

Official Minutes of the City of Mount Rainier

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

DATE: June 21, 2016

COUNCIL CHAMBERS, UPPER LEVEL CITY HALL

Call to Order

7:06 PM, Council Chambers, City Hall, One Municipal Place, Mount Rainier MD

Presiding Officer

Mayor Malinda Miles

Officials Present

Councilmember Bryan Knedler

Councilmember Jesse Christopherson

Councilmember Tracy Loh

Councilmember Shivali Shah

Staff Present

City Manager Miranda Braatz

Minutes provided by:

Brishay Corbin

Councilmember Knedler requested to amend the agenda by adding 5-10 minutes for the trees watering schedule. He also wanted to include the rolling agenda.

Motion to adopt amended Agenda: Councilmember Bryan Knedler

Second: Councilmember Tracy Loh

Vote Recorded: 4-0-1, Motion Passed

Review and Approval of Minutes

The Council agreed to review the minutes for approval at a later time and requested to receive them electronically and also on a computer file for access.

Tree Ordinance

Tree Commission member Gabe Popkin was in attendance.

Mayor Miles expressed the citizens' concerns regarding the tree removal permit, which has been updated, and the tree watering schedule.

City Manager Braatz addressed the watering schedule plan for the Public Works department to water the incoming trees. The Acting Director of Public Works Michael Barnes assured her that the trees could be watered twice a week without incurring overtime for the remainder of the summer.

Councilmember Knedler stated that there will be no new trees planted this year, but the watering schedule depends on the specific tree; it could be once a week, for a larger tree it could be twice a week, and with the use of an adequate gator bag it could be every few days.

Councilmember Knedler also confirmed that the City would receive approximately 200 trees from Prince George's County to replace the trees that are being cut down after the current fiscal year under the "Arundel Road Levee Project." Councilmember Christopherson recalled that the County agreed to plant and maintain the new trees for 2 years, but there was no certain location the trees would be placed.

The Council concluded that the watering schedule would be based on weekly needs during the summer.

During the review of the revised Tree Ordinance the Tree Commission proposed to differentiate and identify the City, public and private property trees. The Tree Commission also asked to evaluate tree removal permits and to have input on public tree decisions with the City Manager.

In regards to private properties, an owner can take a quarter off the canopy of a protected tree before a permit is needed.

For the tree inspection process and "Impact Assessment" the Tree Commission recommended that the Code Enforcement Department initially measure and assess the tree free of charge. The arborist should then submit a written "Impact Assessment" to the City Manager that includes photos. The arborist can determine a permit waiver during the assessment to the City Manager as well.

The Tree Commission suggested a \$35 application fee that will be visible on the permit. The Council then discussed how the permit should be instructional and have as much information as possible for removing and replacing the trees. There was a conversation regarding a "public review" of tree removal permits and it was decided that the Council was not ready to make it a priority.

Councilmember Knedler outlined the recommended tree replacement formula. Councilmember Loh voiced her opposition regarding the fees of the formula and Councilmember Christopherson reasoned that the fees gave residents an incentive to preserve trees in the City. Due to their difference in opinion there would need to be an update in the proposal.

The Tree Commission also requested that the original "notice requirement" that announced public tree removal should be reinstated so that the public can weigh in on the final decision to

keep or remove trees. The Council concluded that each member would note any changes that needed to be made for a future discussion.

Electing a Vice-Mayor

The Council agreed to vote Councilmember Christopherson as Vice-Mayor during the next session.

Resolution 06-2016: Joe's Movement Emporium: FY17 Community Investment Tax Credits

Although the Council had no objections to the concept, they approved of the City Manager revising the resolution for the next meeting.

Rolling Agenda

Councilmember Knedler wanted to address the response letter from Prince George's County regarding the tree replacement plan. Councilmember Christopherson agreed to follow-up with the County; the rolling agenda was updated. The "Groundswell Wind Energy Update" was removed from the rolling agenda, and "Annexation" was set for July's Work Session.

Councilmember Loh asked to be removed as lead on the "Snow Removal" topic and suggested that Interim City Manager Larry Hughes be removed from the "Comprehensive Streets/Sidewalk Survey." The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) was invited to attend the July Work Session to present their work schedule for the City and the new staff planner for the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC) was on the Council meeting agenda for July 5 to relay an update on the Architectural Conservation Overlay Zone (ACOZ) project.

The Council agreed that a draft agenda would be sent the Wednesday before a Legislative or Work Session meeting and the agenda would be final that Friday at 12 noon. City Manager Braatz voiced her opinion on the rolling agenda process and it was clarified that the rolling agenda is a tool to keep up with agenda items and deadlines amongst the Council.

City Manager's Report

The Mayor asked that the City Manager's Report be moved to Legislative meetings only. City Manager Braatz announced that job opportunities are announced on the City website and applications are available in City Hall. Councilmember Shah suggested requesting a need for bi-lingual candidates in Administration.

The Mayor addressed a letter sent by the City's Attorney in regards to conducting a Closed Session correctly.

Motion to close the Work Session to go into a Special Meeting of the Mayor and Council for the purpose of having a Closed Session to discuss a personnel issue relative to the City

Attorney: Councilmember Shivali Shah

Second: Councilmember Tracy Loh

Vote Recorded: 4-0-1, Motion Passed

Motion to designate Jesse Christopherson Vice-Mayor May 1, 2016 to the swearing in of the new Council May 1, 2017, Shivali Shah will serve as Vice-Mayor from the swearing in May 1, 2017 to April 30, 2018, Tracy Loh will serve as Vice-Mayor from May 1, 2018 to the swearing in of new Council May 1, 2019: Councilmember Bryan Knedler

Second: Councilmember Tracy Loh

Vote Recorded: 4-0-1, Motion Passed

Motion to go into Closed Session: Councilmember Tracy Loh

Second: Councilmember Shivali Shah

Vote Recorded: 4-0-1, Motion Passed