

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
VOTING SESSION AND WORK SESSION
Wednesday, May 25, 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, Finance Director Chung, and City Clerk Carpenter

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

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA / AGENDA SCHEDULING UPDATE

Ms. Searcy recognized the 19 children and two teachers that lost their lives to gun violence in Uvalde, Texas. She asked for everyone to take a moment to recognize the precocious lives that were lost and to pray for the children that were still in the hospital.

Ms. Stewart thanked Chief DeVaul for contacting all the local school to speak to the principals and for joining her in greeting the children and their parents as they arrived at school in the morning.

Ms. Stewart provided an update on future agendas.

FOR THE RECORD

Ms. Stewart recognized and read the proclamation of Foster Parent Awareness Month.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sandra Grant stated that she would be homeless as of June 1. She said that the Maryland allowed 3-month notice to vacate while Takoma Park allowed 2-month notice to vacate. Ms. Grant said that two months was not adequate time to find a new place to live. She read a poem by Langston Hughes "I too Sing America". She urged the Council to please help the low to moderate income residents

Paul Huebner, Ward 3, commented on the police department renovation. He asked the council to refuse the architectural contract pending disclosure of the overall cost and an explanation of any changes since the previous spending on the final design plans competed in August 2018. He said that the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force recommended using the ARPA funds to pilot a community assistance office separate from the police department and a smaller construction project. He said that that the Council should listen to the task force and the 250 residents that signed the Presbyterian church petition.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Ms. Searcy gave an update on the stormwater work at the Hillwood Manor playground. She reminded the public of the Farmers Market. She thanked the businesses that were part of the Crossroads Development Authority (CDA). She said that the CDA had their annual meeting yesterday morning.

Ms. Kostiuk acknowledged the mass shootings and commented on gun control. She asked that the community look for ways to individually and collectively make a difference. She said that as the Chair to the Human Development Federal Advocacy Committee, she was inquiring if there was more action that the committee could take through the National Leagues of Cities in regards to federal advocacy at the national level in collaboration with municipalities. Ms. Kostiuk asked the Council to consider seeking out a Welcoming Certification that she said would be beneficial to the community. She encouraged member of the community to sign up to get vaccinated.

Ms. Dyballa commented on gun violence. She thanked Ms. Sandra Grant for speaking tonight. She said that she attended the Council of Government Regional Climate and Energy meeting this morning on electric vehicles. She said that the committee amended the work plan to include closer collaboration with the Transportation Planning Board. She announced a funding opportunity in the infrastructure bill for municipalities to do planning around electric vehicles with an 80% federal match. She also announced that the Council of Governments had an RFP out for climate support to municipalities. She encouraged the community members interested in purchasing an electric vehicle to sign up for the Montgomery County Electric Vehicle Co-Op Program.

Mr. Kovar commented on the shooting in Texas. He urged the public to stay engaged on the gun control issues. He said that he attended the Council of Government's Air Quality Committee meeting. He said that the committee reached most of its goals except for ozone levels. He commented on the Montgomery College construction project update meeting. He said that there was another meeting scheduled on May 31 to discuss smaller projects.

Mr. Smith thanked residents that joined the Ward 5 meeting. He also thanked Melissa Williams from Montgomery Planning and Alex Freedman for attending the meeting to discuss the minor master plan. Mr. Smith commented on gun laws

Ms. Stewart said that she attended the Mt. Calvary Baptist Church vigil for the victims of the shooting in Buffalo.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

No comments.

VOTING SESSION

1. Resolution Regarding the Report of the Sustainable Banking and Investments Task Force

Mr. Fox stated that the Council appointed a Sustainable Banking and Investment Task Force. He said the task force generated a 46-page report that included a set of recommendations.

Ms. Dyballa thanked Deputy City Clark, Finance Director Ching, and Councilmember Kovar for helping to put together the resolution. She said that the Council discussed and agreed to draw up a resolution to enact a business policy. She said that the resolution included three things – it formally accepts the Task Force’s report, sets policies based on the Task Force’s recommendations, and it set a September date for City staff to present a timetable on implementing the recommendations. Ms. Dyballa gave a brief overview of how the recommendations were incorporated into the resolution

Ms. Clarke stated that the September deadline for providing a timetable was achievable. She recognized the Task Force for their work and agreed with their recommendation to form another task force to support staff in undertaking this project over multiple years.

Mr. Kovar thanked Ms. Dyballa and members of the Task Force for all their work. He said he looked forward to the idea that some of the work will be done overtime. He agreed to forming another revised version of the Task Force with a more permanent mission to help with various component of the project.

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

Resolution 2022-14 (attached)

2. Single Reading Ordinance Authorizing a Contract for Architectural Services for the Community Center Renovation Project

Mr. Fox explained that the ordinance authorized \$72,550 for architectural service for the community center renovation.

Mr. Smith asked what work was included in the contract.

Ms. Braithwaite stated that it includes finalizing the architectural plans, permit drawing sets, bid documents, and serving as oversight over the project. She said that the start of the contract was several months away.

Mr. Smith asked Ms. Braithwaite to clarify for the public that the Council was not committed to any final construction agreements until the Council reviews the cost of the project.

Ms. Braithwaite replied that once the design and the bid was completed and the City received complete proposals, the information would be presented to Council for review and Council would ultimately decide to award the construction contract.

Mr. Kovar stated that he would be voting no to the ordinance. He said that he did not think that the City should be using ARPA funds at this time for this project. Mr. Kovar said that taking on this construction at the same time as the library construction was not a good plan. He said he would prefer that the City use the funds to assist people in the community.

Mr. Smith concurred with Mr. Kovar. He said that the funds could easily be used to stabilize residents like Ms. Grant, who spoke earlier, and her neighbors. Mr. Smith said we need to make decisions to help those most in need.

Ms. Kostiuk stated that she would be voting yes. She said that it was critical to have space for the community and space for City staff to serve the community. She said that it would enormously help provide the needed mental health services. Ms. Kostiuk stated that she had some concern about the long-term cost of the project and about the proximity of mental health services to the police department.

Ms. Searcy said she agreed with Ms. Kostiuk. She stated that when residents come into the community center there was a lack of space and privacy to address important issues that residents may have. She said that it was important to have adequate capacity for mental health services in the community center. Ms. Searcy said that the City owes that to the residents.

Ms. Dyballa concurred with Ms. Kostiuk and Ms. Searcy.

Ms. Seamens said that he advocated for this change in the community center years ago. He said that there were multiple problems with noise that carries through the building, the lack of space and privacy and, adverse work environment. He said that the City will need the space to provide mental health services.

Ms. Stewart concurred with Mr. Searcy, Ms. Kostiuk, and Mr. Seamens. She said that she was in support of the project. She stated that by bring mental health services to the community the City can be a model for communities around the country. She said that the project was intended to bring community space. Ms. Stewart explained that the ARPA funds were to service the community's immediate needs and the City has set funds aside for that purpose as well as set funds aside for future plans to build a resilient community that can comeback from the pandemic.

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

Ordinance 2022-19 (attached)

3. Resolution to Approve a Letter to the Maryland Healthcare Commission Expressing Support for Adventist Healthcare's Request for Modification of the Certificate of Need for the White Oak Medical Center

Ms. Clarke described the planned services to be provided by Adventist Healthcare. She explained that the resolution would provide a letter of support to the Adventist Healthcare and would be presented to the commission on June 16.

Mr. Kovar commented in support of the letter.

Mr. Smith spoke in opposition of the letter. He asked that the letter indicate that the Ward 5 Councilmember was not in support of this.

Ms. Clarke said that the resolution would reflect the City Council's vote.

Mr. Seamens moved the resolution. Mr. Kovar seconded the motion. (VOTING FOR: Stewart, Kovar, Dyballa, Kostiuk, Seamens, Searcy; VOTING AGAINST: Smith)

Resolution 2022-15 (attached)

WORK SESSION

4. Procurement Presentation (Auditing Services and Preparation of Annual Comprehensive Financial Report)

Mr. Fox stated that staff recommended the audit proposal from Barbacane Thornton & Company

Tim Sawyer from Barbacane Thornton & Company gave a brief presentation.

Ms. Chung stated that the cost for the service was under the budget estimate.

Ms. Stewart thanked Mr. Sawyer for his presentation. She said that the Council would vote on the item next week.

5. Procurement (Closed Captioning and Other CityTV Equipment)

Mr. Fox briefed the council on the procurement of a vendor to assist City TV with improving the quality and access of the City TV channel. He said that staff recommended Municipal Captioning Inc.

Daniell Krawczyk from Municipal Captioning Inc. gave a brief overview of the company's work history and the service they would provide.

Ms. Stewart stated that this item would come back for a vote next week.

ADJOURNMENT

The Council adjourned for the evening at 9:00 p.m.