

Official Minutes of the City of Mount Rainier

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL MEETING

DATE: December 1, 2015

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 Tracy Loh

Councilmember Shivali Shah

Councilmember Bryan Knedler

Staff Present

Interim City Manager Larry Hughes

Assistant City Manager Veronica Owens

Minutes provided by:

Brishay Corbin

AGENDA

Review and Approval of Agenda

Review and Approval of Minutes

Tax Assessment Presentation

Loitering Task Force Update

Architectural Conservation Overlay Zone (ACOZ) Discussion

Organizational Committee Assessment

Reading of Ordinance 3-2015 (2nd Reading)

Announcements

Rolling Agenda

RECESS

Closed Session

Adjourn

Tax Assessment Presentation – Shannon L. Porter

For the areas being reassessed, assessments are going up 20-30%, so most people will see an increase in their assessment. The property value increase will not take effect until 3 years from now. Notices are set to go out December 28, 2015. The due date to file an appeal is 45 days from the date of the notice. The appeal process begins on the back of the form.

Loitering Task Force Update – Councilwoman Tracy Loh (Council Liaison)

Mount Rainier Business Association hosted a meeting attended by Mount Rainier Police Department and concerned citizens.

Captain Stoots: There's an issue with urinating in public and open alcohol offenses who do not appear in court. Once the person is charged a "Failure to Appear" (FTA) the cases are usually dismissed because it is a non-jail-able offense.

Councilwoman Tracy Loh: Councilwoman Deni Taveras did introduce a bill in committee to modify the penalties that go with the citations for drunk and disorderly conduct. This bill proposes an escalating series of penalties for repeat offenders that include mandatory treatment and the possibility of that being a jail-able offense.

Task Force Representative: My impression is that much more can be done by all members of the Mount Rainier society who have similar concerns, particularly, about sexual harassment which very often accompanies the individuals who are drinking and loitering at the bus stop.

Request For Council Action: Remove current bus shelter benches on Rhode Island Avenue and replace them with ones that have backs with periodic arm rests so that the benches can only be used for sitting and waiting on the bus facing the street. The expense is an estimated \$3,500.00.

Public Comment – Councilman Bridgeman from Bladensburg: The cost is a concern so I would ask that the range of quality and textures of the new benches is considered.

Motion to Accept: Mayor Miles

In Favor: Councilmembers Tracy Loh, Jesse Christopherson, Bryan Knedler, Shivali Shah

Background: The Prince George’s County District Council created the Architectural Conservation Overlay Zone (ACOZ) tool in 2012 to provide a regulatory framework to preserve and protect the architectural or design character in established communities while promoting appropriate, well-planned development and redevelopment that is consistent with the surrounding neighborhoods and adjoining areas.

At the last work session, approximately 2 weeks ago, we whittled down the list to give to the county planners of which standards to work on. I prepared a letter with the list and also councilmember Christopherson’s interest in limiting the standards only for those who are flipping houses. I would like to make a motion to send letter to the Park and Planning Consultants and Planners.

Mover: Councilman Bryan Knedler

Second: Councilwoman Tracy Loh

Public Comment - Councilman Bridgeman from Bladensburg: I am curious as to what councilman Christopherson’s concerns were about the “flipping” and what problem he was trying to alleviate.

Councilman Jesse Christopherson (response): There’s some feeling among the public and the council that some of the standards that have been discussed would penalize a stereotypical home owner. We don’t want to turn Mount Rainier into a home owners association, but I don’t mind putting more standards on “flippers” or someone who is just buying a home to resale it.

Councilwoman Tracy Loh: Suggests deleting the limitation paragraph.

Consensus: Councilmembers Tracy Loh, Jesse Christopherson, Bryan Knedler, Shivali Shah

Public Comment - Bruce from 31st Street, 4500 Block: If you hold everyone to the same standards you're not discriminating against anyone which is where we started to begin with and what we would really like to see happen.

Public Comment - Councilman Bridgeman from Bladensburg: Elongating certain behaviors can control the behavior of "flippers."

Councilman Bryan Knedler: If we have the standards apply then we will hopefully get investors who want to come and help our community.

Mayor Miles motion to approve document with exception of 2nd to last paragraph
In Favor: Councilmembers Tracy Loh, Jesse Christopherson, Bryan Knedler, Shivali Shah

Organizational Committee Assessment/Reading of Ordinance 3-2015 (2nd Reading) – Councilman Bryan Knedler

"Authorizing \$45,000.00 from reserves in the fiscal year 2016 year budget for a contract with the Novak Consultant Group for executive recruitment for the position of City Manager, and for an organizational assessment of the city of Mount Rainier."

Mover: Councilman Bryan Knedler

Second: Councilwoman Tracy Loh

Ayes: Councilmembers Tracy Loh, Jesse Christopherson, Bryan Knedler, Shivali Shah

Announcements

Councilwoman Tracy Loh: I've organized a focus group with the Maryland National Capital Parks and Planning Commissions' staff who is overseeing the

Prince George's County zoning rewrite. That focus group will be meeting in City Hall on Monday, December 7, 2015 at 7:00 PM. It is an opportunity to provide input on the zoning rewrite.

Councilwoman Shivali Shah: There are a few new committees forming. One is for Mount Rainier Day which takes place in May, and if you would like to participate we are looking for new ideas. Another committee we are forming is for an Egg Hunt which will take place the weekend after Easter. If you are interested in helping organize that please get in touch with me. And there's also the formation of an Immigrant Communities Outreach committee for the city to see if there are ways in which the city can better serve its immigrant communities. The first meeting will be the 2nd week in January.

Mayor Miles: Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Thanksgiving baskets; a number of churches, individuals, and organizations and one person in particular Mr. Ethan Stone. We made 115 baskets. If you would like to contribute perishable or non-perishable items you can still leave them at my residence for the upcoming Christmas holidays.

Councilwoman Tracy Loh: The Menkiti Group is having a community meeting Thursday, December 3rd starting at 6:00 PM at the Nature Center. It's a meeting to solicit public input about what is happening in the 3300 block of Rhode Island Avenue. Also, Saturday, December 5th from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM is the Mount Rainier Craft Fair at Joe's Movement Emporium. Please support our local, wonderful arts and crafts creators! If you would like to receive super, secret reservations for Bird's Kitchen and Cocktail's soft opening this week send an email to birdkitchen&cocktail@gmail.com.

Rolling Agenda

Interim City Manager Larry Hughes: LGIT reports that their chief litigator who will be doing the briefing is only available next Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday at 6:00 PM.

Mayor Miles moves to schedule the meeting for Wednesday, December 9th at 7:00 PM

Election Procedures and Updates

Added to the Agenda for the next work session in December (3rd Tuesday)

Recycling Project

Review the Green Team’s proposal at the work session

Councilwoman Tracy Loh moves to add the portion of our city code that regulates Rental Licenses to the next work session

Councilwoman Shivali Shah moves to add Mount Rainier Day and Egg Hunt to January work session

Comprehensive Street Sidewalk Survey

Interim City Hall Manager Larry Hughes will send draft

Annual Merit/Bonus Party

Costs \$1,700.00 to be arranged with the police department. Motion called to approve both a holiday bonus and holiday party.

Mover: Councilman Jesse Christopherson
Second: Councilwoman Tracy Loh
Ayes: Councilmembers Tracy Loh, Jesse Christopherson, Shivali Shah
Nos: Councilman Bryan Knedler

RECESS – Mayor Miles

Motion to recess and then move into a closed session

Mover: Councilwoman Tracy Loh
Second: Councilman Jesse Christopherson