

**Town of Riverdale Park**  
**Work Session Minutes**  
**April 30, 2018**  
**8:00 p.m.**

**In Attendance**

Mayor Alan K. Thompson  
CM Marsha Dixon, Ward 1  
CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2  
CM David Lingua, Ward 3  
CM Alejandro Silva, Ward 6

John N. Lestitian, Town Manager  
David Morris, Chief of Police  
Patrick Timmons, Lieutenant Colonel, Riverdale Park Police Department  
Andrew Powell, Lieutenant, Riverdale Park Police Department  
Robert Turner, Lieutenant, Riverdale Park Police Department  
Jessica Barnes, Town Clerk  
Kevin Simpson, Development Services Director

**Call to Order**

Mayor Thompson called the work session to order at 8:13 p.m.

**Mayor's Report**

Mayor Alan Thompson deferred his report to the May 7<sup>th</sup> Legislative Meeting.

**Presentation**

Riverdale Park Police Department Year in Review: Chief David Morris

Chief Davis Morris gave an overview of the major projects of the Riverdale Park Police Department.

**Discussion Items**

1. Charter Amendment Resolution 2018-CR-01 regarding voter registration and elections

*Public Comments*

Mayor Thompson gave an overview of the ground rules for public comments.

CM Dixon yielded her comments until after the public comments.

Jennifer Maddis of Ward 1 spoke in favor of the Charter Amendment. She stated that she had recently moved from Takoma Park and a similar process had been in place for many years. She also stated that she supported same day voter registration.

Bob Smith of 5001 Riverdale Road stated that all budget public hearings were very well done and he would like to have his questions about the legislation answered.

Juan Carlos Rodriguez of 4807 Rittenhouse Street stated that he loved living in the community and it was safe and clean. He stated that he would like to have the right to vote.

Roberto Rodriguez, 15-years-old, stated that he wanted to be a veterinarian and also wanted the opportunity to vote.

Emerita Rodriguez stated that she had lived in Riverdale Park for 4 years and wanted to be sure that her voice was heard regarding the right to vote.

Roxana Reyes stated that she had lived in Riverdale Park for 7 years and stated that the Charter Amendment gave people the right to vote but also the responsibility to work together as a community. Ms. Reyes stated that good communication would lead to people reporting to local law enforcement without any fear.

A resident stated that she had lived in Riverdale Park for 6 years and would like to see the initiative pass so that the Hispanic American community could be factored in and there could be an improvement in communication with authorities. She stated that the ability to vote would increase responsibility, create a better community, and improve communication regardless of race. She stated that the legislation would help everyone to come together to make a better community and also make history.

Mario Gonzales stated that he had lived in Town for 10 years and would like to see the opportunity for the Hispanic community to vote.

Abby Kiesla of 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue stated that she supported the legislation. She also read comments from Corey Slavitt and Sarah Combs of Ward 1 in support of the legislation.

Sheila Smith of 5001 Riverdale Road stated that they had not received answers to questions asked previously and asked if the answers would be forthcoming.

CM Marsha Dixon thanked everyone for coming and expressing their opinions. CM Dixon outlined and responded to the questions that had been asked at previous meetings.

CM Dixon explained the timeline for introduction of the legislation. She stated that she had contemplated and discussed the idea with some residents, discussed the idea with the Mayor and Council at public meetings, placed two articles in the *Town Crier* seeking resident input, took the idea to the Legislative Committee, and held two public committee meetings before the legislation was introduced. CM Dixon stated that her original proposal did not include the option for 16-year-olds to vote however many residents were supportive of the idea so it was included.

Resident Bob Smith stated that he was concerned regarding inconsistencies and holes in the legislation. He stated that he would like to see things polished and that a better job could be done.

CM Faulx stated that the topic had been discussed for over 6 months and the process had been incredibly transparent and open.

CM Lingua stated that the first meeting of the Legislative Committee was held on February 21<sup>st</sup> and that was the first time that the Committee had seen the proposed language. CM Lingua stated that public meetings are not the same as public hearings and suggested that the Council consider holding a public hearing on the legislation. CM Lingua stated that something as fundamental as voting should require that the entire town weigh in on it. He

stated that was not just his opinion but the opinion that he was hearing from Ward 3 residents.

CM Silva stated that all residents in the town should be able to vote.

CM Dixon asked how the Council could make decisions for the entire town when almost one-third of residents cannot vote.

CM Lingua stated that allowing 16-year-olds to vote should be considered as a separate issue. CM Lingua stated that the proposed changes were substantial changes for the Town.

Sheila Smith of 5001 Riverdale Road stated that the legislation had a huge impact and a public hearing should be held to allow for clearer and more focused discussion. Mrs. Smith stated that any change to the Town Charter should require public hearings.

Mayor Thompson thanked everyone for their comments and called a brief recess. The meeting was called back to order at 9:40 p.m.

2. Variance Request: 4512 Riverdale Road for variances of 11.7 feet front yard width for the dwelling, 12.5% net lot coverage and 1.5 feet side lot line and 1.5 rear lot line setbacks for an accessory building (Ward 1)

Applicants Corey Bettenhausen and Sydney Foster of 4512 Riverdale Road stated that they were seeking the Council's support of their variance requests. Mr. Bettenhausen stated that the variances requested for the front yard width, side lot line, and rear lot line setbacks were due to existing conditions and the only variance related to the project was the net lot coverage. Mr. Bettenhausen discussed his project as well the rain barrels that he had installed on his property. Mr. Bettenhausen also stated that he had letters of support from surrounding property owners.

Mayor Thompson stated that the request would be on the regular agenda for the May 7<sup>th</sup> Legislative Meeting.

3. Variance Request: 5610 Taylor Road for a variance of 2% net lot coverage and waivers of the fence location and height requirements for a fence over 4 feet in height in the side yard (Ward 3)

CM Lingua gave an overview of the variance request. Applicant Adam Trejo discussed his project and the required variances. Mr. Trejo stated that he was doing a lot of landscaping to address flooding issues on his property.

CM Lingua suggested that Mr. Trejo consider the Rain Check Rebate Program. Mr. Trejo reported that his neighbors were not opposed to his project, they just wanted to know what was being planned.

CM Lingua stated that he had received a letter from Mr. Drenoga and he had also spoken with another resident who had serious concerns about the project because the property is located in a 100-year flood plain. CM Lingua stated that he needed to talk with the neighbors and applicant more. CM Lingua scheduled a time to meet with the applicant.

Mayor Thompson stated that the request would be on the regular agenda for the May 7<sup>th</sup> Legislative Meeting.

4. Fence Permit Request: 5511 Taylor Road for a 5-foot split rail wooden fence (Ward 3)

CM Lingua gave an overview of the fence permit request and stated that he was comfortable with the project. CM Lingua suggested that the request be placed on the Consent Agenda.

There were no objections from the Council so Mayor Thompson stated that Discussion Item 4 would be placed on the consent agenda for the May 7<sup>th</sup> Legislative Meeting.

5. Street Closure Request: 4900 block of Sheridan Street on June 10, 2018 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. for Community Block Party (Ward 2)

CM Faulx gave an overview of the request and suggested that it be placed on the Consent Agenda.

There were no objections from the Council so Mayor Thompson stated that Discussion Item 5 would be placed on the consent agenda for the May 7<sup>th</sup> Legislative Meeting.

6. Letter of support for Central Kenilworth Avenue Revitalization (CKAR) grant application

CM Lingua gave an overview of the request and stated that CKAR had advised that a letter of support needed to be provided prior to May 18, 2018.

7. Chapter 15- Building Code- Revisions

Development Services Director Kevin Simpson gave an overview of the proposed revisions to Chapter 15- Building Code. Director Simpson stated that staff recommended repealing and replacing Chapter 15 and that the proposed revisions would allow for a consistent appeal process.

Director Simpson stated that he would review the County permit deadline to ensure consistency.

8. Ordinance 2018-OR-06 establishing Redevelopment Zone Initiative Incentive Program

Development Services Director Kevin Simpson gave an overview of Ordinance 2018-OR-06, establishing the Redevelopment Zone Initiative Incentive Program.

Town Manager Lestitian reported that six applications had been received for the Spring Forward Grant Program.

9. Ordinance 2018-OR-07 establishing Go Green Initiative Incentive Program

Development Services Director Kevin Simpson gave an overview of Ordinance 2018-OR-07, establishing the Go Green Initiative Incentive Program.

10. Ordinance 2018-OR-08 Chapter 68, Weeds, Rubbish, and Garbage Maintenance

Development Services Director Kevin Simpson gave an overview of Ordinance 2018-OR-08 Chapter 68, Weeds, Rubbish, and Garbage Maintenance.

It was suggested that noxious weeds be defined in section 68-2, as a reference.

11. Proposed charter, code, and policy edits to align with the organizational structure and address inconsistencies

Town Manager Lestitian stated that Discussion Item 11 was back on the agenda to provide some additional clarity.

CM Faulx asked if the proposed changes were consistent with what other municipalities did in Council-Manager forms of government. Town Manager Lestitian stated that Council-Manager forms of government vary by municipality however, typically the Council does not weigh in on hiring or firing of department heads. Town Manager Lestitian stated that in smaller organizations such as the Town, it was prudent in order to protect the Town and to provide for consistency.

Resident Bob Smith of 5001 Riverdale Road stated that the proposal was a very good and logical way to make changes.

12. Update on FY2019 Proposed Operating and Capital Improvement Project Budget

Town Manager Lestitian stated that staff intended to make the requested edits, correct typos, and bring forward a budget ordinance for introduction at the May 7<sup>th</sup> Legislative Meeting.

Town Manager Lestitian reported that the Constant Yield Public Hearing would be held prior to the May 7<sup>th</sup> legislative meeting at 7:30 p.m. and that there was no change in the tax rate.

Town Manager Lestitian also stated that there would be a Special Legislative meeting on May 21<sup>st</sup> to adopt the budget. He stated that staff were working to reach the Council's goal of having the budget adopted in May.

13. Minutes from March 26, 2018 Special Legislative Meeting, March 26, 2018 Work Session, April 2, 2018 Legislative Meeting, April 21, 2018 Special Legislative Meeting

Mayor Thompson stated that the minutes would be placed on the Consent Agenda for the May 7<sup>th</sup> Legislative Meeting.

**Town Manager's Report**

Town Manager John N. Lestitian reported:

- Community Walk will be held on Saturday, May 5<sup>th</sup> at 9 a.m. and route will be published soon
- Constant Yield Public Hearing will be held on May 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m.
- Community Walk will be held on Wednesday, May 23<sup>rd</sup> at 5:30 p.m. and will follow the same route as the May 5<sup>th</sup> walk
- Town Hall and Department of Public Works will be closed on Monday, May 28<sup>th</sup>

## **Council Committee & Ward Report**

### **CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2**

CM Faulx deferred his report to May 7<sup>th</sup> Legislative Meeting.

### **CM David Lingua, Ward 3**

CM Lingua announced that CKAR was meeting on May 1<sup>st</sup> and deferred the rest of his report to the May 7<sup>th</sup> Legislative Meeting.

### **CM Alejandro Silva, Ward 6**

CM Silva deferred his report to May 7<sup>th</sup> Legislative Meeting.

## **Unfinished Business**

- CM Lingua requested an update and status report on the stormwater project along Longfellow Street and 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue. CM Lingua also discussed the stormwater drain on Taylor Road (south of Riversdale House Museum). Town Manager Lestitian stated that staff had been working with the County on the agreement for the Longfellow Street project. Town Manager Lestitian stated that he would work with Director Addison to provide a status update.
- Mayor Thompson stated that he would likely make a recommendation for M-UTC membership at the May 7<sup>th</sup> Legislative Meeting.

## **New Business**

There was no new business discussed.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:58 p.m.