

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
VOTING SESSION
Wednesday, May 11, 2022**

MINUTES

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

Also present: City Manager Fox, Deputy City Manager Clarke, Public Works Director Braithwaite, and City Clerk Carpenter

The City Council convened at 7:30 PM in the Auditorium.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA / AGENDA SCHEDULING UPDATE

Ms. Stewart provided an update on future agendas.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Paul Huebner stated that the current tax rate was still a tax increase for most homeowners. He commented on the budget. He thanked the Council members that recommended more resident involvement in the budget process for the next budget year.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mr. Kovar commented on a meeting where EYA developers presented on the development proposal for the Takoma Metro area. He said that dozens of Takoma Park residents participated. Mr. Kovar stated that he would follow up with EYA to clarify some information and to take into consideration some recommendations made by residents. He asked staff to address the concern about the newsletter delivery delays. Mr. Kovar informed the Council that several communities were honoring people who passed away from COVID-19.

Ms. Searcy announced that the Crossroads farmers market would hold a Summer Mercado event on Saturday, June 25, 1-6 pm.

Ms. Dyballa announced that the Chesapeake Bay committee of regional Council of Government was meeting on Friday. She also announced that the Friends of the Library book sale was taking place on Saturday.

Ms. Stewart thanked the Takoma Stormwater Solutions Group for their webinar yesterday. She said that the Presbyterian Church and other non-profits were helping with migrants sent from Texas. Ms. Stewart asked if anyone had a room available to contact the City. She announced that the Village Spring Fling at the VFW and the Takoma Park Middle School Holly event was taking place on Saturday.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

Mr. Fox recognized National Law Enforcement week and Public Safety Telecommunications week.

VOTING SESSION

1. Second Reading Ordinance Approving FY 2022 Budget Amendment No. 4

There was no further discussion on the agenda item.

Ms. Kostiuk moved the Ordinance. Ms. Dyballa seconded the motion. (VOTING FOR: Stewart, Kovar, Dyballa, Kostiuk, Searcy, Seamens, Smith)

Ordinance 2022-13 (attached)

2. First Reading Ordinance Adopting the FY 2023 Tax Rates

Ms. Stewart explained that the tax rate was the same as last year.

Ms. Kostiuk requested for staff to look into raising taxes on vacant property increase the rate on vacant properties to encourage property owners who have long standing vacant properties that were not being developed to become available housing.

Mr. Kovar said that he appreciated the efforts made by staff and the Council to lower the tax rate. He said that he was concerned that the tax rate was no lowered to the constant yield rate. He said he would vote no on the ordinance.

Ms. Dyballa concurred with Ms. Kostiuk's idea on increasing the taxes on vacant properties. Ms. Dyballa requested to also look at the commercial tax rate.

Ms. Stewart asked for clarification on the tax rate figures mentioned on the agenda item coversheet. She said she wanted to make sure the numbers were accurate. She thanked Ms. Dyballa for her work on targeted tax credit to address the issues of increasing assessments.

Ms. Dyballa moved the first reading ordinance. Ms. Kostiuk seconded the motion. (VOTING FOR: Stewart, Dyballa, Kostiuk, Searcy, Seamens; VOTING AGAINST: Kovar and Smith)

First Reading Ordinance 2022-14 (attached)

COUNCIL VOTE TO CONVENE AS THE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT BOARD

Ms. Searcy moved to convene as the stormwater management board. Ms. Kostiuk seconded the motion (VOTING FOR: Stewart, Dyballa, Kostiuk, Kovar, Searcy, Seamens, Smith)

3. First Reading Ordinance Adopting the FY 2023 Stormwater Management Budget

Ms. Braithwaite provided a brief overview of the FY23 stormwater budget expenditures.

Mr. Kovar said that he was hesitant to vote yes on the ordinance. He said that there were uncertainties like to contracts, the stormwater credit, and GIS maps that need to be addressed.

Mr. Seamens moved the first reading ordinance. Ms. Dyballa seconded the motion. (VOTING FOR: Stewart, Dyballa, Kostiuk, Kovar, Searcy, Seamens, Smith)

First Reading Ordinance 2022-15 (attached)

4. First Reading Ordinance Adopting the FY 2023 Budget

Mr. Smith said that he was not in support of the budget as it did not live up to the Council's responsibility to balance the budget. He said that he hoped that the Council take Mr. Fox's recommendation to form a budget committee for the next fiscal year.

Ms. Dyballa stated that she was in support of budget subgroup for the next fiscal year.

Ms. Dyballa moved the first reading ordinance. Ms. Kostiuik seconded the motion. (VOTING FOR: Stewart, Dyballa, Kostiuik, Searcy, Seamens; VOTING AGAINST: Kovar and Smith)

First Reading Ordinance 2022-16 (attached)

5. Single Reading Ordinance Approving the Purchase of a Vehicle for the Police Special Assignment Team

There was no further discussion on the agenda item.

Mr. Seamens moved the ordinance. Ms. Searcy seconded the motion. (VOTING FOR: Stewart, Dyballa, Kostiuik, Kovar, Searcy, Seamens, Smith)

Ordinance 2022-17 (attached)

ADJOURNMENT

The Council adjourned for the evening at 8:33 p.m.