

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING**

**Wednesday, February 16, 2022
Minutes**

Minutes adopted July 27, 2022

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Stewart, Councilmember Kovar, Councilmember Dyballa, Councilmember Kostiuk, Councilmember Seamens, Councilmember Smith, Councilmember Searcy

Also present: City Manager Fox, Deputy City Manager Clarke, City Clerk Carpenter, Public Administration Specialist Dan Powers, ARPA Manager Vernae Martin

The City Council convened at 7:30 PM via Zoom.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA / AGENDA SCHEDULING UPDATE

Mayor Stewart updated the Council on upcoming agenda items.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The City Council was updated on Maryland General Assembly legislative matters by the City's legislative advocate.

1. Public Hearing on Redistricting Plan

Suzy Stimler, Conway Ave., commented on the redistricting maps Y and Z. She was in favor of map Y.

Arthur David Olson, Hancock Ave., commented on the redistricting maps Y and Z. He was in favor of map Z. He urged the Council to not make their decision based on speculative benefits.

Thomas Di Liberto, Prince Georges Ave., commented on the proposed redistricting maps. He mentioned traffic safety concerns affecting the Forest Park neighborhood. He was in favor of map Y.

Robert Dreher, Sycamore Ave., urged the Council to not improperly consider political factors when deciding on a redistricting map. He stated that by selecting map Y to allow council member to retain their seat was prohibited by the City Charter. He was in favor of map Z.

Nadine Bloch, Beech Ave., urged the Council to choose a ward map based on City Charter. She stated that the City residents deserve to elect their council member and not have the council member choose their constituents. She suggested seeking legal council before making a selection.

Rachel Hardwick, Flower Ave., stated that she was concerned about the redistricting process where the Council was deciding the new ward boundaries. She said that Council members appear to be voting to secure incumbent advantage and she was concerned about the conflict of interest.

Robert Anderson, Woodland Ave., gave a brief PowerPoint presentation on redistricting. He stated that option Z was the most compact and complied with all of the requirements of the City Charter. He urged the council to approve option Z.

Robert Antonucci, Conway Ave., stated that there were concerns expressed by community members in his neighborhood with option Z. He said he was in favor of option Y.

Sally Tabor, Ward 2, thanked the Council for creating option Y. She commented on Ward 2 neighborhoods affected by redistricting.

Emmanuel Wagner, Ward 2, urged the Council to vote on option Y. He concurred with the comments made by Sally Tabor.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON OTHER MATTERS

Megan Scribner, Willow Ave., commented on the library renovation. She stated that she was concerned with the cost of the renovation and the high cost of living in Takoma Park. She urged the council to reevaluate the project.

Paul Huebner, Carroll Ave., thanked the Council for instituting a new process where questions made during comments would be addressed at the current meeting or the following Council meeting. Mr. Huebner asked about the cost of the Community Center atrium renovation project. He asked questions regarding the library renovation and ARPA funds.

Ferd Hoefner, Montgomery Ave., referenced a letter sent to Council that included a set of ARPA spending recommendations signed by 250 City residents. He urged the Council to scale back or eliminate the construction and property related proposals.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Ms. Kostiuk reported that the Transportation Planning Board will be moving forward on efforts to do more on climate change, including climate mitigation and goals. Each jurisdiction will be asked to fill out a survey to provide information.

Ms. Searcy thanked the Public Works Director for her efforts on planning the sidewalks and traffic calming on Hopewell, Kentland and Larch Avenues.

Mr. Kover reported on the Winter Play Day. Because of the weather, it was held indoors. He was glad to observe and participate in Jamie Raskin's "Simon Says" group in the Auditorium.

Mr. Smith thanked residents who attended the meeting on Domer Avenue sidewalks. He supported the comments of Megan Scribner about the Library cost. He urged his colleagues to reconsider the direction of the project.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

Mr. Fox reported that the mask mandate will continue in City facilities for now. COVID testing in cooperation with the County will continue. The City's ARPA expenditure plans are similar to other communities. Staff is using evidence and data to make decisions. He reported that the City received its constant yield tax rate, which is .5195/\$100 of assessed valuation.

VOTING SESSION

2. Resolution Extending the Term of the Sustainable Banking and Investments Task Force

Mr. Kovar moved the resolution. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The motion carried (VOTING FOR: Stewart, Kovar, Dyballa, Kostiuik, Seamens, Smith, Searcy).

Resolution 2022-4 (attached)

WORK SESSION

3. Discussion of Redistricting Plan and Draft Ordinance

Kate Doiron, redistricting consultant, presented information. She noted that the City is aiming for under a 10 percent deviation, or even a deviation less than 5 percent.

There was discussion about The Council discussed options and individuals expressed support for either map Y or map Z. The majority supported using map Y but asked staff to consult with the City Attorney regarding the number of residential students that could be estimated for Ward 5.

4. ARPA Spending Plan and Budget Amendment Draft Ordinance

The Council continued reconciliation of the American Rescue Plan Act spending plan.

ADJOURNMENT

The Council adjourned for the evening at 10:54 PM.