



Minutes of the City of Mount Rainier Maryland City Council Meeting

Date: 11-3-2015

Place: One Municipal Place, Mount Rainier

Presiding officer: Mayor Miles

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

City Hall Staff: City Manager Jeannelle Wallace, Assistant City Manager Veronica Owens, Chief Scott,

Agenda

Sustainable Maryland Certification Award
Development Insurance Trust Award
Appropriation of Funds for Julia Barnette Program
DaVita Healthcare- Mr. Lynch
Menkiti Development Update
Resolution 18- 2015 Green Team Chair
Ordinance 2-2015 Arundel Parking (2nd Reading)
Architectural Overlay Zone- Councilman Knedler
Halloween Parade Funding
Nature Center
Organizational Assessment Team Update
Green Team Update- Review of ACOZ
Review and Approval of Minutes
General Comments

Motion to approve the Agenda
Councilman Christopherson
2nd Councilman Knedler

Sustainable Maryland Certification Award - MaryLee Haughwout, Green Team Chair

The City of Mount Rainier was recertified as a Sustainable Maryland City and received the Sustainable Champion Award for the highest points received out of all the Maryland communities in 2015.

Development Insurance Trust Award - Interim City Manager Larry Hughes

Each year, the Development Insurance Trust provides recognition for excellent risk management services in the community. The city received this year's award for consistently demonstrating excellence and commitment to loss reduction and safety.

Appropriation of Funds for The Neighborhood Novelist Project - Ms. Julia Barnette

Ms. Julia Barnette manages the Neighborhood Novelist Project where she assists about thirty to forty 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders at Thomas Stone Elementary with creating a collective novel. They completed the first novel, “Zombie Elementary” and are currently working on a new one, titled “The Imagination Club.”

Motion to appropriate \$1,500 from the Youth and Recreation Item for the Neighborhood Novelist Project

Councilwoman Loh

2nd Councilwoman Shah

4-0

DaVita Healthcare Letter of Support - Michael Lynch

DaVita Healthcare is asking for a Letter of Support from the City of Mount Rainier for the DaVita Healthcare Center located at 2303 Barnum Street. A special permit is required for a clinic in the Arts District. DaVita has filed the special permit with Park and Planning. A hearing for the Planning Board is scheduled **November 19th** at 10:00am.

The space that DaVita will occupy is 7200 sq ft. The renovation will start in January and will take approximately 100 days.

Menkiti Development Update - Mark Rendall

The Menkiti Group is developing the properties located at 3300, 3308, and 3310 Rhode Island Avenue, which include the Former Singer Building. For the past few months, architects and engineers have been observing the site. The team has engaged local architects and engineers at all stages. They have also engaged Annie’s ACE Hardware to be the tenant for 3300 Rhode Island Avenue property. Annie Stone, the owner of ACE Hardware, is dedicated to the community. In her Brookland location, she is hiring locals that can walk to work and sustain a living wage.

The project will be designed and certified to meet LEED Silver standard. There will be an educational plaque put up.

Unique Project Attributes

- Restores existing historic buildings
- Brings together a vibrant collection of users
- Passionate community-minded partners
- Incorporates proven sustainable design features

Project Program

- 3300 Rhode Island Avenue will include 5,500 SF of Hardware Store and 12 Residential Units. The units will be one and two bedroom units.
- 3308 Rhode Island Avenue will include 3, 110 SF Creative Arts Incubator
- 3310 Rhode island Avenue will include 1,360 SF Café/ Restaurant

Economic Impact

This project will create 11 direct and 11 indirect new construction jobs, 22 Full-time and 16 Part-time permanent jobs, and 12 new households. In the course of ten years of operation, this project will generate more than \$3.5 million in tax revenue.

Project Timeline

Community Meeting #1	December 2015
File for Permits	January 2016
Permit Review	3-6 months
Community Meeting #2	March 2016
Construction Start	July 2016
Construction Duration	11-12 months
Construction Complete	July 2017

Resolution 18 – 2015 Green Team Chair

Resolution 18- 2015 appointing Joseph Jakuta as Chairperson of the Mount Rainier Green Team

Councilwoman Loh

2nd Councilman Knedler

4-0

Ordinance 2-2015 Arundel Parking (2nd Reading) – Councilwoman Loh

Councilwoman Shah: I have said my piece about my opposition to the limit to two but as long as, for now, this is just on Arundel, I am fine with it. But if we have any more of these restrictive parking zones, this particular topic is going to come up again. But I am okay with it for now.

Councilman Knedler: So I will echo that...over the years people have known me to take a risk, to be leaders in certain topics. You don't know how things are going to work. Right now, it is just one parking zone. But like Councilwoman Shah said, if it becomes a problem, then we just change it. It is easier to expand the number of permits than to take them away. So I think you are better off to go with a lower number. If it becomes burdensome, then you can amend it. That is the nice thing about small government. It is not Congress. We can do things rather quickly. It doesn't seem like that sometimes. But we have changed many ordinances, because we have realized after the year two that it didn't work the way we thought it was going to work. So I am more than willing to experiment and see how it goes.

Mayor Miles: And I think I was in total opposition. And I had a long conversation with Ms. Loh... I am going to support it tonight on the condition that she and I talked about. We are looking at \$20, instead of the \$30. We also agreed that we are going to try the two and see where we go with that. I just want to throw out one caveat. As of the day...the project in Queenstown on Buchanan Street is going to propose taking away ten additional parking spaces. That is going to be another issue around parking that we are going to have discussion around.

**Email from Gabrielle Popkin (33rd Street Resident/ Tree Commission Member) to the City
Saturday, October 24, 2015**

“Jesse and Tracy, I want to express a concern about your proposed parking ordinance revisions, which I saw posted outside City Hall. By seeking to limit the number of residential and guest permits available for house. This proposal discriminates against lower income Mount Rainier residents, particularly those who live in houses with more than two adults. Group houses allow uncoupled people and people without large incomes, to live in expensive metro areas like DC, as they make our communities more diverse and dynamic. I have lived in group houses my entire time in Mount Rainier and Brentwood and would have never have moved here if I hadn't been able to live in such spaces. And I know others that is also true. These people make valuable contributions to our community. Unfortunately, most people who live here, regardless of income, or housing situation, need to own a car because we are poorly served by transit and bike infrastructure and almost nobody can walk to work or to various other places they need to go. And many houses in Mount Rainier, again, especially those affordable to low income people, do not come with off-street parking. I am not against residential parking permits in cases where street parking is at a premium. But that is not the case in Mount Rainier. In my almost eight years living here, I can't recall a single time I had to park more than a block from my house. So it is hard for me not to suspect that this proposal is driven less by an actual need to restrict parking than by a distaste for certain living styles and certain kinds of people. I know of at least one instance of which a Mount Rainier resident sought parking restrictions to keep members of a group house from parking in front of her house and I think you probably know who I am talking about since it was reported on in the Gazette. In short, not everyone lives in a traditional family or earns enough to live alone. And I would think the council would want to promote and increase diversity in Mount Rainier rather than make it harder for certain kinds of people to live here. I hope you will not decide to lower the number of parking permits available per house. For the record, I do support reducing the permit fee from \$50 to \$20 and I think it would be even better to reduce the fee to zero. If the city needs to renew, it should do so in a way that does not fall disproportionately on poor residents. Thank you for considering this perspective, Gabrielle Popkin.”

Mayor Miles: That was a discussion that he did have about the parking and the number of houses that we have in the community, almost like boarding houses, with more than “x” number of people in the house. But as Mr. Knedler said earlier, let's do a pilot. Let's get it going. Let's see what comes out of it, see what the impact is going to be. If we have a negative impact, we can always come back and revisit this...In the spirit of moving forward.

Councilwoman Loh: I am sure that you guys all saw my replies to Gab...But I think that Gab shared a really strong concern. I think that it is important that we show empathy and respond to

the weight of his concern. What I said to Gab was that as many of you know, I live in a group house that are adults and one child in it. It is a multi-ethnic household. It is also a car-like household. And I am not proposing this ordinance because I have distaste for those kinds of families. This ordinance, while hypothetically applying to all of Mount Rainier, only affects residential parking zones that are established by petition. And the only zone that has been established by petition is on Arundel Road because of concerns by residents who signed the petition about scarcity of parking in this one, two block area. So I want everyone to know that I hear these concerns and that I am not proposing this ordinance from a place of disdain. I am merely trying to be responsive to the concerns of other residents in Mount Rainier's only residential parking zone on Arundel Road. And I am happy to revisit this topic in the future.

Councilwoman Shah: Did we ever hear back from the apartment complex about what their deal was, what they were charging?

Councilwoman Loh: After the hearing, I did call Queenstown Apartments...My understanding is that Queenstown did recently refresh, update or reissue their parking permits. They haven't necessarily changed the pricing structure of their permits per se. The fundamental issue is that Queenstown has somewhere around 1,000 units and significantly fewer parking spaces than they have units... I think that in addition to keeping an eye on parking in Mount Rainier in general, we will still need to keep an eye on how this is working out on Arundel Road and be ready to respond...

Ordinance 2-2014 Arundel Road Parking passed 4-0.

Architectural Overlay Zone – Councilman Knedler

A **City Public Hearing** will be held on **Saturday, November 7th at 2pm at Mount Rainier Elementary School** to hear comments on the Design Review Board's proposal for the projects that would be exempt from the Architectural Conservation District Plan and also projects that would have standards written for them. Public comment is solicited.

Halloween Parade Funding – Mayor Miles

Motion to approve \$500 for the Halloween parade held on October 31, 2015.

Councilman Knedler

2nd Mayor Miles

4-0

Nature Center– Councilwoman Shah

Heather Ware, a resident, has been organizing an informal playgroup for the last few years in the Spring and the Fall. Since this playgroup has been successful in attracting various members in the community, she is asking to have a space in the winter time. It is difficult to go to the outdoor parks in the winter time because it is too cold and it gets dark too early. Councilwoman Shah and Ms. Ware have discussed hosting the playgroup in the Nature Center with Ms. Bernadine, the facilities manager, with specific guidelines.

The playgroup is open to anyone in the city that has a child eight or under. Any child that participates must be accompanied by a parent or adult guardian. The playgroup will meet on Wednesdays at the Nature Center from 5:00 to 6:30pm.

Motion to write a letter to the Nature Center in support of having a children's' play group of eight and under during the winter time on Wednesdays from 5:00pm to 6:30pm at the Nature Center.

Councilwoman Shah

2nd Councilman Knedler

4-0

Organizational Assessment Team Update – Councilwoman Loh

The Organizational Assessment Committee is comprised of Councilwoman Shah, Councilwoman Loh, City of Mount Rainier Finance Director Vijay Manjani, resident Tracy Velasquez, and resident Michelle Darton- Lee.

Six companies responded to the RFP for consulting firms. The list was narrowed down to two. The two remaining were provided with an additional questionnaire. The Organizational Assessment Team decided to move forward with Novac Consulting Group.

Motion to engage the services of the Novac Consulting Group for the scope of work described in our RFP at the cost described in the cost proposal

Councilwoman Loh

2nd Councilman Christopherson

4-0

Green Team Review of ACOZ - Joseph Jakuta, New Green Team Chair

Mr. Jakuta: At the October 20th Worksession, it was requested that we take a look at the ACOZ recommendation and provide some comments from the Green Team's environmental perspective, so I have a letter compelled by some members of the Green Team. The basic crux of the letter, we like several of the things that the Design Review Board put in the proposal, the solar, landscaping and rain barrels. There were several areas where we thought that more clarity was needed, including chimney removals, concrete pathway removals, and replacement of windows with energy efficient or solar-collecting panes. We thought all of those should not require review. We also were concerned that patios were not being reviewed when they were being added unless they were being added with permeable surfaces. And finally, we looked at two areas where offsets could be added to any process to decrease either the carbon footprint of the home or the drain water footprint.

Veteran's Day - Mayor Miles

The Veteran's Day Breakfast is at 9:30am, Date, in the Potts Building.

Motion to approve the September Meeting Minutes

Councilman Knedler

2nd Councilman Christopherson

4-0

Motion to adjourn

Councilman Knedler

2nd Councilwoman Loh