



Minutes of the City of Mount Rainier Maryland City Council Work Session & Special Meeting

Date: 9-15-2015

Place: One Municipal Place, Mount Rainier

Presiding officer: Mayor Malinda Miles

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

Councilmember's absent:

City Hall Staff: Interim City Manager Larry Hughes, Assistant City Manager Veronica Owens, Economic Development Director Samantha Olatunji, Sergeant Eddie Murphy

Meeting called to order at 7:10 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Agenda

New Business

Joe's Movement Emporium 20th Anniversary Event

Art Works Now Summer Camp

Election Board Committee Report

Applicants for Tree Commission

Council Rules and Regulation

Old Business

Gateway CDC MOU Update

Dr. Gupta's Parking Lot MOU

Mixed- Use Town Center 3200 Rhode Island Avenue

Tree Watering Plan

State Highway MOU

Director of Public Works Position

City Manager Position

Organization Assessment Update

Residential Parking

Review of Rolling Agenda

***Special Meeting-* Gateway CDC MOU, State Highway MOU, Organizational Assessment**

Joe's Movement Emporium 20th Anniversary Event

Brooke Kidd, Co-Founder and Director of Joe's Movement Emporium

Vickie Under, Committee Chair of the 20th Anniversary Block Party

The 20th Anniversary Block Party is a free event. The theme is "Dancing in the Street." There will be a stage, dance floor, and vendors in the Joe's Movement Emporium parking lot. Cake will be served at 4:00 P.M. In between the bands there will be movement classes. An event permit and a diagram indicating the event layout and streets that would need to be blocked off were submitted to the city. Ms. Kidd has also sent information to the Chief and Public Works soliciting feedback on their pending involvement and logistics around this. They would like to close the road at 11:00 am and re-open it at 7:00 p.m. She mentions that this type of event has been done a couple times before and it was discovered that it is unnecessary to block off the parking lot behind ZZ's.

This is a HEAL event. Mayor Miles and Economic Development Director Olatunji discussed the city making a contribution in the form of \$1,000 to Drum Circle. As a sponsor, the city will enjoy a number of benefits, including having its logo added to all the flyers and social media, a vendor table, and a mention at the stage.

Other Upcoming HEAL Events

October 24th – Annual Thriller Dance (Free Admission)

October 31st - Gateway 5K

Art Works Now Summer Camp

Artworks mission is to provide access to high quality and meaningful arts education for the children of the region, particularly those of the Gateway Arts District. Art Works Now was founded in Mount Rainier in 2010 by Barbara Johnson, a native of Mount Rainier. It is her intention to develop a passion for art in the current generations of children in her hometown. She is asking for the council to support the summer camp scholarship program. This year there was an unprecedented demand for financial aid for Artworks summer camps, from \$9,000 in 2014 to over \$32,000 this past summer. Art Works' budget for financial aid scholarships for 2015 summer camps was \$15,000. However, its core values included commitment to never turning anyone away because of an economic hardship. Artworks felt it needed to meet that challenge head on. The summer camp program this year was twelve weeks long and served nearly 350 children. Twenty-three Mount Rainier children participated in multiple week-long camps. So twelve weeks of scholarships were given to four Mount Rainier children, both partial and full scholarships. \$5,000 in scholarships was awarded to children in Mount Rainier.

Art Works has met with leaders of towns and communities that make up the Gateway Arts District and have reached out to Councilmember Deni Taveras as well as several corporate and individual donors to help fill the gap in funding they are experiencing. They have received positive results from each. They are requesting a \$2,000 grant from the City of Mount Rainier.

In the event that Artworks moves from Mount Rainier in 2016, they will provide transportation for Mount Rainier kids to access the programs. Art Works has deep roots in Mount Rainier and plans to keep ties. It currently works with Thomas Stone Elementary and would like to work with Mount Rainier Elementary. Art Works presently visits Thomas Stone Elementary three times a month for three hours. There are 120 kids in the CPAC program. At any given time there are thirty to forty kids in a class. It has never charged

the school, the teachers or the children for its services. The money that Artworks is recouping will go towards supplies for Thomas Stone Elementary and the cost of sending teachers to Thomas Stone.

Councilman Christopherson would like to give Art Works Now the \$2,000 they requested. Councilmembers Shah, Loh, and Knedler would like to see what amounts were given in the past to organizations that met the deadline for funding applications and those that did not. More importantly, they would like to check the balance to see what amount remains. A potential vote will occur at the next city council meeting on October 6th.

Applicants for the Tree Commission

There are two applicants. One was unable to attend due to an emergency.

Brian Reisz (31st and Taylor Street) has been a resident of Mount Rainier for a year and a half. He bought his home almost two years ago. Part of the reason he moved to Mount Rainier was because of the trees. He can offer his time and energy to the trees of Mount Rainier.

Election Board Committee Report

Recommendations

- Open up the timeline in which candidacy applications can be submitted
- Have really clear instructions on what deadlines and timelines entail.
- Outline a more specific procedure that entails details. The procedures are vague in terms of order of processes.
- The website should include a link with all the information and forms necessary for understanding and completing the application process correctly.
- Have a retreat for the committee.
- The committee needs to meet with the City Attorney in the beginning of the process. This meeting could be part of the retreat.
- Have the committee meet with the city council to discuss ways to improve the election process
- Have a better forum for communication so that all information comes to a central location and is formally discussed. They suggest having a city email as a formal means of contacting and sending information to the committee.
- The city council should create ethics guidelines regarding the election process and communication between the council and the election committee.
- Have a forum for potential applicants to ask questions

The committee will serve a two-term. It will start monthly meetings in October at Mount Rainier City Hall. Members will come up with a working plan to address the current inconsistencies in procedures and provide formal recommendations to the city council. The goal is to provide a template for the next election board committee to refer to so that they will not run into the same issues.

Councilwoman Shah advises the committee to think about creating a budget for the next election and ways the committee can better reach out to the broader community for future applicants to the committee.

Announcements

City of Mount Rainier Police Department - Sergeant Murphy

- Public Safety Night will be Friday, September 18th, from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Architectural Conservation Overlay Zone (ACOZ) Update – Councilman Knedler

The DRB met with Zunelda and the consultants. The next step is to meet with the consultants to have them answer some questions. The county is now proposing to change the architectural conservation overlay zone into a neighborhood conservation overlay zone. This is a surprise to the council because they have been working on the architectural overlay zone for many years and the county did not inform the council. The council will see the new proposal in October. Councilman Knedler would like to know if this change affects the Mixed-Use Town Center Zone and the Gateway Arts District? Mayor Miles would like the council to have some input in the process to protect some of Mount Rainier's housing stock.

Mary Connelly (4200 32nd Street) submitted a list of questions to the Mayor and Council. She is not fully opposed to the goals of having a pretty look to the city. However, she feels like the proposal is a solution in search of a problem. She believes a lot of her neighbors feel the same way.

Francis Marques (4200 30th Street) recounts her feelings at the ACOZ meeting of July 15, 2015. She is concerned about the lack of communication to residents about the process of ACOZ. She believes it is the responsibility of the leaders of the city to inform residents about things that will impact them, whether or not they choose to become involved. She then lists some suggestions for the council to consider when communicating with residents in the future about upcoming events and procedures.

Rick Ruggles (4200 32nd Street) will forward his opinions to the council in writing.

Gateway CDC MOU

Anthony Lee (3000 Bunker Hill Road) and Anthony Henderson (Chief Administrative Officer of Gateway CDC and resident of Mount Rainier) come before the council to answer questions regarding the Gateway CDC MOU.

The Former City Manager Jeannelle Wallace thought it would be good to make better use of the relationship between the city and the Gateway CDC and also create a more connected structure where Gateway CDC would show up and regularly report out on its activities related to things that are happening in Mount Rainier that they are involved in. The MOU clarifies the Gateway CDC's willingness to share information, discuss joint fundraising, update one another on projects that may overlap between Gateway CDC's and Mount Rainier's scopes, to work collaboratively, and regularly report on its activities that relate to Mount Rainier.

State Highway MOU – Mayor Miles

Councilman Christopherson would like the city to ask SHA to replace the plants they have on their landscaping plan with native plants. Most of the plants in the plan are not. Mayor Miles states that the MOU deals with the maintenance and not the planting. Assistant City Manager Veronica Owens informs the council that the SHA landscaping plan is still a draft so the council may make changes to it.

Council Rules and Regulations – Councilman Knedler

Councilman Christopherson would like to know what the consequences will be for violating the rules and regulations. Councilwoman Loh suggests pulling the councilmember aside to privately address the issue. If that does not work, the council should publicly vote to censure the councilmember in violation. Councilwoman Shah believes that a nudge to the person in question is all that is necessary. The rules are to codify procedures so that the wheel does not have to be reinvented every time a topic comes up. Councilman Knedler mentions that the rules and regulations are brought up in the first meetings after an election to notify the new members of the rules they are expected to follow. That is why the council must agree on them before moving forward.

The council agrees that the deadline for agenda and staff reports will be the Friday before the next meeting. In person staff reports will be optional unless the council requests that staff member to be present. Requests for staff will go through the City Manager.

Dr. Gupta's Parking Lot MOU – City Manager Larry Hughes

Interim City Manager Larry Hughes and Finance Director Vijay Manjani met with Dr. Gupta two weeks ago. They are drafting up an MOU for city hall parking on any day except Monday and Wednesday. In an exchange for free parking, the city will continue to mow the grass and shovel the snow on Dr. Gupta's lot as it has done in the past. Mr. Hughes states that signage will have to be made and lines will have to be painted to direct city hall parking.

Councilman Knedler would like to know who will be allowed to park there. Councilwoman Loh does not support this MOU. She does not believe it is the council's obligation to provide additional free parking downtown. The city is about to build a public parking garage. The council agrees that it is unnecessary and that the city should stop tending to the grass and snow on Dr. Gupta's lot.

Economic Development Director Samantha Olatunji informs the council that new businesses have to fulfill a parking requirement to obtain their Use and Occupancy License. She recently helped the new business Bird Kitchen and Cocktails to go through this process. Due to the parking requirement it was very challenging. She urges the council to consider the parking requirement for future businesses when making parking decisions.

MUTC 3200 Rhode Island Avenue – Economic Development Director Samantha Olatunji

The MUTC committee met on September 9th to review a MUTC application for the second revised development plan of the 3200 Block of Rhode Island Avenue Project, which was submitted by Streetsense and The Neighborhood Development Corporation for properties located on Eastern Avenue and Rhode Island Avenue. Ms. Olatunji provided the council with a copy of the MUTC minutes, a copy of the MUTC's schematic design study, and a copy of the stamped and approved MUTC application by the Design Review Committee.

The MUTC committee voted 3-1. They voted to approve the application with the following conditions:

- Architectural modifications to the design plan on Building II

- A narrative and justification for side scape elements on the site to insure they are in compliance with the MUTC design plan
- Restriction of times for loading on the residential side of the property, which is at the rear of the building. In the meeting, the applicant decided to move the loading dock to rear of the building to keep the seamless and beautiful façade.
- A green wall extension above the proposed parking garage
- A narrative for sustainability features

The applicant is expected to make revisions for the following conditions and come back before the council in October for final approval as part of the land development agreement. Councilwoman Loh would describe the town homes mentioned before more accurately as split-level condos with garden street level entrances. These are six units that are wholly contained in the envelope of the previous building design.

SHA Landscape Planting – Assistant City Manager Veronica Owens

The city was able to get more items added to the last plan. For instance, now they are landscaping all of the areas around the circle and even some inside the circle. This is a draft and SHA has a list on their website of all the plants that they can plant. In the plan, around the circle and in the median, the city picked a lot of grasses which will be easier to maintain than what is currently there.

The council would like to refer the plant selection to the Green Team and have them report back to the Assistant City Manager.

Director of Public Works Position – Interim City Manager

Only three resumes were received, which is not adequate for examination. The city will advertise it for a second time. The City Manager will also contact the Maryland Municipal League (MML) to find out what the salary range is for a Public Works Director position in municipalities of comparable size.

City Manager Search & Organizational Assessment Consultants – Interim City Manager

The committee met last night and narrowed the consultants down to three. They will be interviewed on October 16th.

Residential Parking - Councilwoman Loh

At the next meeting, Councilwoman Loh will be introducing an ordinance to change the pricing structure of the City of Mount Rainier’s residential parking permits. Currently residential parking permits are \$50 for each resident vehicle and \$20 for each guest vehicle. Councilman Christopherson researched and discovered that in D.C. residential parking permits are only \$35 and, in Hyattsville, they are only \$10.

Councilwoman Loh would like to limit residential parking permits to vehicles that are registered to that address in the State of Maryland. With the exception of students and military, people should be asked to provide proof of registration. She believes each house should be limited to two resident vehicle permits (\$20 each) and one free guest vehicle permit. DC has one free guest permit as well.

Councilwoman Shah supports the limit of two resident permits for the Arundel Road residential parking zone only because of the limitation of street space within the zone. In general, she does not support the limit of two because many households in Mount Rainier have extended families that require more than two vehicles. She will consider this in making decisions on future residential zones.

Councilwoman Loh will look into policies regarding lease cars to incorporate into the ordinance being proposed.

Review of Rolling Agenda

Mayor Miles would like to put the 31st Street Park on the rolling agenda and would like Councilwoman Shah to handle it.

Councilwoman Loh requests for the rolling agenda to be a shared document so that edits and revisions do not have to circulate through emails. Councilwoman Shah met with Andy Lin, the city's IT guy, regarding file sharing. Finance Director Manjani is expected to follow-up on the matter.

Motion to adjourn the Work Session and move into the special meeting

Councilwoman Loh

2nd Councilman Christopherson

3-0 (Councilman Knedler not present)

Motion to approve the Gateway CDC MOU

Gateway CDC staff and Mount Rainier City Staff will meet regularly to exchange information on current activities in the Mount Rainier jurisdiction. Gateway CDC staff will report to the council quarterly.

Councilman Christopherson

2nd Councilwoman Loh

3-0 (Councilman Knedler not present)

Motion to adopt the State Highway MOU

Councilwoman Loh

2nd Councilwoman Shah

4-0

Motion to adjourn at 10:54p.m.

Councilman Knedler

2nd Councilwoman Loh

4-0