

Town of Riverdale Park
Work Session Minutes
February 22, 2021
7:00 p.m.

In Attendance

Mayor Alan K. Thompson
CM Marsha Dixon, Ward 1
CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2
CM David Lingua, Ward 3

John N. Lestitian, Town Manager
Jessica Barnes, Town Clerk/Director of Administrative Services
Ryan Chelton, Development Services Director
David Morris, Chief of Police
Paul Smith, Finance and Employee Services Director
Gentry Jones, Finance Manager

Absent

CM Christopher Henry, Ward 4
CM Colleen Richardson, Ward 5
CM Hala Mayers, Ward 6

Call to Order

Mayor Thompson called the Work Session to order at 8:39 p.m.

Agenda Approval

No changes to the agenda.

Presentations

Policing in Riverdale Park: Chief of Police David Morris and Assistant Chief Rosa Guixens
Chief of Police David Morris provided an overview of the Department and Assistant Chief Rosa Guixens discussed the increase in violent crime in and around Riverdale Park. Assistant Chief Guixens outlined several crime prevention measures and Chief Morris discussed the next steps in addressing the increase in violent crime.

Chief Morris also outlined current practices and initiatives relating to recruitment and retention, promotional processes, best practices related to medical training, duty to intervene, duty to report misconduct, and the body-worn camera program. Chief Morris discussed annual training programs such as de-escalation, mental health response, implicit bias, autism, use-of-force, and supervision and leadership. Chief Morris outlined several process improvements that were currently underway such as mental health support, developing education assistance program, establishing a random drug testing program, and enhancing supervisory promotional processes. Chief Morris discussed several changes that required statutory authority.

Mayor Thompson stated that, according to his research, the increase in carjackings was nationwide and not just a local issue. Chief Morris noted that violent crime had also increased nationwide.

Resident Lora Katz if there were any trends with regard to the increase in crime and Chief Morris discussed the increase in juveniles offenders and the disruption in court proceedings due to COVID-19. Chief Morris also discussed the social issues that contributed to the increase in crime.

CM Faulx reported that, in his time as a member of the Council, it was remarkable to work with the staff team and that he was grateful for the staff and their hard work. CM Faulx noted that it was easy to talk with the Town Manager, Chief of Police, and Assistant Chief of Police.

CM Lingua thanked Chief Morris and Assistant Chief Guixens for the presentation. CM Lingua asked that if the items listed as in-process improvements would be included in the upcoming budget and Chief Morris replied in the affirmative. Chief Morris stated that some of the in-process improvements would not be overly burdensome on the budget and Town Manager Lestitian reported that all of in-process improvements would be incorporated into the proposed budget.

FY2022 Budget: Revenue - FY2021 Estimated Actuals and FY2022 Projections

Finance Manager Gentry Jones provided an overview of the FY2021 Estimated Actuals and FY2022 Projections. Town Manager Lestitian discussed the increase in local income tax revenue and the impact on overall revenue. Town Manager Lestitian also noted that the projected residential property tax revenue was based on the assumption that the tax rate would remain the same.

Mayor Thompson thanked Finance Manager Jones and staff for being so conservative with the budget estimates last year so that there would be a surplus at the end of the fiscal year.

Mayor Thompson asked if staff expected that the Town would have to send any Safe Speed for Students revenue back to the State. Finance Director Smith discussed the increase in expenses related to the program and stated that he did not think that the Town would reach the required threshold.

Mayor Thompson requested additional information regarding Account 4501 Highway User Revenue (HUR) and Finance Manager Jones provided an overview.

CM Lingua asked about the revenue in Account 4100 Licenses and Permits and if the waiver of permit fees had substantially impacted revenue. Town Manager Lestitian provided clarification and noted that the waiver of permit fees only applied to residential projects and not commercial projects.

Town Manager Lestitian stated that the numbers at the end of the report were gross numbers and did not reflect the General Fund transfers to the CIP for capital equipment and capital improvement projects.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Alan Thompson reported:

- Report of Closed Meeting held on 2/15: to discuss the performance evaluation of employee over whom the public body has jurisdiction (Statutory Authority 1), specifically to discuss the performance review for Town Manager Lestitian. At the Closed Meeting the content, format, and methodology of the draft report prepared by the Mayor was discussed as well as the conclusions and corrections/revisions to be made. The only action taken was to direct the Mayor to finalize the evaluation and deliver it to the Town Manager no later than next Monday.
- COVID-19 update: looking so much better and numbers are down; encouraged social distancing, wear mask, wash hands, avoid large gatherings, and to get the vaccine as soon as possible. Mayor Thomson is working with others to get more vaccines here.

Town Manager's Report

Town Manager Lestitian reported:

- Update on veto override that the Mayor and Council supported regarding HB1236 on the MARC Rail expansion: veto override occurred on February 12th
- Discussion regarding parking tickets: down by 59.43% year to year which speaks to the discretion that officers are using in the enforcement of parking regulations; will explore whether any legislative action is needed
- Reminder regarding State of Town presentation: March 15th at 7:30 p.m.
- Kudos to Department of Public Works team for a wonderful job keeping the streets and sidewalks clear; Neighborhood Services team for addressing a lot of issues in multifamily buildings throughout the winter. Doing a wonderful job for our residents.
- Police Department response to serious incidents in Town has been inspiring, the dedication of officers to save lives
- Thank you to Mayor and Council for leadership in response to recent violent crime

Council Committee & Ward Reports

CM Marsha Dixon, Ward 1

CM Marsha Dixon reported:

- Two recent incidents in Town: really appreciated the expediency in response to informing the Mayor and Council; and thank you to the officers who have been working throughout the pandemic
- Encourage everyone to stay safe and vigilant
- Thank you to Town staff for helping navigate the pandemic, things are going as smoothly as possible
- Received second vaccine and did have some minor side effects

CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2

CM Aaron Faulx reported:

- Deferred majority of comments to next week
- Got second shot on Friday with no side effects; parents received their second shot, and this is remarkably comforting
- Wear a mask, social distance, and wash hands; continues to be effective in fighting COVID-19

CM David Lingua, Ward 3

CM David Lingua deferred his report to next week.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Discussion Items

1. Ordinance 2021-OR-02 regarding 2021 Election Procedures

Administrative Services Director Jessica Barnes provided an overview of the legislation and requested action related to Ordinance 2021-OR-02 regarding 2021 Election Procedures. There were no questions or comments.

2. Ordinance 2021-OR-03 regarding Budget Amendment to reflect CARES Act funding

Town Manager Lestitian provided an overview of the legislation and requested action related to Ordinance 2021-OR-03 regarding Budget Amendment to reflect CARES Act funding. Mr. Jones provided additional information regarding the requested budget amendment. There were no questions or comments.

3. Community Conversations Initiative

Administrative Services Director Barnes provided an overview of Community Conversations Initiative.

Mayor Thompson stated that he was glad that the Town was moving forward with the program and the format and idea sounded great. CM Lingua and CM Faulx agreed that it was an excellent idea.

4. Town Election: May 3, 2021

Administrative Services Director Barnes discussed the preparations being made for the May 3rd Town Election specifically related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. Minutes

Mayor Thompson requested that the Council make staff aware of any changes or corrections needed to the minutes.

New Business

- CM Lingua discussed the hiring of a new director at Riversdale House Museum and the upcoming departure of Director Edward Day. CM Lingua reported that the staff at Riversdale were planning to do have a recognition event for Director Day and suggested that the Town designate a day for Edward Day in Riverdale Park, similar to what was done for Ms. Wass.
- Mayor Thompson reported that Ordinance 2021-OR-04 regarding a budget amendment related to Improving Neighborhood Safety was introduced in the last Work Session and asked if there was any additional discussion regarding the ordinance. Mayor Thompson noted that there would be more opportunities to discuss the ordinance in the future.

- Mayor Thompson stated that he would like to add HB 626 Prince George's County - Height Monitoring (Automated Enforcement) to next week's agenda as a hearing before the Environment and Transportation Committee had been scheduled for March 4th. Mayor Thompson stated that he would like to send an official letter of support for the legislation. CM Lingua stated he did not have any concerns with sending a letter of support for HB 626 as it would have a positive impact on the Town. Mayor Thompson added that the Prince George's County Council also supported the legislation.

Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:33 p.m.