

**Town of Riverdale Park
Special Legislative Meeting Minutes
October 18, 2021**

In Attendance

Alan K. Thompson, Mayor
CM Richard Smith, Ward 1
CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2
CM David Lingua, Ward 3
CM Karen Mejia, Ward 5

John N. Lestitian, Town Manager
Paul Smith, Director of Finance and Employee Services
Jessica Barnes, Director of Administrative Services/Town Clerk

Absent

CM Thomas Sadiq, Ward 4
CM Hala Mayers, Ward 6

Call to Order

Mayor Thompson called the Special Legislative meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Approval of the Agenda

CM Faulx made a motion to approve the Special Legislative Meeting agenda for October 18, 2021. The motion was seconded by CM Lingua. Vote: 4-0-1 (Favorable)

Roll Call Vote

CM Richard Smith, Ward 1: Aye
CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2: Aye
CM David Lingua, Ward 3: Aye
CM Thomas Sadiq, Ward 4: Absent
CM Karen Mejia, Ward 5: Aye
CM Hala Mayers, Ward 6: Absent
Alan K. Thompson, Mayor: Abstained

Discussion:

There were no amendments or stated conflicts of interest.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Legislative Action Items

1. Motion regarding request from City of College Park regarding Prince George's County Councilmanic District Map presented at the County Council Committee of the Whole meeting on October 14, 2021

CM Lingua made a motion for the Town of Riverdale Park to be a signatory on the letter drafted by College Park regarding the redistricting plan, the Davis Plan, recently

approved on October 14th when the County met as a Committee of the Whole. CM Smith seconded the motion. Vote: 4-0-1 (Favorable)

Roll Call Vote

CM Richard Smith, Ward 1: Aye
CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2: Aye
CM David Lingua, Ward 3: Aye
CM Thomas Sadiq, Ward 4: Absent
CM Karen Mejia, Ward 5: Aye
CM Hala Mayers, Ward 6: Absent
Alan K. Thompson, Mayor: Abstained

Discussion:

Mayor Thompson reported that members of the County Council had been invited to attend the Special Legislative Meeting.

District 3 County CM Dannielle Glaros provided an update on the status of the Prince George's County Redistricting process. CM Glaros discussed the Redistricting Commission's proposal which included minor changes to District 3. CM Glaros stated that a new map had been presented during the final day of the County Council's work session which contained more substantial changes. CM Glaros stated that she had voted against the new map because, unlike the Redistricting Commission's map, there had not been adequate opportunity for public input. CM Glaros also noted that she was concerned about the impact on the Purple Line communities as well as the University of Maryland College Park. CM Glaros stated that legislation for the new map would be introduced tomorrow, the last day for introduction of legislation, and the final public hearing would be held on November 16th. CM Glaros reported that the new map, if approved, would go into effect for the 2022 election cycle, and if the new map was not approved, the Redistricting Commission's original proposal would stand.

CM Faulx asked if the first time that CM Glaros had seen the new map was the morning prior to the discussion at the work session and CM Glaros replied in the affirmative. CM Faulx stated that the process seemed to be flawed.

CM Smith asked about the origin of the new map. CM Glaros stated that the new map was created by County CM Davis with the assistance of the County's redistricting consultant and, according to the *Maryland Matters* article, shared with some County Council colleagues but not all. CM Glaros recommended reviewing the video of the County Council's work session meeting. CM Smith asked about the application of the Maryland Open Meetings Act and sunshine laws, and CM Glaros noted that those issues had not been raised by the members of the County Council. CM Smith stated that he had a profound respect for the institution of democracy and was concerned with how the County Council had proceeded so far with the alternative map. Mayor Thompson stated that the alternative map was likely discussed in sub quorum groups.

CM Lingua asked about the timeline for discussion of redistricting maps and CM Glaros provided an overview. CM Glaros stated that it was unusual that a new map was presented and moved forward with only an hour and a half of discussion. CM Lingua asked if the same amount of data had been provided with the Davis proposal as was provided with the Redistricting Commission's proposal. CM Glaros stated that some

information was shared but it was not the same quality of information as was shown with the Redistricting Commission's proposal.

CM Lingua asked if, during the timeframe of September 1 through October 14, any members of the County Council had offered amendments to the Redistricting Commission's proposal. CM Glaros stated that she was aware of discussions regarding minor changes, but the new map presented at the work session was substantially different.

CM Smith asked about the impact of the new map on District 3 and the County as a whole. CM Glaros outlined her concerns regarding relationships with community stakeholders, development, and the impact on who would be eligible to run for office.

Mayor Thompson asked if there was anything that precluded maps being presented earlier in the process and CM Glaros that that there was not. CM Glaros stated that it was her understanding that the Redistricting Commission was under the impression that the County Council wanted a least change map.

Mayor Thompson stated that substantial changes to legislation at the last minute typically happen only if something was overlooked previously. Mayor Thompson asked if anything was shared with regard to a serious oversight. CM Glaros discussed the demographics of District 2 and the desire to unite split municipalities. CM Glaros added that College Park wanted to remain in two districts and supported the Redistricting Commission's map.

Mayor Thompson stated that it was his understanding that there were no new issues that required a radical reorganization of the redistricting map and CM Glaros reported that there had been little formal testimony on the Redistricting Commission's proposal. CM Lingua suggested that the small amount of community input could be viewed as tacit approval of the Redistricting Commission's proposal and CM Glaros agreed.

Resident Dan Behrend discussed his concerns regarding the overall redistricting process and the appearance of a politically motivated and last-minute change. Mr. Behrend stated that the new map would impact nearly 17% of County's population and there was little opportunity for public input for such an impactful change. Mr. Behrend stated that the process seemed undemocratic. Mr. Behrend thanked CM Glaros for her leadership.

Resident Alex Hirtle discussed the remainder of the redistricting process and potential scenarios. CM Glaros provided additional clarity regarding the process. Mr. Hirtle suggested that the Mayor and Council forward their concerns to the County Executive if there was role in the process for the County Executive.

Mayor Thompson reviewed the letter provided by the City of College Park.

CM Lingua stated that the letter drafted by College Park covered the issues that the Town had with the redistricting process. CM Faulx agreed. There were no objections.

2. Motion regarding Prince George's County Council redistricting process

Mayor Thompson asked if further action was needed. CM Lingua stated that the Town needed to express clearly how the next redistricting process should be conducted.

CM Faulx stated that what happened during the current process was remarkably unsettling and a subversion of the democratic process. CM Faulx stated that he wanted to comment now and not on a process that would happen in 10 years.

CM Lingua stated that the decisions made now would impact the County for the next 10 years and the Prince George's County Municipal Association (PGCMA) should make the expectations of the County's municipalities known as they relate to the overall redistricting process.

CM Smith encouraged everyone to read the *Maryland Matters* article to better understand the impact that the new map would have on candidates for the upcoming election.

CM Faulx suggested that further discussion of the matter was needed at the November Work Session.

Mr. Hirtle discussed his concerns with the overall process to include the timing of significant amendments, the amount of public review and comment, and those who are voting on something that would impact the County for 10 years but would not be accountable to the public through the election process. Mr. Hirtle reiterated that the process was severely flawed and needed to change.

Mayor Thompson stated that the Town would be starting the redistricting process soon.

Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

New Business

There was no new business.

Adjournment

CM Faulx made a motion to adjourn the Special Legislative Meeting at 8:11 p.m. CM Smith seconded the motion. Vote: 4-0-1 (Favorable)

Roll Call Vote

CM Richard Smith, Ward 1: Aye
CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2: Aye
CM David Lingua, Ward 3: Aye
CM Thomas Sadiq, Ward 4: Absent
CM Karen Mejia, Ward 5: Aye
CM Hala Mayers, Ward 6: Absent
Alan K. Thompson, Mayor: Abstained