

Official Minutes of the City of Mount Rainier

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

DATE: September 20, 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

Officials Absent

Councilmember Shivali Shah

Staff Present

City Manager Miranda Braatz

City Treasurer Vijay Manjani

Director of Economic Development Samantha Olatunji

Director of Public Works Kourosch Kamali

Minutes provided by:

Brishay Corbin

Review and Approval of the Agenda

Councilmember Christopherson read the agenda.

Vote to Approve the Agenda

Vote Recorded: 2-0-1

Report – FY15 Audit; Murphy and Murphy CPA LLC

City Treasurer Vijay Manjani introduced Murphy and Murphy CPA LLC auditor Greg Ferguson to debrief the Council on the Fiscal Year 2015 report.

Mr. Ferguson explained that his job as an auditor was to inspect the City's books, records, and processes to render an opinion. Mr. Ferguson stated that the financial statements within the report and all the material reflected gave no reservations regarding the City's financials.

Mr. Ferguson continued to expound on the audit report. A management letter was distributed which reiterated some items from the past and outstanding receivables, money owed to the City, through Business Personal Property Taxes and Commercial District Management Fees (CDMA). There were also few instances that did not appear to go through the “approval process” or were undocumented, and having a better record of the fixed assets was recommended as well as timeliness in completing and submitting the report.

City Treasurer Manjani stated that the Finance Department would be completing the next audit by the end of October for the deadline on November 1. Mayor Miles inquired about the Council receiving an early draft for the future October Work Session and Mr. Ferguson agreed to a presentation of the basic data.

Police MOU – Brentwood

City Manager Braatz introduced the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Mount Rainier and Brentwood as a document that did not limit the City’s rights but defined an understanding with Brentwood in matters that may have crossed jurisdictional boundaries.

Lieutenant Kenneth Bragg from the Brentwood Police Department stated that the agreement outlined rules, protected each municipality, and established a line of communication between each police department.

Councilmember Loh inquired about officers working together in common grounds like Thomas Elementary School, and although that was not specified in the agreement Lieutenant Bragg assured the Council that if there was necessary action that needed to be taken it would regardless of the officer’s jurisdiction.

The Council decided to sign the agreement and make the official vote at the October Legislative meeting.

ACOZ Update

Councilmember Loh gave a reminder that the County meeting would be on Thursday, September 22 at the Bunker Hill Volunteer Fire Company at 7 PM. The consulting team and Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission staff would also present the pattern book for the Architecture Conservation Overlay Zone.

Tree Replacement Formula – Urban Forest Chapter

Councilmember Knedler gave a presentation on the proposed tree replacement formula in relation to tree size.

Tree Commission and Green Team member MaryLee Haughwout advocated for stronger tree protection over private property trees. Ms. Haughwout expressed her belief that a 1 for 1 tree replacement was not acceptable in regards to sustainability and property value, and also

explained the County's Raincheck Rebate Program where a property owner can spend up to \$4,000 on tree replacement and receive \$150 reimbursement per tree.

Ms. Haughwout passed out a proposal to the Council and information regarding the Raincheck Rebate Program. Mayor Miles spoke about the potential burden on homeowners to plant and maintain new trees. The Council discussed their thoughts on the tree formula.

Resident Kate Bartfield voiced her support in having a replenishing program for trees after they are cut and asked that the Council consider the best program. It was ultimately decided that the City Attorney would review the language while the Council further examined the document.

Report from Public Works Director for Work Plan

Public Works Director Kourosch Kamali presented the Council with an overview of his 2017 Work Plan which included staff training, cleaning and organizing the Public Works area, servicing the vehicles, and conducting City Hall reports. Public Works also updated their electronic intake policy where residents could drop off their electronic items at the Public Works building.

Director Kamali went through the first quarter of the Work Plan. Councilmember Loh inquired about the process for residents to report pot holes and sidewalk repair issues and requested to receive annual reports. Councilmember Knedler asked for updates on staff members and promotions accordingly and Mayor Miles suggested that new staff members be introduced at Council meetings.

DER Feasibility Discussion

Councilmember Knedler reported that Chief of the Green Building and Climate Branch in the District of Columbia's Department of Energy and Environment William (Bill) Updike invited Director of the Department of Environment Adam Ortiz to review the Menkiti Project in Mount Rainier. During the visit, Mr. Ortiz stated that if the City wrote a request for a "technical analysis" for the Green Street Project he might provide funds for staff to come and evaluate the green elements that could be implemented around the Menkiti project.

The Council agreed that the staff would draft and send the letter.

Bike Co-op; Condition of Building

Councilmember Loh stated that one of the issues with the Bike Co-op was that the City did not have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the organization. It was not the City's direct responsibility to maintain and protect the building based on the fact that the City owned the building.

Mayor Miles voiced how the City had a relationship with the Bike Co-op and Toolshed. The Mayor stated that the building was secured under the City due to the fact that it would be open

for public use and that there were line items implemented to assist with maintaining the building in the past.

Councilmember Knedler explained that the Toolshed was a committee of the City. He believed that the Bike Co-op should have been paying rent or leased the building as a formal agreement. Mayor Miles stated that there was a written agreement but the document went unaccounted for.

The Council was in consensus to locate the written document before moving forward. City Manager Braatz was tasked with getting reports from the Director of Public Works and the Director of Code Enforcement regarding the building.

Ordinance 07-2016: Town Center Parking

Residents requested to have marked parking spaces in the residential area near Joe's Movement Emporium. Councilmember Knedler proposed to amend the language towards the blocks adjacent to the Town Center zone for the spaces.

Councilmember Loh questioned whether an ordinance was needed, and Councilmember Knedler answered that he did not find anything in the ordinance that supported it. Mayor Miles suggested that the Director of Public Works Kamali accesses the situation with Chief of Police Michael Scott prior to any legislation being made; the Council agreed.

Comprehensive Street and Sidewalk Plan Presentation

The Comprehensive Street's project team was Economic Director Samantha Olatunji, Public Works Director Kourosh Kamali, and Public Works Administrative Assistant and Tree Liaison Jessica Love. Director Olatunji directed the Council to examine the timeline for the project which would take 3-6 months to complete, with the construction stage phased out over a 5 year period.

Director Olatunji showed evidence of the conditions that existed in the streets and sidewalks and then went over the Complete Streets Checklist.

Councilmember Loh expressed opposition to the plan stating that it was not the right approach and did not address the problem. Councilmember Loh was concerned about the inventory submitted, the lack of parking attributes, and the Complete Streets approach, she then voiced her priorities.

Councilmember Knedler inquired about traffic calming specifications and Councilmember Loh answered that traffic engineers would assist with that. Councilmember Knedler also voiced his concern regarding tripping hazards.

Councilmember Christopherson was confused with Councilmember Loh's position that the Complete Streets Plan was "too much" yet still lacked certain attributes, but he did support the

Bike Plan. Councilmember Christopherson believed that it was a good start and that the plan should just be modified.

Mayor Miles was concerned the lack of implementing sidewalks and supported Councilmember Loh's decision to volunteer time to discuss the plan with the staff.

Director Olatunji responded to the Council's critiques, one being that it was not a Complete Streets project, and recapped the presentation. Green Team member Joseph Jakuta voiced their support and appreciation for the plan but was disappointed that there was no opportunity in the schedule for civil engagement.

City Manager Braatz confirmed that the project was a weekly priority for the staff.

Budget Amendment Discussion

City Manager Braatz explained how the City would be undergoing budget amendments each quarter with Director of Finance Vijay Manjani. There were 3 recommendations made; the first was that in addition to the \$9,000 budgeted for City Hall repairs, the unexpected insurance payout from the Local Government Insurance Trust (LGIT) of \$8,050 could be included for remediation repairs and the contingency reserve could fund the allocation of \$42,050 for City Hall repairs.

The second item dealt with the Public Works Department and included a 2016 Dodge 2500 Snow Chief Package that came with a truck, plow, and salt spreader and a Snow Chief that came with a truck and a plow. The Public Works Department also requested a Troy-Bilt Polar Snow Blower (small/medium). The total needed to fund all of the items was \$85,862. In order to cover the cost City Manager Braatz stated that Truck #97, 2014 Mack Truck, was deemed too big for the City's streets so the sale of the truck would generate revenue to purchase the other needed equipment.

The third item was a budget proposal for the Department of Economic Development which included a marketing package for the City, business meetings, developer tours, marketing events, showcasing exhibits, public art, and business development programs. It was funded through grant funding and the additional money needed was \$15,250. City Manager Braatz explained that the line item for a Public Works vehicle for \$12,500 could be reallocated due to the possible sale of Truck #97 in the previous item. Also, funds could be reallocated from the website line item of \$10,000 due to locating vendors for lower prices which varied from \$3,500-\$5,000 which left additional funding; so the request was for \$2,750 be used towards the Economic Development Department.

Councilmember Christopherson questioned the quality of a website at \$3,500 and Economic Director Olatunji spoke about the cost entailing a redesign of the website and reorganization of

the information without a new content management system which would be an expensive component.

Councilmember Knedler agreed that if the truck was not being used due to its size then the City could use the smaller ones. Councilmember Loh believed that the City needed a big plow as well as small plows to fit down the street and supported the trade-off. Councilmember Loh wanted to speak with Director Olatunji regarding the website.

Mayor Miles had questions about the overall process of making the repairs and whether there were bids being made, and in selling Truck #97 whether there were buyers or just quotes on its worth and if both trucks would be purchased before or after the sale of Truck #97. City Manager Braatz assured the Council that there were 3 companies researched and the City hired the cheapest one for the remediation.

Public Works Director Kamali stated that the offers being made for Truck #97 was at \$80,000-\$100,000 with only 3,532 miles. The truck could be sold by the next meeting (once the Council voted) but although the new packages were available the company would not keep them in stock upon request so the new items would have to be purchased simultaneously with Truck #97's sale.

City Treasurer Manjani explained that the process of having Truck #97 examined by any bidder would take 2 days; he detailed that Director Kamali was advised to go through State bidding for discounted rates. The staff was asking the Council for direction regarding the purchase of the new packages while Truck #97 was sold.

It was ultimately decided to purchase the new packages and to sell Truck #97.

The Council also decided to approve the budget proposed for the repairs in City Hall in the total of \$14,125.

Resolution 09-2016: Selling of Inventory for Public Works

The Council agreed that the matter was discussed with their decision to sell Truck #97.

Resolution 10-2016 – Appointing a Supervisor of Elections

The Council decided to vote to appoint Nichole Logan as the Supervisor of the Board of Elections at the next Legislative meeting, and also asked to amend the language so that Board of Elections member Maxine Drakeford could be appointed as an election judge.

Mayor and Council Announcements

Mayor Miles advised the Council to reach out to Councilmember Christopherson with any County level issues or legislation so that it could be reported to the Prince George's County Municipal Association (PGCMA).

Also, the State Highway Administration (SHA) needed a Memorandum of Understanding from the City to move forward with lighting on MD-500. A cost item was going to be sent to the Council and staff for review. SHA requested that Mount Rainier exhibit certain “no turning” and “no entrance” signage as well.

The Council agreed to meet with Brad Frome of Prince George’s County at 7 PM in October.

City Manager Braatz confirmed the City Attorneys received and accepted the terms established in a letter that was sent.

Motion to adjourn: Councilmember Bryan Knedler

Second: Councilmember Tracy Loh

Vote Recorded: 3-0, Motion Passed