

Town of Riverdale Park
Public Hearing regarding RISE Zone Renewal
November 22, 2021
7:00 p.m.

In Attendance

Mayor Alan K. Thompson
CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2
CM David Lingua, Ward 3
CM Thomas Sadiq, Ward 4
CM Hala Mayers, Ward 6

John N. Lestitian, Town Manager
Jessica Barnes, Town Clerk/Director of Administrative Services
Ryan Chelton, Development Services Director
Ivy Lewis, Director of Public Projects and Services
Paul Smith, Finance and Employee Services Director
Gentry Jones, Deputy Director of Finance Services
Rosa Guixens, Acting Chief of Police

Absent

CM Richard Smith, Ward 1
CM Karen Mejia, Ward 5

Call to Order

Mayor Thompson called the Work Session to order at 7:00 p.m.

Public Hearing

Development Services Director Ryan Chelton provided an overview of the RISE Zone renewal.

Resident Lora Katz asked about the benefits of the program and if there was a long-term plan for the program. Director Chelton reported that recent amendments to the program would help incentivize certain types of businesses to move into Town and potentially attract more businesses. Town Manager Lestitian discussed the concerns regarding the Town's assessable base as it related to the commercial and office sectors due to the increase in remote work.

Mayor Thompson asked if the Town had lost any revenue related to the RISE Zone program over the last 5 years and Director Chelton replied that there had not been any participants in the property tax credit portion of the program in the last five years.

Mayor Thompson asked for clarification regarding how the rental assistance program would work and Director Chelton provided an overview of the rental assistance portion of the program. Town Manager Lestitian provided additional information and stated that staff would seek more information regarding whether ARPA funds could be used to provide existing businesses with rental assistance.

Ms. Katz stated that it was her understanding that one of the buildings in the Discovery District was used for production or fabrication, not office space. Town Manager Lestitian clarified that certain industries were targeted in the RISE Zone and the term office space referred to non-retail commercial businesses. Ms. Katz discussed the new buildings at the University of Maryland.

Ms. Katz asked if the RISE Zone would be in place for perpetuity. Director Chelton stated that the program would be in place for 5 years and then would be re-evaluated for renewal. CM Lingua stated that the program would be evaluated based on what happened over the next 5-year period and the amendments to the program could make a difference.

Mayor Thompson clarified that the program would also have to be renewed by the State after 5 years. Mayor Thompson read the list of industries targeted by the RISE Zone and noted that there could also be an increase in personal property taxes based on the types of businesses targeted.

Town Manager Lestitian asked that the record remain open until December 6th for written comments and Mayor Thompson replied in the affirmative.

There were no additional public comments.

Adjournment

Mayor Thompson closed the public hearing at 7:20 p.m.