Minutes of the City of Mount Rainier Maryland
City Council Meeting

Date: 6-3-2014
Place: One Municipal Place, Mount Rainier
Presiding officer: Mayor Malinda Miles
Councilmember's present: Ivy Thompson, Jesse Christopherson, Jimmy Tarlau
Councilmember's absent: Brent Bolin
City Hall Staff: City Manager Jeannelle Wallace, Chief Scott, Public Works Director Luther Smith, City Clerk Janis Lomax

Meeting called to order at 7:25 pm
Pledge of Allegiance

Agenda
Review and Approval of Agenda
Review and Approval of Minutes
Announcements
Official Reports
General Public Comment

New Business
Council Vote on Formal Recess Schedule
MOU with the Town of Bladensburg for Mount Rainier MEA grant recipient
Resolution 7-2014

Old Business
Ordinance 3-2014 Amending Chapter 3 Building Code, Chapter 7 Licenses and Permits, and Chapter 11 Refuse Collection of the Mount Rainier Code to increase certain fees . (2nd Reading and vote)

Motion to Move the Agenda
Councilman Tarlau
2nd Councilwoman Thompson
4-0

Motion to Approve the Minutes with any changes to be sent to the City Clerk by Close of Business on Friday
Councilwoman Thompson
2nd Councilman Tarlau
4-0

Announcements

Ward I

Councilman Tarlau

- Primary Day is June 24th at the Mount Rainier Elementary School from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Early voting is from June 12th thru June 19th. The two closest locations are in College Park and the Learning Center in Landover.

Councilman Christopherson

- The PTO is just gaining strength. If you have or are going to have a child at Thomas Stone Elementary, please **join the PTO**. Forms are available in the school office. PTO membership is $5.
- **Thomas Stone needs volunteers**, including mentor volunteers for life coaching and helping with homework from 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. Please contact 301-985- 1890 if interested. You do not have to be a parent of a child at that school to participate. Long-time volunteering requires fingerprinting.
- **Community Services Event on July 12th at Thomas Stone Elementary Auditorium.** Everyone is welcome. Attorneys and Social Services representatives will be there to help provide resources and guidance for filling out immigration paperwork, applying to county or state services, or talking to legal aide attorneys. People interested in volunteering at this event can contact Councilman Christopherson through the number posted on the website.

Ward II

Councilwoman Thompson

- Adds to Councilman Christopherson's call to support the schools, including Mount Rainier Elementary.
- **The Summer Reading Program kicked-off on June 1st**. Sign- up at the Mount Rainier Library or online. Children as young as three and adults of any age can sign up.

Mayor Miles

- **Mount Rainier Day**-- She has heard across the county about what an outstanding job Mount Rainier did on Mount Rainier Day. She mentions to the Chief that people have spoken of the wonderful performance the Army Drill team gave. Thank You messages have gone out to all the event's sponsors and one will go out to the Army Drill Team.
- **The Street Corner Supper** was an awesome event. It was well-attended, the musicians were fantastic, the networking was great.
- The **opening up of the Price Right** on Queens Chapel Road. Management is looking to partner with the Mayor and Council. They looking forward to coming to introducing themselves, letting everyone know that they are here to serve, hearing from everyone. Council members and City Staff received $5 certificates to the store. To Reverend Bryan Adams, The store is prepared to make a substantial contribution to the food Pantry. The President of the store, Mr. Neil Duffy, said that however he can partner with the Food Pantry, he looks forward to doing that, and if you

are ever in the store, just look for him. If there is ever any issue you in the store, residents are directed to Mr. Neil Duffy or Mr. Nel Briton .

- **Street Paving**- The Mayor has been in touch with WSSC, Delegate Summers. We have had assurances from Jerry Johnson, the CEO of WSSC, that we are going to get on top of this and get it done. Tonight, the Mayor will work with City Manager Wallace to get a meeting set up with all of the players again to get some timelines for when the work will be done.
- **Last Tuesday, She met with the Gateway CDC**. One of the residents met with the three different development groups. Based on his vetting, the Gateway CDC has been asked to be the non-profit organization to partner with the developer. A decision has not yet been made.
- **The Menkiti Group will be meeting with the Mayor at City Hall on Thursday at 10:00 a.m**. to provide more information regarding development. All members of the council are invited to attend and participate.
- **Last Friday, the Mayor signed the contract for the $5,000 for the Senior Program**. One outing has already been scheduled for June 7th at the St. John's Episcopal Church at 34th and Rainier Avenue at 9:30 a.m. There will be a tour around the city and a lunch on the *Spirit of Washington*. It is for seniors 62 and over. All of those who are interested please call City Hall. (cannot be totally limited to Mount Rainier but it is for Mount Rainier Seniors. The money must be spent by June 30th or at least have it appropriated. .
- She has met with a number of seniors at the different facilities and is trying to coordinate with all of the mangers from the apartments so they are on the same page as far as the streets in their area, snow removal, and some of the road work that needs to be done.
- **She spoke with Pastor Martinez** about some of the issues and concerns that have been articulated to him within the community. She will meet with him and some other ministers in a formal meeting over the next couple of weeks.
- **The Maryland Municipal League will be kicking off June 8th in Ocean City**. Mount Rainier will be **awarded for our Green Program Effort as well as for being a Banner City**. The City has only missed being a banner city only once out of eleven years. She thanks Councilman Christopherson, City Manager Wallace, and City Clerk Lomax.

City Manager's Report- Ms. Jeannelle Wallace

- The City will be receiving an **"Award of Influence"** from the Maryland Municipal League this year on June 8th. The Public Works Director, Mr. Smith, will be involved in the parade of flags. This year, the awarding will be aired on the cable network.
- **The City received an award letter for a grant that the City Manager submitted**. The City will not release information regarding the organization or the amount until the organization has a press release in Baltimore on June 18th.
- **She attended mandatory training that was held through the Community Legacy Neighborhood Revitalization Program**. That grant is due July 15th. The City will be submitting another Community Legacy Award Application for improving some of our businesses in our business district.
- She had meetings with INET, issued a lot of permits this year, we have issues with utilities on our street repairs. She notify the department of environmental resources about the erosion,

sinking issues that are currently occurring on 29th Street and 31st Street to get some expertise as to what needs to be done there.

- She received a notification today from the City Planner, Zenelder Rodriguez, from the Maryland National Park and Planning Commission about the architectural conservation Overlay Zone, the purpose of which is to protect and preserve the historical character of the homes in the city. She wants to set up a meeting with the City Manager and the Design and Review Board MUTC Committee members.
- There are two grants for the weatherization. One grant is for upgrading the lighting in City Hall. The city Manager had to send a report for that. That is not complete because the contractor is waiting on an order for the lights to do in the stairwell. All of the other upgrades have been completed so far. There are also timers in the restrooms and motion sensors in the offices. The other MEA award is through the collaboration of fifteen municipalities with the Town of Bladensburg at the head. There is a Memorandum of Understanding which the Council is supposed to pass tonight, which talks about that collaboration. It is similar to the MOU that the city signed with the municipalities in 2013.
- The Council passed the Fiscal Year Budget and that is on the website.

Public Works- Luther Smith

- Reminds residents that yard waste will no longer be accepted in plastic bags. Yard waste can be put in the trash bin or paper bags.
- Public Works has started the striping at the corner of Buchannan and Chillum Road.

Councilman Christopherson: Is Richardson Park scheduled to be mulched soon?

Mr. Smith: I am in the process to find the right mulch. For the park, you cannot just put any mulch. It needs to stay rooted and not come up. Also, there is a tree branch that fell on the park. Mike and I are in the process of cutting it up. We have been working on the potholes. This last Saturday, we had Charles and Ms. Sandy in doing potholes.

Mayor Miles: When are we going to electronics recycling again?

Mr. Smith: We should have it one Saturday this month. If you have a TV you are trying to get rid of and cannot make your way down to Public Works, give Public Works a call instead of setting it outside. We do not want it on the street and we cannot put it in the trash.

Mayor Miles: What are people doing with their batteries? What should we be doing?

Mr. Smith: I will find out and get back to you.

Police Department- Chief Scott

- The Army Drill Team enjoyed participating in Mount Rainier Day. They said to call if the City wanted them to attend its Christmas Party.
- From January to May, crime is down 15.45% from where the city was a year ago. There is also a very large decrease in violent crimes in the City, including aggravated assault and robberies. That is down 60% from where it was last year. The only problem the Police Department is still having

in its crimes statistics is motor vehicle theft. That is true across District 1, even though they are not as high as we are.

- On October 1st, new speed camera laws will take effect.
    - In the State of Maryland, citations must be signed by a law enforcement officer. We have always done that in Mount Rainier. Our Administrative Sergeant has always signed his citations. But in some areas, they have civilian contractors that did that.
    - Contractors can no longer charge per citation like they currently due. The city will be discussing its contract with its provider.
    - A contractor must pay damages if more than 5% of the tickets are issued erroneously. This is not an issue because the camera vendor does not issue any citation without our authority. It is our responsibility as law enforcement to go through each photograph that the vendor sends us to determine whether or not a citation is warranted.
    - In order to operate a speed camera, the speed limit on the road way must be at least 20 miles per hour, not 15. The Chief's understanding is that before October, that speed limit will be changed to 20.
    - Before activating a speed camera, the local jurisdiction must ensure that each assigned designated school zone is near a sign warning of its use. In other words, when you put up a 20 mile and over speed limit, it has to say "School Zone" and "Photo Enforced."

Councilman Tarlau: My understanding is that something is close to another jurisdiction, the other jurisdiction must have approval of that.

Chief Scott: If there is a provision in the law, I am not aware of that provision.

Mayor Miles: According to a delegate, if one jurisdiction does not have a school in theirs and the school is in the other jurisdiction, before they can put up a speed camera, a discussion must be had. Yet we have not got an official ruling on any of that. So things are still up in the air Mr. Tarlau.

- The jurisdiction using speed cameras must designate an employee to act as sort of xxx omnibusfor people who complain about citations.

Chief Scott: If I have to designate someone to do that all day, it must be a police officer because we probably get twenty inquiries a day about citations and so forth.

Mayor Miles: But that designation does not say that that person must be a police officer. It says it must be an employee that is assigned the responsibility of hearing the complaint, reviewing the complaint, and having the authority to wave or disallow.

Chief Scott: Here is my concern. If only a police officer can issue a ticket. Why can some non-police officer void a ticket.

Mayor Miles: I hear what you are saying but I am saying there is a distinction between those two requirements.

- If a designated employee does not receive notice of a violation because of administrative error, then the employee can either rescind the citation or void it.

Chief Scott: When we had the camera on Rhode Island Avenue, we always had at least a two-step review on each violation that was sent to us from our contractor. The evening shift, night clerk reviewed them for obvious errors and then the day work Sergeant always reviewed them for final authority on whether or not to issue a citation.

Chief Scott updated everyone on the meeting he had with Rainier Manor where Rainier Manor indicated that it was interested in having an agency agreement. This agreement would allow officers to act on their behalf in terms of criminal activity so that their management would not have to come to court to testify. It would allow the City to ban people for trespassing and other violations without management approval. Chief Scott spoke with the manager, Ms. Jefferson, and sent her the Sample Agency Agreement. The Police Department has a similar agreement with other businesses in the city.

The night shift clerk left employment on May 12th. Currently, an officer on night duty is filling in on the 12-4am shift. In addition, that officer is responsible to go to certain trainings that are mandated by the state and training with the National Women and Law Enforcement Association. When the office is not open, the notice will be posted.

Chief Scott: National Night Out will be on the last Friday in September.

No General Public Comments

New Business

Motion for the Council to go into recess at the end of June 30th for the months of July and August.
Councilman Tarlau
2nd Councilman Bolin (via phone)
4-0

National Night Out
The traditional night out walk with the public safety emphasis will occur on National Night Out and there will also be a Public Safety Night on September 26th, 2014.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Town of Bladensburg and the City of Mount Rainier for the MEA Grant.

In December 2013, the City adopted a resolution 19-2013 which engaged the City in a collaboration agreement for the purposes of grant funding from Maryland Energy Administration and the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development through the Community Legacy Program. Collaboration exists among several Prince George's County Municipalities.

The municipal collaboration recognizes that there is a significant need for reinvestment and revitalization of communities in the collaboration and also recognizes the needs of other municipalities located in Prince George's County. This MOU by the request of this resolution authorizes the city to partner with the Prince George's County Municipal Corporation.

The Department of Housing and Community Development, Community Legacy awarded $150,000 towards this project for Prince George's County Municipal Healthy Homes Project and the Maryland Energy Administration awarded another $600,000 for a total committed effort of $750,000. The project is

for rehabilitation for low and moderate-income homeowners, identified through energy ordinance to ensure health and safety, energy efficiency, and sustainability.
Councilwoman Thompson
2nd Councilman Christopherson
4-0

Resolution 7-2014 Community Legacy Grant
This is similar to the resolution the council adopted last month authorizing the grant award to the Redevelopment Authority for the purchase of the Singer Building and the other properties on Rhode Island Avenue. Each year when any entity applies for funds through the Community Legacy Program, the local jurisdiction has to adopt a resolution, which has to be submitted in conjunction with the application. The report is due July 15th. This resolution requests grant funds in the approximate amount of $200,000 for the revitalizing of the City's Business District (34th Street, Rhode Island Avenue, and Varnum Street).
Councilman Tarlau
2nd Councilwoman Thompson
4-0

Old Business

Ordinance 3-2014 Amending Chapter 3 Building Code, Chapter 7 Licenses and Permits, and Chapter 11 Refuse Collection of the Mount Rainier Code to increase certain fees . (2nd Reading and vote)
Approved as amended at the prior work session and with the Yard Sale fee changed back from $25 to $5.
Councilwoman Thompson
2nd Councilman Tarlau
3-0

Motion to Adjourn at 8:45pm
Councilwoman Thompson
2nd Councilman Christopherson
4-0