



Minutes of the City of Mount Rainier Maryland City Council Meeting

Date: 10-6-2015

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: None

City Hall Staff: Interim City Manager Larry Hughes, Economic Development Director Samantha Olatunji,

Pledge of Allegiance

Call to order at 7:00 p.m.

Agenda

New Business

Parking Zone Fees (1st Reading)

Announcements

Old Business

Streetsense- Rhode Island Development Project

Public Comment

Council Rules

Artworks Summer Camp

Streetsense- Rhode Island Development Project

Mr. Guy Silverman, President of Streetsense, updates the council on the Streetsense meeting with the MUTC Committee. Streetsense had a meeting with the MUTC on September 9th. The MUTC Committee provided approval with conditions that Streetsense needed to address. A list was sent out in a memo dated September 12th, which outlined the conditions that the MUTC committee wanted to see. With an exception of a few items, all of the items were addressed. Streetsense plans to come up with lighting, fencing, furniture plans with regard to the streetscape at a later time so that they can approach those decisions more holistically and come back before the committee for approval.

Mr. Adrian Washington, CEO of National Development Company, updates the council on where the project is on the schedule and what changes have been made to the timeline:

Finalized the Land Development Agreement – Occurred May 11, 2015

MUTC Approval of Design Updates – Occurred September 15, 2015

Demolition will start on October 13, 2015

Approval of the TIFF is anticipated to take a month longer.

Preliminary Plan of Subdivision may take longer as well. The anticipated deadline is mid-March 2016.

Permit Design Documents have been pushed two months back to July 31, 2016.

Permits are expected to be received by August 28, 2016.
The Ground- Breaking Ceremony will be closer to October 3, 2016

General Public Comment

Mixed-Use Town Center Representatives

Mr. Jack Baker, Architect member of the MUTC Committee. He has been working with this project for the last two to three years and has been a resident of Mount Rainier for eight years. He speaks as an individual and not as a representative of the entire committee. The committees' goal was for this project to make a good contribution to the Mount Rainier community. He believes it will do that.

“The lighting package, the furniture...I agree that for a project of this size it would not be atypical for those to be done at a later date as things go along. That said, I did have a few design comments but those as was stated were offered as criticism in that the committee did give their approval. This was a suggestion and not a requirement for approval. I would take a slight exception on the brick issue that was mentioned...Hardy panel or cement fiber board. It is a cheaper material. Hopefully, it is used higher up and you would use the more expensive materials closer. It breaks up the reading of the building. I think ideally we would like to see this as one big mass on the corner of a grand industrial loft type building. I think it loses a little bit of strength and power in the composition by bringing that hardy panel down there. So as a design recommendation, I would strongly encourage them to do that. And again, that was not a requirement of the committee. I will take a moment to comment on the cost. I think we are talking about a 1,000 sq ft of brick in all, a cost delta over what is currently there in the hardy panel. This is my ballpark estimation. I certainly think it is much closer to \$10,000 or \$15,000 than it would be to \$70,000. I would say there are more areas on the back of the building for instance that materials could be substituted and even going into a cementitious-based, EIFS, Exterior insulated Foam System. It is not a great material close to the ground. It could get beat up...I would say this is an important enough space. I would do the brick here and the trade-off somewhere else.”

Mr. Tony Lee (3000 Block Bunker Hill Road): I think Jack gave a really concise view from a design standpoint. But we pretty much, in our comments to Streetsense from our meeting, gave them all the criteria we wanted them at least to meet and I think they have done an adequate job in doing so.

Councilman Christopherson: Could you please put brick instead of cement board in the areas where Jack was indicating?

Mr. Guy Silverman, President of Streetsense: We will further look at it...The council knows when we talked about the gap financing and where this project is, we are battling. This is not we are trying to eat more profit out of this. We are trying to get this thing financed. We need to bring it to market a viable project. I mean it. We mean it. Hopefully, MUTC recognizes that we are more than happy to reach out and set a meeting or a phone call to go over a few things and see if we can bridge it somehow...we are open-minded. I would be insincere and not truthful if I said sure we will go ahead and do it.

Councilwoman Loh solicits Streetsense's and NDC's thoughts on their process for procuring public art for the project.

Mr. Guy Silverman informs the council that art will be incorporated on the prominent facades, in the building name, the sidewalk area, and the signage of the building. There will be a time to think about it. It is in the top 10% of non-heavy lifting for the project because the art community is in Mount Rainier. So they do not have to go looking for it.

Nicole Demori (34th Street) I think this project is way too important, in terms of the density it brings to the town, the tax basis that it introduces to the town, that “if” should not be a word associated with this project. I think it is way too critical for that. We have a phrase at my job... that a lot of people don't do anything because they do not have the perfect thing to do. I think we really need to avoid stalling things because maybe things are not perfect. I think overall the benefit this thing will bring to the town is way too important to miss any type of opportunity.

Anne Lecur: I just want to offer two pieces of advice on how to integrate public art planning. One is the first time you hit that major design challenge that is unaffordable but still necessary, that is a great time to introduce an artist or design artist into a process to figure out if something is just outside our perception of what the possibilities are. And I just want to emphasize sort-of on behalf of my colleagues in the arts community, is we really want to be a part of fabrication. So we have tons of fantastic fabricators. Often they can deliver an outcome that is also beyond the imagination. So when we get to that stage to be sure to ask our community first what they have the capability to fabricate to make sure we do not shoot low for what is possible.

Motion to approve the plan as presented by Streetsense and Neighborhood Development Company.

Councilwoman Loh

2nd Councilman Christopherson

4-0

Osha (2800 Block Upshur Street): My main concern is in my backyard, my neighbor has very age old trees. In increments they are coming and falling. And he is not cooperative. And my insurance, I have to first meet the deductible \$1,000. So I need to know the city rules and how the tree commission or city can help me. **It is serious** because my backyard fence broke and he never even looked. This is the situation. My next thing is sidewalk. It is in bad condition. I tried to patch it with cement. It is winter is going to come. So for that I heard if there are any slips or falls or any accident, one has to pay.

Mayor Miles: Not on a city sidewalk. If it is on the public sidewalk, it is a public hazard that the city needs to address.

Mayor Miles and Public Works Director, Mike Barnes will come out and take a look at the sidewalk.

Councilman Knedler: The same situation has occurred a couple of times in the last few weeks. I believe Mr. Hughes is aware of the code section that if a tree is a nuisance or dangerous then the city can order them to take it down actually. We would have to have the city arborist go and evaluate it.

Tree Commission Resolution – Councilman Knedler

Resolution appointing Bryan Reese and Amy Donor to the Tree Commission for two-year terms

Councilman Knedler

2nd Councilwoman Shah

4-0

Parking Zone Fees (1st Reading) – Councilwoman Loh

The purpose of this ordinance is to amend the existing Section 13-122 of the Mount Rainier City Code in Chapter 13, which covers residential parking permits. The current code defines the residential parking permit program, how the zones can be established, and then once they are established, how they can be administered. The changes that are proposed affect how the zones are administered.

While the City's current ordinance restricts each dwelling unit to a total of four residential parking permits and two visitor permits, the ordinance proposes to reduce the total of residential parking permits to two and visitor parking permits to one per dwelling unit. The ordinance also restricts residential parking permits to the people who live in the block of the residential parking zone and vehicles registered to the owner at the address in the block. Parking permits cannot be received if you have traffic citations from the city that are unpaid or vehicle tags are outdated. The following vehicles will be exempt from the parking vehicle program: vehicles that are owned by active duty personnel with legal residence other than Maryland, authorized emergency vehicles, motor vehicles owned or operated under contract to state or local government agencies and being used in the course of official government business, and motor vehicles owned and operated under contract to utility when used for utility business. The City

Manager may grant exemptions to all the requirements of this section based on a demonstration of unusual, hard or exigent circumstances at their discretion.

Councilwoman Shah does not support the restriction to two vehicles per dwelling. It does not cover people who are boarders within the same dwelling unit or people who are living in alternative family structures. She believes three permits are reasonable. In her personal experience, it is impractical to have more than one car parked in the driveway. Also, it tends to be that lower income families are the ones that do not have driveways.

Council Rules- Councilman Knedler

Personal Correspondence

Councilman Christopherson suggests broadening the disclaimer requirements to correspondence on city letter head or from city staff or officials regarding opinions on topics.

Motion to adopt the council rules and procedures as amended several times.

Councilman Knedler

2nd Councilwoman Shah

3-2

Artworks Summer Camp

Barbara Johnson, Founder and Director of Artworks Now requests \$2,000 to cover the 2015 summer camp expenses.

Councilwoman Shah does not support funding the \$2,000 because she believes the process is not fair to all the organizations involved. She is comfortable with providing them with \$750.

Motion to approve \$1,500 for Artwork's Summer Camp

Councilman Christopherson

2nd Councilman Knedler

4-0

Joe's Movement Emporium Block Party

Motion to appropriate \$1,000 from the "Other Community Events" line item for the Joe's Movement Emporium Block Party

Councilman Christopherson

2nd Councilwoman Shah

3-1

Councilwoman Loh does not support the motion. She is in favor of appropriating \$500.

Motion to table the Minutes

Councilwoman Loh

2nd Councilwoman Shah

4-0

Announcements

Councilwoman Loh

- **5K Fun Run on Halloween, Saturday, October 31st.** It will start at 9:30am from Joe's Movement Emporium and will follow a route through Mount Rainier and Brentwood. Everyone is encouraged to wear costumes. Prizes will be awarded to the "Best Costume," "Best Kid Costume," and "Best Dog Costume." Register through Tracyloh.org/5k.

Councilwoman Shah

- There will be a **Kids Halloween Parade** following the 5K. It will start around 11 am at Joe's Movement Emporium. If you have any questions, contact Councilwoman Shah at Shivali@shivalishah.com.

Mayor Miles

- **The Annual Halloween Party for October 31st will take place at 5:30pm or dark**
- **Veterans Day Program will be on November 7th at City Hall**
- **Councilwoman Deni Taveras' Office is having a community program** at the community college, 6525 Belcrest Road, on **October 14th**. There will be six keynote speakers from the Whitehouse. It is Hispanic Heritage Day so there will be lots of food.
- **1st Senior Fall Fling on October 29th** at Joe's Movement Emporium hosted by Councilwoman Taveras. It will be from 11:30-1:30pm. She is looking for residents that do not live in Rainier Manor.
- **CB-65 Paid Sick Leave Hearing will be on October 13th**
- **Meeting on Bike Infrastructure** was held this past month by ATHA. They will be asking for an MOU from Mount Rainier, Brentwood, and North Brentwood to support the infrastructure.
- Tonight there is a **meeting in Hyattsville sponsored by Councilwoman Deni Taveras** and ATHA on art work. They are going to look at six different art pieces they are going to put in the Gateway Arts District to help brand it. Assistant City Manager Veronica Owens and Economic Development Director Samantha Olatunji attended.
- **September 24th, the Mayor did an ice cream social at Mount Rainier Elementary**
- She has heard from Ms. Ellis at Thomas Stone Elementary. She would like to know if the Mayor and Council will encourage the 3rd grade to visit City Hall again the next year.

Interim City Manager Larry Hughes

- **The Green Street Contract is signed**
- **Mount Rainier Gateway Demolition will occur on October 13th 2015.**
- There will be a **mini-ground breaking ceremony at 3:00pm on October 14th 2015.**

Motion to adjourn at 9:27pm

Councilman Christopherson

2nd Councilwoman Shah

3-0