



**Minutes of the City of Mount Rainier Maryland
City Council Meeting**

Date: 9-1-2015

Place: One Municipal Place, Mount Rainier

Presiding officer: Mayor Malinda Miles

Councilmember's present: Jesse Christopherson, Bryan Knedler, Tracy Loh,

Councilmember's absent: Shivali Shah

**City Hall Staff: Interim City Manager Larry Hughes, Assistant City Manager Veronica Owens, , Chief Scott,
Economic Development Director Samantha Olatunji, Finance Director Vijay Manjani**

Pledge of Allegiance

Call to order at 7:00 p.m.

Agenda

New Business

Review and Approval of Minutes

Announcements

General Public Comments

Mixed-Use Town Center Business Member Appointment

Council Rules and Procedures

State Highway MOU

Gateway CDC MOU

Arundel Residential Parking

Resolution 15-2015 Bank Loan

Resolution 16-2015 CL-MD-DHCD

Thomas Stone Elementary Safety Resolution

Old Business

Department Updates

Buchanan Street

3200 Rhode Island Avenue

3300 Rhode Island Avenue

Motion to approve the Agenda

Councilwoman Loh

2nd Councilman Knedler

4-0

Motion to approve the minutes and have corrections sent to the City Clerk by close of business on Friday

Councilman Knedler

2nd Councilwoman Loh

4-0

Announcements

Councilwoman Loh

- **The 3rd Annual 7th District 5K** will be held on **October 31st**. It will be a spooky edition. Grown-ups, kids, and babies are invited to participate.

General Public Comment

Ms. Mowatt (29th Street) expresses frustration with the drug problem, unfixed pothole, and stop sign on her street.

MaryLee Howard (4000 31st Street) speaks on behalf of herself and two tree commissioners, Amy Donna and Abe Popkin. They are concerned about the trees that were planted this past spring and their need for water. The weather has been incredibly dry for the last month. Young trees require approximately 25 gallons per week, which is about 1.5 inches of rain each week. They have not been receiving that. The city received \$9,500 worth of trees from the Relief Grant. If the city does not water them, it is basically throwing that money away. Based on her assessment from walking around town, most of these trees are dying or dead. Casey Trees has water alerts for the city to subscribe to.

Mixed-Use Town Center Business Member Appointment

There are two people interested in the appointment, Jessica Lawrence and Chantal Attias. To qualify, the individual must own a property or business within the MUTC zone.

Jessica Lawrence obtained a graduate degree in Real Estate Finance. She worked at a national real estate organization on institutional investments, managing money for Calpurs, Tennessee Teacher's Retirement Fund, and other institutional investors of that caliber. She was working on asset management and development internationally and in the U.S. She also worked at an energy services company and an NGO. She currently consults for the Department of Energy on energy efficiency work that deals directly with cities. She is also a principal of a real estate development company. With her company, she has a project in the MUTC district, which entails four net-zero energy townhomes.

Chantal Attias is the owner of **Theo Management on 34th Street**. She also owns a number of residential properties in the zone.

Motion to recommend Jessica Lawrence to the Parks and Planning Department for appointment to the Mixed-Use Town Center Committee.

Councilwoman Loh

2nd Councilman Knedler

4-0

Council Rules and Procedures –Councilman Knedler

Motion to adopt the proposed Mount Rainier Council Rules and Procedures that is dated August 25, 2015.

Councilman Knedler

2nd Councilwoman Loh

Motion to amend the rules to strike number H, Rules for answering questions on the private listserv

Councilman Knedler

2nd Councilwoman Loh

Withdrawal of motion to adopt the August 25, 2015 Council Rules and Procedures and motion to move it to Work Session

Councilman Knedler

2nd Councilwoman Loh

State Highway MOU– Mayor Malinda Miles

Mayor Miles had some concerns with the amount of money the State Highway was paying the city to take on the MOU. She believes the numbers are too low. So the number has been raised to \$15, 244 a year. That amount includes mowing, sweeping, litter removal, and tree removal. The party responsible for tree removal remains undecided. If it is the city's responsibility, State Highway is willing to increase the amount. However, they are not willing to give the city the cost of living index. Mayor Miles recommends the three-year term as opposed to the five-year term. The \$15, 244 is more than the City has received in previous years. Also included in the MOU are landscaping and the planting of the median. The city will be responsible for its maintenance. The penalty line stating that the city would have to pay a fine if a certain item was not completed has been removed from the agreement. In conclusion, all of the city's requests were included in the MOU.

Gateway CDC MOU- Economic Development Director Samantha Olatunji
(Agenda item was moved to Work Session)

Arundel Residential Parking – Councilwoman Loh

Chief Scott mentions the lack of public parking as an issue throughout Mount Rainier. He and the Mayor have been monitoring the activities on Arundel Road for the past few weeks. He supports residential parking on the south side in front of the houses but not on the aqueduct side.

Councilman Christopherson believes that a fee should be affiliated with this residential parking zone. He does not want residents to feel they own the public parking space in front of their homes. He would like to revise the fees down to \$30.00 for a residential permit and \$10.00 for a visitor's permit. Councilwoman Loh supports this pricing structure for all parking zones.

Mayor Miles is in opposition of the motion. She is not in support of residents reserving certain sides of the street for residential parking. There are other areas in Mount Rainier where the public takes up parking in front of the houses, thereby making residential parking on the street limited.

Motion to establish a residential parking zone on the south side of Arundel Road between 31st Street and 34th Street

Councilwoman Loh

2nd Councilman Christopherson

3-1

Resolution 15-2015 Bank Loan for Police Cars

A resolution allocating the funding for new police cars. The loan is for a three-year term.

Councilwoman Loh

2nd Councilman Knedler

4-0

Resolution 16-2015 CL-MD-DHCD

A resolution approving the submission of the FY2016 Community Legacy Application for funds towards façade and interior improvements of businesses in Mount Rainier

Councilman Knedler
2nd Councilwoman Loh
4-0

Resolution 6-2015 Thomas Stone Elementary Safety Resolution

A resolution establishing that it is the city's policy to provide public safety support through a law enforcement officer to elementary schools in the afternoons when they let out if they are not busy taking care of a call for service. The city will provide student safety assistance equally to both elementary schools.

Councilman Christopherson
2nd Councilwoman Loh
3-1

Chief Scott supports the motion as long as it does not absolutely require the police department to be at both the elementary schools in the afternoon. Generally the police department has a parking enforcement officer and two police officers on average during the day. He cannot put a police officer at a particular post regardless of what it is for and not have anyone available to run calls for service. Currently, the department provides safety support to the schools in afternoons if they are not on a call. Also, he mentions that this is not a Mount Rainier issue. This is a Prince George's County issue because it is a county school.

Councilman Knedler would like to take out the 2nd whereas clause and the clause that implies that the principal of the school can direct the officer. He would also like to make it understood that a law or parking enforcement officer are both authorized to provide this public safety support. Mayor Miles would like to take the word "equally" out. She believes assistance should be provided on an "as needed basis."

The Mayor does not support the resolution. She does not believe a resolution is necessary. A directive to the chief of police would suffice.

Department Reports

City Manager's Report – Larry Hughes

- He welcomes Jessica, the new intern. She will be with the city for a year working on recycling improvement.
- The city has completed a lot of pothole patchwork in the last week. It has used three tons of asphalt and has one more day to go.
- He is working on an environmental impact statement for the CDBG Grant
- Six proposals for the organizational study and city manager search were received

Police Department Report – Chief Michael Scott

- 8.33% Crime increase for the month of August
- 13 Burglaries for August. That is the highest amount since August 2008.
- Down in the total number of crimes for the summer
- 203 arrests have been made so far this year
- **National Night Out** was on **August 4th** in Kaywood Apartments
- **Annual Public Safety Night** will be on **Friday, September 18th, 5:00 pm-9:00 pm**
- C-Safe coordinator, **Donald Bell**, passed away February 2014 as a result of his battle with cancer. **On September 23rd 1:00pm**, there will be a luncheon in his honor. His old office will be formally dedicated in his memory.
- Currently, the police department has 2,000 police videos uploaded to the system. The department averages 13 videos a day. The department can now provide the State's Attorney secure access to videos they need online as opposed to providing cd copies as was previously necessary.

Public Works Report – Mayor Miles

- There was a fire at the recycling station, which has made recycling difficult for the city. There have been some problems with single streaming recycling. Public works is currently working to take care of that.
- The department has been working diligently to get the streets re-patched throughout the city.
- Mayor Miles thanks public works on behalf of residents who are happy that trash bins are not being displaced up the street.
- The department is in the process of reviewing submittals from on-call landscapers to maintain the city's grass. A landscaper will be selected by next week.

Buchanan Street Project – Assistant City Manager Veronica Owens

The contract was awarded to Broughton Construction Company. The city is working on updating the timeline and a follow-up meeting to sign the contract next week. A kick-off meeting with the city's funders, the Department of Natural Resources, and Bio habitat will occur within the next week or two. A month ago, a community meeting was held along with Buchanan Street, Rainier Manor, and the Levy Project to update the community on what will be happening in that same proximity.

Code Enforcement Report – Assistant City Manager Veronica Owens

- There were thirty-eight violations given for grass over ten inches high. Most of those were resolved.
- Worked with Maryland National Capital Park and Planning to get some signage around the pool to stop the illegal parking around the pool
- Looking to turn the former circle deli into a new office for code enforcement
- The department is working with the Neighborhood Design Center to work on some plans to move code enforcement out of the public works trailer into the Starr Potts building, specifically the former circle deli.
- Fifty-three permits were issued in the month of August. Eight were building permits.
- The department is also working with MaryLee Howard on the recertification of the city's Sustainable Maryland designation.

3200 Block Rhode Island Avenue Development Project (Mount Rainier Gateway Project)

Economic Development Director Samantha Olatunji

Project Overview

This project is located on Rhode Island Avenue at the Eastern Avenue border of the City of Mount Rainier. On May 11, 2015, a land development agreement was signed between the City of Mount Rainier and a joint venture development team, which comprised of Street Sense Development Partners, LLC and The Neighborhood Development Company, LLC. The LDA provides for the acquisition of approximately 33,000 sq. ft. of city-owned property in the Mount Rainier Town Center and the development of a mixed-use project. The project will include over 19,600 sq. ft. of retail space, an apartment building with approximately 191 residential units, and a parking garage serving both the residents and the public. The developers are also acquiring approximately 27,000 sq. ft. of property at 3210 to 3220 Rhode Island Avenue, which is currently being used for Thrifty Car Rental and will be incorporated into the mixed-use development project.

Project Milestones

May 25, 2015 - The city received proof of the 5% earnest money, which was placed in an escrow account. It also received a copy of the purchase option agreement, which was made on May 18th, granting the Neighborhood Development Company and Street Sense Development Partners an option to purchase the property known as 3210-3220 Rhode Island Avenue (a.k.a the Thrifty Rental Property, which is owned by Arrow Inc.)

July 16, 2015 – The city received the project schedule, which has an anticipated construction deadline around the 2nd quarter of 2018.

July 2015 – The Economic Development Director and the Acting Director of Public Works, Michael Barnes, have been working with the demolition contractor, American Enterprises. They are also working towards the disconnection of the utilities and asbestos removals on site. Currently, they are waiting for disconnections of the gas

lines. Pepco utilities have been disconnected. The last utility disconnection they are waiting on is Washington Gas. They are following up with Washington Gas this week to see how to expedite the process. Once the process is complete, a date can be set for the groundbreaking ceremony. They project that to occur within the next thirty days.

August 2015 - The developers have submitted an updated conceptual design and an MUTC application. It included a few amendments to the application including removal of impractical units over the parking garage, some changes in the exterior materials and window types, changes in the unit mix and location, and an addition of six urban townhomes on the southwest side of the project.

The **MUTC Design Review Committee** is scheduled to meet **Wednesday, September 9th, at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall** to review the application.

3300 Rhode Island Avenue (a.k.a. the Singer Building)

Economic Development Director Samantha Olatunji

There was a purchase and seal agreement between the Redevelopment Authority for Prince George's County and The Menkiti Group on August 4, 2015. The property will be transferred to the Menkiti group on or about December 31, 2015. There will be a six-month design process following their building permit application approvals. Ms. Olatunji has already started discussions with the Menkiti Group to find creative ways to engage the community in the design process. They are targeting the construction start date for the second quarter of 2016 and have taken a number of steps to move the project forward. In that regard, they have issued a notice to proceed with design activities to Ahmann, LLC, which is an architectural firm in University Park. On August 19th, they conducted a preliminary review meeting with Maryland National Capital Park and Planning. On the week of August 24th, they completed their preliminary site investigations. Currently, they are working with the Gateway CDC to incorporate Art Lives Here signage at their property. In an effort to engage the council, they are tentatively planning to present to the city council around October 6th and to present their design to the MUTC committee around October 14th.

Mayor Miles would like the proposal to come before the council before it goes to the MUTC committee. The Mayor Councilman Knedler and Councilman Christopherson are disappointed that they were not aware of the town home additions to the design. That was not what the council agreed to.

Office of Deni Taveras Announcements

Michael Watson, Chief of Staff for County Councilwoman Deni Taveras

- **Park and Planning Budget Hearings are September 21st and 22nd**
- **The Municipal Breakfast is on September 12th, 9:00 a.m., at Prince George's Plaza Community Center, 6600 Adelphi Road.** He invites all of the elected officials from Mount Rainier to attend.
- **The District 47 Picnic is on September 12th 12:00 p.m., at Brentwood's City Hall Park.** It is hosted by Senator Ramirez, Delegate Tarlau, Delegate Fennell, and County Councilmember Deni Taveras at.
- **On Sunday, September 20th, 2:00pm to 5:00 p.m.** Councilmember Taveras will be hosting a **community get-together** at the **Prince George's African American Museum & Cultural Center** in North Brentwood. Everyone is welcome to come.

Continued General Public Comment

David Miller, President of the Board of Prince George's Swimming Pools, announces a dedication ceremony that will be held on Saturday, September 5th, in honor of Mr. Raymond Bolding. The pool used to be a "White's only" pool until 1974 when Raymond Bolding decided to work with the NAACP to get a lawsuit. A year later, the pool changed its bylaws and ended its policy of only accepting white people. When Mr. Miller discovered this fact, he reached out to Mr. Bolding's family. He and the family decided to dedicate a new shelter in memory of Raymond Bolding. Between fifty and sixty members of his family are attending.

*Anyone interested in attending should notify Mr. Miller so that he may add you to the guest list.

Pastor Devin Stephenson from Servants of Christ Church, announces that on behalf of ACCS, a program will be held on **October 10th, 7:00pm, at the Fire House on Bunker Hill Road.** The dress is casual and **tickets are \$35.** All proceeds will go to a fund for helping residents, especially the elderly who are having problems paying their

utility bills and have no other resources. This program will be run throughout the winter months from October to February.

Motion to adjourn at 9:45 p.m.

Councilwoman Loh

2nd Christopherson

4-0