

Official Minutes of the City of Mount Rainier

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL MEETING

DATE: September 6, 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

Minutes provided by:

Brishay Corbin

Councilmember Loh suggested moving the guest speaker Dinora Hernandez to the top of the agenda and removing all of the discussion items except for “Thomas Stone School Safety and Repairs.”

Motion to adopt the agenda as amended: Councilmember Bryan Knedler

Second: Councilmember Jesse Christopherson

Vote Recorded: 3-0-1, Motion Passed

Guest Speaker Dinora Hernandez, PG County Public School – Board of Education

Ms. Hernandez announced that the 2 new principals in the area were Dr. Shanti Foster at Thomas Stone Elementary School and Jennifer Till at Mount Rainier Elementary School. Ms. Hernandez then briefed the Council on a meeting that took place in March with County Councilmember Deni Tavares regarding school boundaries that related to both elementary schools.

Ms. Hernandez recognized 2 Prince George's County Public School officials that were also in attendance; Chief Operating Officer Wesley Watts and Communications Officer Raven Hill as subject matter experts for the Council.

During the County meeting, it was suggested that the possible adjustments during that discussion be part of "community forums" which would begin to take place in early fall, according to Mr. Watts the first 2 weeks of October, but the exact dates would be relayed to the City Manager and City Council.

Ms. Hernandez believed that once the forums took place the CEO would identify school boundary adjustments that would later be recommended to the Board of Education after a public hearing, which would hopefully take place in January.

Councilmember Loh inquired where the community forums would take place and Mr. Watts specified that there would be 3 community forums in October and though the dates had yet to be determined one would take place on the North side of the County, another on the Central part, and the last on the South side. Mr. Watts assured the Council that although the forums were for all communities there were specific studies that were taking place with Mount Rainier was one of them.

The length of the process would begin in October and after the Superintendent acquired input from the staff and community forums he would create a proposal for the Board of Education to hold public hearings in January and then the Board would vote or modify the proposal(s). Councilmember Loh asked whether the Board would vote the proposed boundary changes as a package or individual line items and Ms. Hernandez stated the it could possibly be either or.

Mayor Miles voiced that she did not believe the City should be part of any package in the County and that Mount Rainier needed a separate hearing. Councilmember Loh shared the Mayor's sentiments and expressed that an updated attendance boundary was necessary for the 2017-2018 school year.

Ms. Hernandez spoke about getting the new principals acclimated to the area and looking forward to the school year.

Mayor Miles asked if the Council could receive feedback from Ms. Hernandez on environmental and physical conditions of the Thomas Stone Elementary facility.

Councilmember Christopherson shared his concern regarding the yellow flasher on the west side of 34th Street that did not flash and had no known owner. Ms. Hernandez was asked to become a point person in that issue.

Councilmember Loh was concerned that Thomas Stone Elementary was used as a polling station but did not have a handicap accessible restroom. Councilmember Loh questioned Ms. Hernandez on her agenda and how the City could help her achieve it.

Ms. Hernandez stated that the County was taking the City's issues seriously due to Mount Rainier being vocal and proactive. Ms. Hernandez spoke about her efforts with County Councilmember Tavares to collaborate and strategically get things done for Mount Rainier.

Councilmember Knedler requested that the dates for the October forums be established as soon as possible so that they could be announced in the City's newsletter. Councilmember Knedler also suggested that the Board of Elections be called regarding the lack of a handicap accessible bathroom at Thomas Stone Elementary as a polling place.

The Council thanked the officials for being present at the meeting.

Review and Approval of Minutes

Motion to table meeting minutes to the October Council meeting: Councilmember Tracy Loh
Second: Councilmember Bryan Knedler
Vote Recorded: 3-0-1, Motion Passed

Mayor and Council Announcements

County Councilmember Deni Tavares had a State of the District Meeting on September 8 at 7:00 pm on Rhode Island Avenue at the Bunker Hill Fire and Rescue Station.

Positions were available in community volunteer groups including the Youth and Recreation Committee, the Tree Commission, the Design Review Board, the Emergency Preparedness Committee, and the Personnel Committee. For further details, residents could visit the City's website under the "Residents" tab. Councilmember Loh also volunteered to put the information in an e-Newsletter.

In regards to the Mount Rainier Board of Elections, Maxine Drakeford wanted to step down as the Supervisor and Nichole Logan was open to being appointed.

The Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission (MNCPPC) was holding a community meeting at the Bunker Hill Fire and Rescue Station Wednesday, September 21 at 7:00 pm regarding the Architectural Conservation Overlay Zone (ACOZ) where the pattern book would be shared with the public.

Public Safety Night would be on Friday, September 23 on 30th Street and Arundel Road. Also, Saturday, September 24 there would be a community dialogue with the Police Department at the Mount Rainier North Park located at 30th Street and Arundel Road.

There was a Public Hearing held on Tuesday, August 30 regarding Party Time Liquor's request to have a Sunday sales license where the owner(s) ultimately withdrew their application with the Liquor Board.

There was also a meeting with the residents regarding Perry Street and 31st Street. The curb had been repaired and new signage was put up. Another repair that had been made by the Public Works Director was the bollards at the circle.

Councilmember Knedler voiced his appreciation for the Public Works Department with handling the trees during the summer. Councilmember Knedler also recognized Economic Development Director Samantha Olatunji for maintaining the City's website which received 17,000 hits from July -August.

A Bid Package was included in the Director or Public Works' report, Councilmember Knedler requested that the Council review the contents before it was released.

A football team had been put together in Mount Rainier. The Nature Center had become a point of interest as a facility that young residents, ages 12-21, could be.

Report of the City Manager

City Manager Braatz introduced new Director of Code Enforcement Ray Watkins where he gave his introduction statement. Mr. Watkins spoke highly of customer service; Councilmember Loh stressed the importance of the City's success in District Court cases and Councilmember Knedler expressed how the vacant property code was in need of review.

City Manager Braatz confirmed that the Director of Public Works was scheduled to present an update of his work plan at the upcoming Work Session.

Loitering Task Force Update

Councilmember Loh gave insight to a project she was working on with Doyle Neiman, resident and States Attorney's staff member, where they compiled data that focused on the offenders of alcohol related citations in the City. Councilmember Loh wanted the Council's input on having a meeting with State Attorney Angela Alsobrooks and Mount Rainier's Chief of Police regarding the process of handling such citations.

The Council came to a consensus that Councilmember Loh should move forward.

Public Comment

Deanna Westheimer, 4000 block 36th Street, was seeking information on getting her home up to code in hopes of renovating and creating a guest house. The Council proceeded to give Ms. Westheimer a list of resources she could use for her project.

Mount Rainier Day

The date for Mount Rainier Day was confirmed for October 1 from 12 pm to 6pm. In the absence of Councilmember Shah, City Manager Braatz gave an update about the Mount Rainier Day

themed-newsletter being ready to be distributed, banners had been ordered and the website would go live later in the week.

Ordinance 05-2016: Increase Election Board Stipends

Councilmember Christopherson gave a synopsis of the stipend changes; Election Supervisor would increase from \$350 to \$550 per election, Election Judges would increase from \$100 to \$250 per election, and Election Clerks from \$75 to \$150 per election.

Councilmember Knedler suggested increasing the Election Clerk stipend to \$200. The Council decided to contact the Maryland Municipal League for further research on what surrounding municipalities' stipends.

Ordinance 06-2016: Increase Council Member Stipends

Councilmember Christopherson read the introduction of the ordinance. Under the stipend change and effective on the 2nd Monday in May, 2019, following the 2019 City Election, the Mayor shall receive a salary of \$7,200 plus \$50 per month for traveling and communicating expenses and each Councilmember shall receive a salary of \$5,100 per year with \$50 per month for traveling and communicating expenses.

The Council was in agreement that the increase may not be high enough. The Mayor voiced her opinion about potentially providing child care for future Councilmembers and the Council further discussed issues that hindered people from running.

It was ultimately decided to move the item to a future Work Session.

Councilmember Christopherson read the statement for the Closed Session.

Motion to go into Closed Session: Councilmember Tracy Loh

Second: Councilmember Bryan Knedler

Vote Recorded: 3-0-1, Motion Passed

Mayor Miles summarized that the Closed Session addressed hiring or keeping personnel and the City's investment on 3100 Rhode Island Avenue regarding Street Sense and their potential investor. The Mayor and Council ultimately decided to request a public meeting with Prince George's County Executive Rushern Baker and/or staff to determine how the County would work with the City to get Mr. Baker's signature building built at the corner of 3100 Rhode Island Avenue and Eastern Avenue.

Motion to adjourn: Councilmember Bryan Knedler

Second: Councilmember Jesse Christopherson

Vote Recorded: 3-0-1, Motion Passed