

Official Minutes of the City of Mount Rainier

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL SESSION

DATE: January 25, 2018

COUNCIL CHAMBERS, UPPER-LEVEL CITY HALL

Call to Order

7:20 PM, Council Chambers, City Hall, One Municipal Place, Mount Rainier MD

Presiding Officer

Mayor Malinda Miles

Officials Present

Councilmember Celina Benitez
Councilmember Luke Chesek
Councilmember Bryan Knedler
Councilmember Shivali Shah

Staff Present

City Manager Miranda Braatz

Minutes provided by:

City Clerk

Review and Approval of Agenda

Motion to Adopt the Agenda as Presented: Mayor Malinda Miles Move: Councilmember Bryan Knedler Second: Councilmember Luke Chesek Vote Recorded: 4-0-0, Motion Passed

3201 Bunker Hill Road Presentation

John Woline and Eric Meadows of Woline Properties, want to build a house at 3201 Bunker Hill Road. They are seeking a permit to build a single-family, 3000 square foot home with five bedrooms and three and a half baths. This will be a high-end build. The Council reviewed a packet with the building plans and drawings and then asked questions. Councilmember Bryan Knedler liked the design and felt it matched the neighborhood. Councilmembers reminded the builders of noise, tree and other City and County ordinances and rules and recommended that they review the City Code or that they contact City Manager Miranda Braatz with any questions. Councilmember Luke Chesek and Mayor Malinda Miles warned the builders about potential erosion and run-off into drains. They builder said they have dirt

erosion procedures during the build and that the new homeowner will not have issues. The build will take four months. They will start the build on Monday if they get the permit approved tonight. Public comments were taken. Mario Cisneros of 34th Street near Bunker Hill asked for copy of the plans which he was given. The builders said that all their plans are on their website. A Resident of the 4200 Block was worried that vibrations from digging will cause nearby houses to get cracks in their plaster. The builders said they will be using small to medium sized equipment and will not use a jack hammer. They have not encountered this problem during other builds in the area. The City approved the design and Miranda Braatz told Woline to call the City Permit Office tomorrow and speak to Alma. She will walk them thru getting the physical permit.

Work Session

Discussion of the Economic Development Fund

Director of Economic Development Samantha Olatunji was absent but had previously presented documents on the Fund to the Council. The Council felt prepared to give feedback. City Manager Miranda Braatz said there is no new information to present on the Fund. Mayor Malinda Miles said that she and some Councilmembers had concerns about the Fund for discussion. Councilmember Shivali Shah said she wants a Fund Committee that is more, nimble and does not want a static committee. She wants to know which City committees or partners would review which applications for monies from the Fund. For example, the green incentive application would go to the Green Team for review. There was discussion. Councilmembers clarified for the City Manager Miranda Braatz they want a list of what groups will review their application ahead of time and not just at the time of application. City Manager Miranda Braatz raised privacy concerns for the applicants. Councilmember Shivali Shah is more worried about transparency to applicants and the City residents. There was more discussion. City Manager Miranda Braatz said it's a broad piece of legislation for annexation and development and she does not want to shut down early conversations by adding layers of review. Mayor Malinda Miles said the Council have debated this and it is time for Council to set policy. Councilmember Shivali Shah said she wants the Council to know what the City's process will be internal and the Council and City Manager Miranda Braatz agreed. She will provide full disclosure of partners and committees to Council. Councilmember Luke Chesek mentioned that applicants should be told that their application will be reviewed by City partners or committees, but they will not be told by whom. This will stop any lobbying efforts. He also asked about eligibility for matching funds from the County or State. City Manager Miranda Braatz said establishing this Fund will allow the County and State to advertise the Fund and to make additional offers to create package deals. She explained how the State builds a package with the County and then with Municipalities that have Funds. The Council understood.

City Manager Miranda said this will designate 1 million for the assistance Fund, so a new Council can dissolve the Fund. Mayor Malinda Miles wants more procedures, on how much goes to annexation, how much will go to loans or grants, and how will the Fund will grow business. Her constituents think 1 million is a lot for the fund and she would like to start it at \$500,000. Councilmember Shivali Shah said the Council needs more details to earmark 250K to 1 Million for this. She was not comfortable with the Council agreeing to this and letting the details be worked out by the City staff. She discussed past incentive programs and the need for strong outreach to businesses and the community for this to work. Councilmember Celina Benitez wants bilingual outreach and markers for the Fund.

City Manager Miranda explained the reasoning for 1 million dollars for the Fund. 1 million is 25% of the City's Budget. That number is a marketing tool. She is a little hesitant on markers yet. She appreciates the Council's input. Councilmember Luke Chesek wants 1 million Fund having lower markers are not worth it. The Fund needs to champion are current business. He wants to go to the upcoming Economic Development Conference with the 1 Million Fund. He excited to have that tool. Councilmember Bryan Knedler agreed with Bryan. City Manager Miranda explained their will be a 2-page application so the City knows what incentives are appropriate to the applicant. Mayor Malinda Miles said this will be in the current budget asked why annexation is included in the Fund. City Manager Miranda said annexation is included to lure property owners. Mayor Malinda Miles wants to remove annexation from the Fund. She and Councilmember Celina Benitez wants to know how the fund will be replenished. She is also worried about outreach to current business and absentee building owners. City Manager Miranda Braatz said that the City and MRBA will do application workshops. Councilmember Shivali Shah wants City staff to walk to all the stores all over the City. Those businesses on Varum are not sure they are in Mount Rainier. She wants this outreach strategy included in presentation. City Manager Miranda would have press kick-off event.

Councilmember Bryan Knedler and Mayor Malinda Miles said the City has from now to June 30, 2018 to figure out the Fund. Mayor Malinda Miles said for her to approve this Pilot Fund she needs a written outreach strategy, measurements for success, methods to report failures and success, and stated outcomes, and example of the application. Councilmember Celina Benitez wants to make sure outreach is to all businesses and not just the top five. It should be acknowledged some business may need help with the application. Outreach and help needs to be available in Spanish too. Also, some business owners are also residents, so we need to make sure it's a even playing fields. There needs to be consistent messaging from Council and City. The City needs to be able to give the Council monthly reporting. She thinks implementation in small stages is necessary for the Fund to be successful and transparent. She wants the Fund to be successful. She wants more information and not less. Mayor Malinda Miles said that Council said that waiving fees would help local business. This should be in the package. One of the biggest drawbacks to annexation for business owners is paying City taxes and fees. Councilmember Shivali Shah said we need homebased business that are not registered with MRBA and the Fund might be an incentive for them to join MRBA and get a City license. This can be incentive for tenants to talk to building owner about annexation to get Fund money for upgrade. Miranda fees breaks and expedite of permits would be great add in six months to a year.

Council will break and then vote on the Concept to the Budget Amendment to Allocate 1 million to the Economic Incentive Fund till June 30th, which ends Fiscal Year 2018. This period would be used to work out the procedures and strategies demanded by Council to City Manager Miranda Braatz. The Council will be involved every step of the way and City staff will present procedures and strategies to for a vote into the Fiscal Year 2019 Budget. Council returned from break and each Councilmember stated what they believed what they were voting on. They agreed to 1 million, they want the procedures and strategies to be developed, they want assurances that procedures and strategies will make a fair application process, include oversight by the Council. Mayor Malinda Miles votes yes on the concept, but not for 1 million allocation to the Fund.

Vote to Move Out of Work Session into Special Session: Mayor Malinda Miles Move: Councilmember Shivali Shah Second: Councilmember Bryan Knedler

Vote Recorded: 4-0-0, Motion Passed

Special Session (Need a Super Vote of Four)

City Manager Miranda Braatz read fair summary for Ordinance 09-2017 that creates an Economic Development Fund for 1 million in City's Reserves in Budget 2018.

Approval of Ordinance 09-2017 Economic Development Finance Program: Mayor Malinda Miles
Move: Councilmember Bryan Knedler
Second: Councilmember Shivali Shah
Vote Recorded: 4-1-0, Motion Passed
Mayor Malinda Miles (Opposed)

Adjournments

Motion to Adjourn Meeting: Mayor Malinda Miles
Move: Councilmember Bryan Knedler
Second: Councilmember Shivali Shah
Ayes: 4-0-0