

Official Minutes of the City of Mount Rainier

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

DATE: July 19, 2016

COUNCIL CHAMBERS, UPPER LEVEL CITY HALL

Call to Order

7:00 PM, Council Chambers, City Hall, One Municipal Place, Mount Rainier MD

Presiding Officer

Mayor Malinda Miles

Officials Present

Councilmember Jesse Christopherson

Councilmember Bryan Knedler

Councilmember Tracy Loh

Councilmember Shivali Shah

Staff Present

City Manager Miranda Braatz

Economic Development Director Samantha Olatunji

Minutes provided by:

Brishay Corbin

Councilmember Knedler requested to have a vote to share the City Attorney's legal opinion regarding the city building permits with the Design Review Board during the Special Meeting.

Rolling Agenda

Councilmember Loh asked to touch base on the Rolling Agenda for the September Work Session due to the recess in August. Councilmember Loh also requested that the Public Works Director give a work plan during the September Work Session.

Councilmember Knedler vowed to have the ordinance to increase the stipends for the Elections Board and the ordinance to increase the stipends for the City Councilmembers prepared for the Work Session.

Councilmember Knedler also asked for an update on the 31st Street Park and Garden. Mayor Miles stated that the City was ready to sign the agreement but Park and Planning, including the City, misplaced the signed petitions so they needed to be redone for the record.

Councilmember Loh asked if the Public Works Director would be ready to update the Council on County take-over recycling pickups in order to free the Public Works Department from that duty. City Manager Braatz confirmed that the Work Session would be too soon to discuss that topic.

Councilmember Knedler wanted an update on the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) bus lane purchase. Councilmember Loh thought the Council needed to have a meeting with County Councilmember Deni Tavares and/or a staff member during the September Legislative Meeting.

Mayor Miles recommended that Dinora Hernandez, PG County Board of Education, be invited to the Legislative Meeting regarding the attendance boundaries for Mount Rainier Elementary School and Thomas Stone Elementary School.

Councilmember Loh volunteered to share an update on the County bike share plans at the Work Session. Councilmember Knedler asked for an update on the SHA bus jump lane. Councilmember Shah wanted Mount Rainier Day added to both September meetings.

Mayor and Council Announcements

On Wednesday, July 27 at 7:00 pm at Joe's Movement Emporium the Mount Rainier Police Department and a Prince George's County officer will be in attendance for a gathering regarding the public's experiences and concerns on race and race relations.

Washington Suburban Sanitary Committee (WSSC)

Eugene Williams from the WSSC Intergovernmental Relations Office introduced Samuel Majano and David Wilkins as two representatives that would be speaking with the Council on various topics.

Mayor Miles inquired about a schedule for the next 5 years in the City that could possibly be coordinated with Washington Gas. Mr. Majano gave insight to "Agency Project Coordination 2" (APC2) where Washington Gas, SHA, Prince George's County, and Montgomery County are able to coordinate their GIS maps to work together to be fiscally responsible.

The residents were urged to also go to the WSSC website to see what work would be done in their neighborhoods, and it was stated that there were also apps that would provide the information. As far as what is scheduled in the next 5 years, Mr. Majano stated that WSSC had 5 projects; 1 that was currently under construction and impacted 34th Street, 2 that were under design, and 2 prepared for 2018.

Councilmember Loh wanted insight on the boundaries of the current project which were 34th Street, Tilden Street, Upshur Street, Bunker Hill, and Shepherd Street. The entire pipe had been laid and tested and the service had been returned. However, WSSC had a separate contract for restoration which did not have a tentative date, but 60 days was the projection.

Mr. Majano then explained the color coordinated projects and their areas on the handout map given to the Council. Councilmember Knedler noticed that the County had planned to build a median on Arundel Road that impacted one of the WSSC projects. Councilmember Christopherson offered to send the Department of Environment project manager's information to WSSC.

Mr. Majano continued explaining the future projects. He also assured the Council that the residents would get notification letters and that the City would receive the construction plans, commission plans, and updates on when to expect construction including what areas would be impacted.

Councilmember Christopherson asked if the APC2 was available for residents or City officials but the application was restricted to the utility companies and jurisdictional authorities like the County only.

Mr. Majano also gave details on the other remaining projects. Councilmember Loh voiced her concern regarding the FY18 plans for 31st Street due to the paving conditions of the road that the City planned to resurface. Mr. Majano asked for the Council to provide the resurfacing plans for WSSC to review.

As part of the WSSC Design Work Plan they use "photographic records" to ensure that the same conditions are left after construction. If the City had any plans of resurfacing and wanted to coordinate with WSSC, if there was no correlation with WSSC work already underway in the area then WSSC would not get involved.

Councilmember Shah expressed the residents' issues in terms of notice from WSSC regarding construction noise and water being turned off. Mr. Majano spoke about the new system strategy to keep residents involved via letter deliveries from the contractors and project inspectors for better communication. Councilmember Shah also voiced concerns about on-site crews being made aware of such issues.

Resident Valarie Silensky from 31st Street communicated her dismay when the water was cut off at her home and disrupted her family. The contractors instructed her to contact City Hall but when she did the staff was unaware of the situation altogether, and after hours of contacting WSSC the situation was never explained to her.

Mr. Majano explained that the project managers and contractors should be listed on any letter regarding construction but if a resident contacted a toll free number they would be routed to customer care. Mr. Williams urged residents to contact their customer advocate, David Wilkins in those situations.

Mayor Miles advised WSSC to notify City Manager Braatz regarding City projects that included all of the project information to ensure better communication.

The Council thanked WSSC for coming and agreed on having future discussions.

Mayor and Council Announcements (continued)

The memorial service for Charles Stewart was set for July 23 noon at Family Community Fellowship located at 2026 Maryland Ave NE, 2nd Floor, Washington, D.C.

Century Engineering – Green Street Update

Engineer for the Buchanan/Green Street project Tom Hicks was asked to review the standpoint of operational and/or safety problems with the Council. Mr. Hicks suggested that some improvements were desired for Queenstown Road. Marking changes were suggested to provide 2 11-foot lanes and it was desired that there be no parking between the curb and Queenstown Road.

Mr. Hicks stated that the engineer who looked over the job recommended moving the centerline 2 feet to the south, toward the park, to provide more space for parking. Also, the vehicle bumpers would be moved back along the curb to allow more space for residents to back up when parking.

The Council looked over the plans Mr. Hicks provided.

Councilmember Knedler voiced his opinion of not needing a centerline. Councilmember Christopherson agreed with eliminating the centerline but also wanted to include the curb replacement. Councilmember Loh believed that removing the parking would suffice and that removing the centerline was reasonable. Councilmember Loh also stated that at minimum the recommended parking would need to be eliminated and Councilmember Shah agreed.

Councilmember Knedler inquired about escrow funds. City Manager Braatz stated that the Local Government Insurance Trust (LGIT) scheduled a review in the first week of August and that the City would be holding on to the funds until City Manager Braatz conferred with the City Attorney.

3411 Newton Street Presentation

Real estate agent David D'Costa gave a brief synopsis of the plans for construction.

Joe's Movement Emporium/Call-A-Bus

City Manager Braatz wanted this discussion to be added to the agenda due to the fare increase for round trips using the Call-A-Bus service. Brooke Kidd was present to represent Joe's Movement Emporium for the discussion of keeping or increasing the \$600 monthly Call-A-Bus agreement with the City that had not been established contractually.

Councilmember Loh was satisfied with the current agreement and proposed that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) be drafted to have the arrangement documented.

Mayor Miles spoke on the issues of the bus overall. The Mayor also stated that she will be taking meetings to see if there was any way that the City could get a new bus. Ms. Kidd spoke in support of advocating for a new bus as well in hopes of partnering with multiple organizations to build an after school program at Thomas Stone Elementary.

It was ultimately decided that a new contract would be created at the same rate and would be reviewed on a yearly basis. Councilmember Shah asked if the bus could be rented for private use. Mayor Miles stated that the Call-A-Bus can be rented but its main function is for service so the City will rarely make a profit.

Annexation

Economic Development Director Samantha Olatunji joined City Manager Braatz in the discussion regarding annexation. A map was distributed to the Council so that they could pinpoint what areas they would have liked to pursue for further analysis.

Councilmember Knedler inquired about Park and Planning parcels and City Manager Braatz explained that Park and Planning is indecisive unless it's beneficial to them.

Mayor Miles voiced her interest in and across Queens Chapel Road, Presidential Towers, and also the area from Chillum Road through the car wash, the dialysis center, and Queenstown Auto.

Economic Director Olatunji expressed that she had been working with Community Planner Jose Ayala for an updated map.

The Council discussed points of interest near Hyattsville and the Metro bus stop. Councilmember Loh offered her assistance by use of her Remote Graphic Software license (RGS) to work through mapping needs and reviewing parcels. The Council asked for a periodic update on the areas they specified as interests.

Resolution 08-2016: Disposal of Police Vehicles

Councilmember Loh pointed out that the resolution summary only stated 3 vehicles so it was updated to 4. The Council agreed to vote on the resolution during the Special Meeting following the Work Session.

Priorities of the City Manager – Discussion

City Manager Braatz described her management style as decisive, dynamic and fast-pace. She identified her main priorities that are professionalism in services and having well trained staff.

City Manager Braatz requested to have a Director of Administrative Services to help with community development and events. The City was awarded approximately \$581,000 towards its streets in the upcoming 1-2 years. City Manager Braatz scheduled bi-weekly meetings with the

Director of Public Works, the Economic Development Director, and Century Engineering to work on a “Complete Streets Plan” to begin being implemented in January 2017.

Councilmember Loh asked to shelf the Complete Streets Plan conversation so that the Council can discuss the City Manager’s priorities.

City Manager Braatz explained that her priorities were to hire a qualified Director of Code Enforcement, fixing and updating the City’s codifying issues, Economic Development funding, Capital Improvement Plan, strategic plan, an updated procurement policy, and Public Works staffing level.

Councilmember Knedler voiced that annexation, the City’s website, Complete Streets, Code Enforcement including the City’s appearance, the Civic Center and the lower level of the police station were his concerns.

Councilmember Loh prioritized extinguishing all of the dumpster fires in the City, having the staff at capacity, and delivering core City services like public safety, code enforcement, sanitation, and asphalt maintenance. Councilmember Loh also agreed with the Mayor’s document due to it being realistic.

Mayor Miles offered to email her proposed document to the Council so that each member could choose the most critical points for the remainder of the year.

Councilmember Christopherson listed his priorities as being infrastructure with Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP), professional service level, and economic development which included code enforcement, the City’s website, developing an incentives package, branding, the County’s Gateway project, walkability, code tweaks, and annexation.

Councilmember Shah stated that her priorities were code enforcement, fixing Public Works, staffing issues, policies and procedures within City Hall, community development which included the Director of Administrative Services and City committee interaction/support, and lastly working with the Director of Economic Development and Mount Rainier Business Association (MRBA).

The Council instructed City Manager Braatz to take their priorities with her own to come up with both short-term and long-term goals.

Motion to end the Work Session for the purpose of discussing the Board of Zoning Appeals letter, the resolution to dispose of the police vehicles, and the City building permits to share with the Design Review Board (DRB): Councilmember Tracy Loh

Second: Councilmember Bryan Knedler

Vote Recorded: 4-0-1, Motion Passed

Special Meeting

The Council reviewed the design for 3613 Eastern Avenue. The Design Review Board specified the changes they thought should take place with the roof. The resident requested a variance to move forward with the construction plans and the Council agreed to write a letter of support.

Motion to draft a letter supporting that the Council will allow the recommendation as long as it stays within the plans and the draft that has been presented to the Mayor and Council:

Councilmember Bryan Knedler

Second: Councilmember Tracy Loh

Vote Recorded: 4-0-1, Motion Passed

Motion to adopt Resolution 08-2016, as corrected (from 3 vehicles to 4): Councilmember Tracy Loh

Second: Councilmember Bryan Knedler

Vote Recorded: 5-0-0, Motion Passed

Motion to make the legal and confidential memo received by the Council on Monday, July 18 concerning the City of Mount Rainier building permits public: Councilmember Jesse Christopherson

Second: Councilmember Shivali Shah

Vote Recorded: 4-0-1, Motion Passed

Motion to adjourn: Councilmember Bryan Knedler

Second: Councilmember Tracy Loh

No vote recorded