



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

Date: 10-7-2014

Place: One Municipal Place, Mount Rainier

Presiding officer: Mayor Malinda Miles

Councilmember's present: Jesse Christopherson, Brent Bolin, Jimmy Tarlau

Councilmember's absent: None

City Hall Staff: City Manager Jeannelle Wallace, Assistant City Manager Veronica Owens, Economic Development Director Samantha Olatunji, Chief Scott, Assistant Public Works Director Michael Barnes,

Agenda

Pledge of Allegiance

Presentation from the State's Attorney, Angela Alsobrooks

Public Hearing on 29th Street Traffic Calming Petition

Public Hearing and Comments

Council Vote on 29th Street Calming Device

Review and Approval of Minutes for September 2, 2014

Entering into official Record the resignation of a councilmember for Ward II, Representative Ivy Thompson

Declaration of vacancy for Ward II Council Seat

Brother's Keeper Program

Mayor and Council Reports

Department Reports

Anacostia Hours

Public Works

Mount Rainier History Book

Social Media

Motion to approve the agenda

Councilman Tarlau

2nd Councilman Bolin

3-0

Presentation from the State's Attorney for Prince George's County, Angela Alsobrooks

The Assistant State's Attorney, Renee Battlebrooks, will be in Mount Rainier on October 20th conducting training with the Police Department.

The year 2013 ended with a 37% decline in overall homicides and 27% decline in overall violent crimes. While nine of the fifty-six homicides from that year were domestic in nature, seventeen of the forty this year are domestic in nature. This is an alarming assessment.

Ms. Alsobrooks is looking at more ways for preventing violent crimes, especially those domestic in nature. She called for a meeting of faith leaders in the community at the First Baptist Church of

Glenarden last Monday. They are putting together a collaborative relationship to work throughout the county to provide resources for every member of the family. She says that if we continue to only provide resources to victims of crimes without reaching out to the abusers and offenders, we are going to be unable to resolve this particular crime. We need to get to offenders before they commit the crimes because we have seen even in the last year a number of individuals who have never been on our radar before. These are not people with very long histories. The crimes that we have seen have been primarily middle-aged men with no histories at all.

In the beginning of the year, we had legislation that children are invisible victims of domestic violence. Children are witnessing these crimes. Boys who witness are more than twice as likely to repeat them. Young women who witness these crimes now make up the fastest growing and larger share of our population at the Department of Corrections. We know that some of that has to do with their past.

On October 18th, the Department is holding their Annual Victims Fund Run. It is called “Our Family Strong 5K Challenge” and is dedicated to Domestic Violence. It is free but donations are accepted. Proceeds will go to the Family Crisis Center, The House of Ruth, and Still I rise.

The largest challenge in domestic violence is housing. There are a large number of women who desire to leave their homes and desire safety but the reality is that the county has a ways to go in terms of providing those resources. The family crisis center has done all it can to help out but we think we need more.

Councilman Christopherson follows up with the State’s Attorney on the action items that were discussed in the July Meeting with the State’s Attorney and the council including criminal prosecution procedures, officer court date scheduling’s, witness appearances, and training for police department for grand jury screenings.

Councilman Tarlau: A while ago we heard that there was a tremendous delay in terms of collecting fingerprints and processing them. We got a lot of flak that our officers could do a better job of collecting fingerprints. We understood that there was almost a year delay. Is that still true?

State’s Attorney: A year is unreasonable. It does not ordinarily take a year to process fingerprints. One thing that is accurate is that our lab is overwhelmed.

Mayor Miles asks if the warrant serving process is more effective. The State’s Attorney informs the council that there was a grant that came through the governor’s office on Crime Prevention and Control to specifically fund the unit that would serve the warrants. As a result, they have been able to go out and serve a good number of those backlogged warrants. The challenge on the State’s Attorney’s side is that while there was funding on the Sheriff’s side, there was not funding on the State’s attorneys side for them to review the case. The State’s Attorney’s Office was unable to get additional staff to be able to process and make decisions about the cases. It is a working progress but progress is being made. However, it should be noted that the Sheriff’s Office prioritizes warrants where domestic violence cases are concerned.

Chief Scott states that a couple of years ago, a case in the Court of Appeals called **Richmond V. DeWolf** said that a defendant was entitled to representation at a bond hearing before a commissioner. This legislation was met with apprehension because officers and the state’s attorneys feared the time commitment that it would bring to cases. However, the State’s Attorney’s Office has made it so that there is a full-time State’s Attorney at the Upper Marlboro DOC facility. Mount Rainier Officers are instructed to take serious cases to that location in case the State’s Attorney needs to review or advise them. There is also a hotline from DOC to call Upper Marlboro and officers can get the same advice over the phone.

Chief Scott comments on the great collaboration between the Mount Rainier Police Department and the State's Attorney Office. He states that Renee Battlebrook has been a tremendous help to the department, especially when the Mount Rainier C- Safe Program was a model C- Safe Program for the State of Maryland. We need tell our delegates and delegates-elect that we need to put money back into the juvenile prevention crimes for more facilities and more counseling in school and out. Also, we need services for male victims of domestic violence.

Markita Bryant (4600 27th Street): I touch bases with a lot of the youth around Mount Rainier. Another thing I had an issue with was a young girl was sex trafficking. What has been going on in Mount Rainier in our apartment complexes, people bay out the vacant units. They lower the young girls on yelp and the young girls come here. I recently had an incident where I actually had to call an officer and help a young girl who traveled from Silver Spring on the bus, who was homeless, to come for a sex ordeal. That was very troubling because that is not the first incident that had happened in my complex. I just want to know what our city is doing in regards to sex trafficking?

Another question is about burglary and robbing in our complex. The robbers are pulling our doors open. Recently, we had an incident where a guy had robbed a Dominoes pizza man in my building with a gun. One issue with the people in my complex is could they get more information in regards to crimes because they do feel left out? Is there any hope that we can work with the apartment complex managers to ensure the safety of our residents.

Ms. Renee Battlebrooks, Assistant State's Attorney: There is a Prince George's County Human Trafficking Task Force. If we do not have anyone from this great City, we would like to invite participation on this task Force. The task force is run by the human rights commission and Councilperson Toles, head of the human rights committee. It is comprised of government agencies, businesses, faith-based groups, and volunteers. There are three proposed legislation that are in the working phase. One deals with hourly rates at hotels...we are trying to stop that practice. Another proposed legislation is making people in the hotel industry certify their employees every year so that they are made aware of the signs. The third legislation proposed is dealing with massage parlors. There are massage parlors that are not legal and are conducting other services. This legislation seeks to tie their license and or their use and occupancy through the Business Occupancy License to the Department of Permitting, Inspection, and Enforcement. .

Public Hearing on 29th Street Traffic Calming Petition

There was no public comment.

Motion to close the forum
Councilman Christopherson
2nd Councilman Bolin
3-0

Motion for the Chief and Public Works to implement traffic calming devices on the 29th Street blocks that were specified in the traffic calming petition
Councilman Tarlau
2nd Councilman Bolin
3-0

Motion to approve the minutes of September 2, 2014 with provision that councilmember's enter any revisions to the City Clerk by end of business on October 10, 2014.
Councilman Tarlau
No Second

3-0

Councilwoman Thompson's Resignation

Councilman Tarlau reads Councilwoman Thompson's Letter of Resignation dated September 18, 2014. Councilwoman Thompson has bought a new house and will no longer be a resident of the City of Mount Rainier. Her resignation is effective on October 1, 2014.

A list of prospects for the open Ward II seat will be discussed at the next work session.

Ward I Report

Councilman Tarlau

- Mount Rainier 5k race is on October 18th at 9:30am .
- October 23rd thru 30th – Early Voting
- November 4th – Election Day

Councilman Christopherson

- Tax Differential – The city provides services in lieu of the county. As a result, property owners in Mount Rainier get reduced county property taxes. Municipalities are interested in increasing the amount of money that property owners get through this system. He went to a meeting last week with Councilman Tarlau regarding this. There are opportunities for expanding the benefits. A cost-benefit analysis will be done for expanding or reducing municipal services.
- Tax Differential will be on the Prince George's County Municipal Association Agenda (Councilman Christopherson is a liaison)

Ward II Report

Councilman Bolin

- Civics Day for 3rd Graders

Mayor's Report – Ms. Malinda Miles

- Talks about the benefits of having the Civics day for 3rd graders, including the help it would bring to the 4th grade "If I were mayor" essay submissions from the city to the Maryland Municipal League.
- Requests for the Council to visit the two elementary schools in Mount Rainier and introduce themselves.
- Schools ask that dog owners do not walk their dogs on school premises
- **Green team meeting on October 13th** by Sustainable Maryland Certified

City Manager's Report- Ms. Jeannelle Wallace

- Provides some **guidelines for dealing with the vermin issue:**
 - All trash must be in an airtight container with a lid
 - Dog owners must pick up after their dogs because things on the ground go into the waterways. Also rats and vermin eat dog poop.
 - Do not store concrete, bricks and wood on the ground or park cars on the grass because they create nesting areas for rats.
 - Notices will be given to violators. If problems are not corrected, fines will issued.
- With the City's Tree Commission , she submitted the **County Relief Grant Application** to Prince George's County, which will enable the City to get \$6, 950 to pay for 50 replacement trees.

- There is a **limit on the size of trash bins to 33.5 gallons** because heavier bins put a strain on staffs backs. The 33.5 gallons will be the only bins to be picked up.
- An **RFP for the City of Mount-Rainier's Green Street Program** was put on The Washington Post and the Maryland E-Market. The **RFP Closes on October 30th**. Reports will be put on the website tomorrow. They have already been put on the listserv.
- **3200 block Rhode Island Avenue Project** – October 15th is the deadline to receive an update from Street-Sense on the project
- **Pepco is giving the city vouchers**, three trees for every one tree that was erroneously removed. There were four trees that were removed. The city is expecting to get twelve voucher. There will be a meeting on October 13th to pick up on the work of removing specified trees in residential areas.

Assistant City Manager's Report – Ms. Veronica Owens

- She is working on a revitalization strategy with the Economic Development Director
- They have met with MRBA, Gateway CDC, the Green Team, and the DC/ Prince George's County Gateway Collaboration
- They are working on the website, signage, newsletter, social media, and survey of the month
- info@mountrainiermd.org is the new email for the City
- The **Newsletter has been revamped**. It includes a welcome section from the Mayor, Economic Development Section, Tools for Small Businesses, Buzz around the city, Toddler Time, Shining Stars, Safety Component, Healthy Living, Trash Code 101, Dates for DPW, etc.
- For **funding**, we have **two applications for the State of Maryland**. One is for business façade infrastructure and to acquire and renovate vacant homes throughout the City. Another is for strategic demolition and smart growth impact funds that will demolish our former funeral home site and the home on the corner of Eastern and Rhode Island Avenue. Notice on those decisions will be received in February 2015.
- A letter was submitted to kick start the process of the **Main-Street Maryland Designation**. There are no designated Main Streets in Prince George's County so Mount Rainier will be the first.
- The **CDBG application** is underway and due next month.
- Will be **meeting with DPW** to identify streets that need to be addressed right away
- Will be **meeting with WSSC** so the city is not duplicating efforts as far as the infrastructure and the waterways.
- **Green Team interns are going to assist with website coordination**. They are going to create a tab for resources for green and healthy living within the City of Mount Rainier.
- **Gateway CDC has received an incubator grant** from the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA). The city will be working with them and some incubator businesses that may be interested in establishing a presence in the city of Mount Rainier.

Economic Development Director Report- Ms. Samantha Olatunji

- **District of Columbia/ Prince George's County Gateway Collaboration**. The County would like to establish a gateway connection at the D.C. / Prince George's County Border and Rhode Island Avenue/ Eastern Avenue. This also serves as the entrance to the Gateway Arts District
- The County Deputy Chief's Office is conducting a three-part stakeholder outreach series to get feedback and brainstorm on what should be the priorities and goals of this gateway.

Stakeholder Outreach Schedule

1. Meet with the gateway arts district organizations (August)
2. Meet with the local business organizations within the project area along Rhode Island Avenue within the City of Mount Rainier (September)

3. Meeting and site tour with the county agencies, local artists, and art organizations within the project area. (November 20th)
- MUTC Committee met last month to review the **proposal for the historic bank building located at the 3800 block of 34th Street**. The organization, Compass Inc. bought the property in 2013 and intends to create and renovate a new artist studio.

Police Department Report- Chief Scott

- Your individual vote is important
- Suggests combining the 3rd Grade Civics Day with dictionary day.
- **Halloween Celebration** will be at the **Mayor's Mansion on 30th Street from 6:00pm till 8:30pm.**
- 2.6% more crimes in the first 9 months of 2014 than in 2013. Motor vehicle theft is an epic problem in District 1 of Prince George's County.
- Six robberies in September. Two of them were solved quickly by the county police.
- Three lethality assessment program screens in September
- Burglary in multi-family complexes is up. The department is looking into what it can do to reduce those crimes.
- Twenty-five applications for **the evening shift records clerk position**. Three or four applicants will be chosen for interviews and the Chief, the City Manager, and records clerk will decide who they are going to hire.

Mayor Miles suggests that the Department highlight which crimes in the city were handled by the County.

Public Works Report- Mr. Michael Barnes

- The trash bins can be 33.5 gallons or less
- To combat the **rat and vermin problem**, rinse the bins occasionally, add a little bleach or ammonia to the bin, and tie your bags up to get rid of the smell. The vermin can eat through the plastic bins.
- **The trip hazards at 4236 34th Street and 4210 Rainier Avenue were taken care of.**
- **A fallen tree on 34th Street and Eastern Avenue** was cut up and removed. Although it was not the city's tree, it fell on the city's side.
- **Yard Waste & Treated wood-** Yard waste is tree limbs, grass, leaves, branches; anything that grows out of your yard. Treated wood is lumber or anything you build with.
- **Mr. Barnes and Ms. Owens did some research on flowers and pots for our commercial district.** Mayor Miles states that State Highway will buy what goes on the median strip and help put it out there.

The council discusses the attention **Richardson Park** needs. Councilman Christopherson states that the level of mulch is not high enough. Mayor Miles communicates that the park needs to be upgraded and redone.

Councilman Bolin brings up the issue of **filled trash cans** around the city. Public works has been trying different tactics to lower the trash level, including moving the cans.

An equipment issue is preventing the **online streaming** from working currently.

Anacostia Hours

Nick Williams (4100- 32nd Street)

Anacostia Hours is a non-profit organization, run by volunteers, that promotes a local currency in order to stimulate greater economic self-sufficiency among the residents and local independent businesses of Mount Rainier as well as the surrounding towns from Washington D.C. up to College Park. With the use of a local currency, businesses and consumers can do business with each other. That currency is accepted and spent by participants who agree to do this. In so doing, they keep the value of the currency in the town or the community unlike dollars, which leave the community very quickly, especially if they are spent at stores and businesses, which are owned and managed by giant corporations.

Consumer and business participants pay a membership fee. In return for paying that fee, they receive some local currency. They can spend that currency with any business that is listed in the Anacostia Hours Directory, which is online. The fee for one year membership is \$5. The city will receive two Anacostia Hours as a renewing member.

Motion to renew membership to Anacostia Hours

Councilman Tarlau

2nd Councilman Christopherson

3-0

An ordinance discussing **recycling and yard waste falling on a holiday** will be discussed at a work session.

Mount Rainier History Book

There is an opportunity for the city to publish a book about the history of Mount Rainier. The commission is 8% of the net profit. Approval of the images that will be used is needed. This item will be discussed more in a work session.

Social Media

The Mayor discusses the fact that on Facebook there are three or four Mount Rainier sites. The city owns none of them. Information is put on it and shared but there is no city policy regarding it. In the last three MML conferences, municipalities have been urged to take policies and positions on their website and the use of their name on issues throughout the city. She has asked the MML to provide the city with policies that other municipalities have adopted on the issue. This item will be added to the work session.

Motion to adjourn at 9:45pm

Councilman Bolin

2nd Councilman Christopherson

3-0