

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

In Attendance

Mayor Alan K. Thompson
CM Richard Smith, Ward 1
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 Karen Mejia, Ward 5

Call to Order

Mayor Thompson called the Work Session to order at 7:20 p.m.

Agenda Approval

There were no changes to the agenda or stated conflicts of interest.

Mayor Thompson stated that he would like to discuss Council Committee Assignments as Unfinished Business.

CM Lingua stated that he would like to discuss an item related to Greater Riverdale Care and Route 1 Communities Cares as Unfinished Business.

Presentation

Introduction to Budget Format

Deputy Director of Finance Services Gentry Jones provided an overview of the format of the budget and the components of the budget. Deputy Director Jones gave an overview of each section of the budget and discussed the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Award.

CM Sadiq asked for clarification regarding where the budget was located on the Town's website.

CM Lingua congratulated staff on receiving the Distinguished Budget Award from GFOA again this year.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Alan Thompson reported:

- Will be observing Thanksgiving in a few days
- Personal thanks to serve as Mayor and thankful for day job, thankful for family, thankful for health, thankful to Town Staff, Council, residents, and businesses.

Town Manager's Report

Town Manager John Lestitian reported:

- Town Hall and DPW will be closed on Thursday and Friday in observance of Thanksgiving
- Thankful for residents, Council leadership, and staff
- Trash will not be collected on Thursday due to Thanksgiving; it will resume on Monday
- Reminder that Small Business Saturday is this Saturday: shop small, and shop local as often as possible
- Municipal Center Project: DPW Entrance portion of the project will start the week of November 29th
- 48th Avenue Sidewalk project will also start the week of November 29th
- Schedule for Roadway Repair Projects will be received by the end of the week of November 29th
- County is making progress in its review of the Longfellow Street Stormwater project: residents will receive easement documents this week
- Fourteen new pet waste stations have been installed throughout Town and a map will be coming soon
- Luminis will hold a Vaccination Clinic at the Farmers Market on December 2nd from 3:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
- Town Toy Drive: 160 families (approximately 400 kids) signed up this year, a much larger number than ever before, will be coordinating with County Toys for Tots program

Discussion:

Mayor Thompson asked when the deadline was to donate toys for the Toy Drive and Director Barnes stated that the deadline was December 10th.

CM Sadiq stated that residents had noticed the new pet waste stations and thanked staff for installing them. Town Manager Lestitian stated that staff appreciated the feedback.

CM Lingua asked if notices had gone out to residents potentially impacted by the 48th Avenue Sidewalk project and Director Lewis replied that the notices had been distributed a month ago.

Council Committee & Ward Reports

CM Richard Smith, Ward 1

CM Richard Smith reported:

- Feeling under the weather but attended the meeting for the budget presentation
- Congratulations to staff for the GFOA Distinguished Budget Award
- Thankful not to have COVID-19
- Reminder: now is a good time to take your turkey out to thaw in time for Thanksgiving
- Special Farmers Market tomorrow- can pick up your free-range turkey

- Enthusiastic support for recommendations of the Riverdale Park Station traffic calming report; seeking support from the Council
- 86th Iron Bowl to be held this weekend

CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2

CM Aaron Faulx reported:

- Deferred report to the Legislative Meeting
- Remarkably thankful for wife and son
- Thankful for Town staff, Mayor Thompson, Council, and residents
- Live life day by day as nothing is promised

CM David Lingua, Ward 3

CM David Lingua reported:

- Concur with colleagues: very fortunate and very thankful
- Request from John Tabori regarding Greater Riverdale Cares and Route 1 Communities Cares program to assist with food insecurity and assist local businesses; will be discussed as Unfinished Business
- Overview of comments from County Executive Alsobrooks regarding COVID-19 case rates, County's efforts to help combat the pandemic, and raising the commercial tax base
- Safe travels to those travelling for Thanksgiving

CM Thomas Sadiq, Ward 4

CM Thomas Sadiq did not have a report.

CM Hala Mayers, Ward 6

CM Hala Mayers did not have a report but asked that the crosswalk between 54th Avenue and Jefferson Street be repainted. Director Lewis reported that the crosswalk was included in the upcoming Road Improvement project.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Discussion Items

1. FY2022 Revenue Update

Deputy Director Jones provided an overview of the FY2021 Revenue categories in comparison to three previous fiscal years.

Resident Ifiok Inyang asked about the parking permit revenue related to the cost of the permits. Mayor Thompson clarified that the cost of the parking permits was simply to cover the cost of the program.

2. CIP Budget Amendment regarding CIP Project #11PW07 Streets and Sidewalk Improvement

Deputy Director Jones provided an overview of Ordinance 2021-OR-10 regarding an amendment to the FY2022 Budget related to CIP Project #11PW07 Streets and Sidewalk Improvement. Mayor Thompson noted that the Budget Amendment was discussed at the November 1st meeting.

CM Lingua stated that he would introduce the ordinance on December 6th.

3. Walk, Bike, Drive: Riverdale Park Station Traffic Calming

Director of Public Projects and Services Ivy Lewis provided an overview of the Traffic Calming Report for Riverdale Park Station. Director Lewis discussed the four key findings from the Report: 1) each location met the eight criteria for the installation of a speed hump as established by the Town's speed hump policy; 2) speeding was not a consistent issue; 3) narrow streets and curbside parking served as traffic calming measures as intended, and 4) additional stop signs were needed, and several existing stop signs were not benefiting the community.

Director Lewis discussed the recommendations included in the Report: 1) the installation of additional stop signs on Woodberry Street, Van Buren Street, and Rhode Island Avenue, creating all-way stops; 2) the removal of the stop signs that were not serving the community and that could potentially create hazards for drivers and pedestrians; 3) installation of high visibility, ladder style crosswalks in key locations, "Stop Ahead" pavement marking on the bridge, and retaining the speed humps on Woodberry Street and Van Buren Street at the trail crossings; 4) continue monitoring traffic volumes and speeds as development occurs; and 5) install speed humps on Woodberry Street, Rhode Island Avenue, and 47th Avenue after other recommended traffic calming measures are implemented.

Director Lewis stated that staff would work with the developer to implement some of the recommendations during the current fiscal year and seek additional funding in the FY2023 budget to cover the cost of the other recommendations.

CM Lingua discussed the request for speed humps on Longfellow Street. Town Manager Lestitian stated that staff would review the information from several years ago and bring it back to the Council at a future meeting. Director Lewis discussed the amount of data generated over the last several months.

Riverdale Park Station resident, Wendy, stated that it was human nature to slow down near radar speed signs which would impact the data collected. She also stated that the narrow roadways and curves did not deter speeding and stop signs were not being recognized regularly by many drivers. She stated that she was concerned that an accident would happen.

Mayor Thompson stated that the Council shared the resident's concerns, and it was difficult to change behavior. Director Lewis stated that the Report recommended a comprehensive approach to changing driver behavior and after implementation, staff would continue to monitor the situation. Mayor Thompson discussed the speed hump near his home.

Riverdale Park Station resident, TC, stated that he appreciated the opportunity to discuss the issue with the Mayor and Council. TC stated that the ongoing construction impacted the data collected and Woodberry Road was a straightaway which contributed to the issues with speeding. TC also stated that the road transfer had been discussed for many years but had not happened yet, so he did not want the implementation of the

recommendations to wait until after the road transfer. TC discussed his concerns regarding the potential impact of speeding on his family.

Mayor Thompson asked residents if the traffic had slowed down since the apartment building was completed and TC responded via chat message that speeding was still an issue.

Riverdale Park Station resident Ifiok Inyang stated that he lived on Woodberry Street near the Trolley Trail and his car had been sideswiped. Mr. Inyang stated that he was unclear about whether the recommendations contained in the Report were based on meeting a minimum threshold for the installation of speed humps. Mr. Inyang noted that the traffic patterns were not normal during the traffic data collection period as construction was taking place and there were fewer drivers on the street due to the pandemic. Director Lewis explained that all of the criteria for the installation of speed humps were met but it was recommended that all other measures be installed before speed humps. Mr. Inyang asked the Town to take a more aggressive stance with the developer related to implementing the recommendations. Mayor Thompson noted that the Town had actually seen an increase in speeding during the pandemic.

Riverdale Park Station resident Leo Dorsey stated that he hoped for continued discussion and continued traffic monitoring. Mr. Dorsey noted that Riverdale Park Station had a unique density which increased the chances of tragedy.

Mayor Thompson discussed a pilot program with very small speed cameras that were less intrusive. Mayor Thompson stated that he would like to see authorization for micro speed cameras, stop sign cameras, and truck enforcement.

Mr. Inyang asked if the details of the recommended options would be discussed at a future meeting. Mayor Thompson stated that there was detailed information available about the recommendations in the Report.

Mayor Thompson discussed the traffic data included in the Report.

CM Lingua suggested that Riverdale Park Station residents could conduct a write in campaign to encourage the developer to implement the recommendations.

TC stated that Riverdale Park Station residents had raised the issues with the developer, but it always seemed to become a back and forth between the Town and the developer regarding who was responsible. TC asked if residents could raise the funds for the speed humps. Town Manager Lestitian stated that staff agreed with the recommendations and there appeared to be support from the Mayor and Council to move forward. Town Manager Lestitian explained the next steps that staff would take.

Mr. Inyang stated that residents were frustrated because they had been living with the issues for over four years. Mr. Inyang asked if some or all of the recommendations would be implemented, and Director Lewis stated that all of the recommendations would be implemented over time.

Director Lewis provided an overview of the process for installing speed bumps to include permitting, procurement, engineering, construction, and a rough timeframe for the process.

Town Manager Lestitian stated that it was important that community understood that staff would start the process in the next coming weeks.

4. Planning Assistance to Municipalities and Communities (PAMC) Application for Tree Inventory and Condition Assessment

Director Lewis stated that, at the December Legislative meeting, staff would request approval of a Resolution supporting an application for funding and technical assistance from the County Planning Department's Planning Assistance to Municipalities and Communities (PAMC) program to complete a Town-wide tree inventory and condition assessment. Director Lewis provided an overview of the PAMC program and application process.

Director Lewis discussed the previous tree assessment completed in 2019, the number of trees lost since 2019, and the number of trees that had been added to the Town's inventory since that time. Director Lewis discussed the scope and type of information to be included in the new Tree Inventory and Assessment. Director Lewis stated that staff would request CIP funding in FY2023 for the Tree Inventory and Assessment if the Town did not receive funding through the PAMC program.

Mayor Thompson asked if all of the trees in Town would be included, or only Town-owned trees, and Director Lewis clarified that only Town-owned trees would be included.

Resident Lora Katz thanked Director Lewis for her work on the project and asked if the Town had ever received PAMC funding. Director Lewis discussed her experience with the PAMC program and stated that the program management and technical assistance aspects of the PAMC program would be very beneficial to the Town.

Mr. Inyang asked what the expected increase in cost would be related to the trees in Riverdale Park Station and Director Lewis stated that an inventory of the infrastructure would be completed prior to the Town assuming responsibility for the trees. Mr. Inyang asked if the PAMC program funding was annual, and Director Lewis provided an overview.

Mayor Thompson stated that he was looking forward to the Tree Inventory and Condition Assessment.

5. Review and recommended updates to Partners in Economic Recovery programs

Development Services Director Ryan Chelton provided an overview of the Partners in Economic Recovery programming to include: the Farmers Market Dollars Program, the amended Business Growth Grant Program, the amended Business Improvement Grant Program, the Emergency Repair Grant, and the waiver of residential permit fees. Director Chelton noted that staff recommended that the Mayor and Council take action to extend the programs at the December 6th Legislative Meeting.

Mayor Thompson asked if the programs were eligible for reimbursement through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and Director Chelton provided an overview.

Mayor Thompson asked how many families were participating in the Farmers Market Dollars program and Director Chelton replied that 236 households were currently participating.

There were no additional questions from the Mayor, Council, or public.

6. Process for appointment of Chief of Police

Town Manager Lestitian noted that the appointment of a Chief of Police, due to a recent retirement, would be the first vacancy to be filled under the new form of government and subsequent changes to the Town Charter regarding Department Heads. Town Manager Lestitian provided an overview of the process and discussed the role of Raftelis, formerly the Novak Consulting Group, to design and administer an outreach and input process for the development of a profile for the Town of Riverdale Park Chief of Police.

There were no questions from the Mayor, Council, or public.

Mayor Thompson stated that it was a good process, and it was important to be careful and deliberate when selecting a new Chief of Police.

7. Proposed Riverdale Park Board of Elections

Administrative Services Director Jessica Barnes discussed changes to the Town Charter and Code to establish a Board of Elections. Director Barnes provided an overview of the staff recommendations regarding a Board of Elections and the revisions needed to the Town Charter and Code as identified by Town Attorney Fred Sussman.

CM Lingua asked about the timeline for the establishment of the Board of Elections and Director Barnes provided an overview related to the next Town Election in 2023.

CM Sadiq asked when the Council would take action and Mayor Thompson discussed the timing of the legislative process related to the proposed changes.

8. Prince George's County Climate Action Plan

Town Manager Lestitian stated that there was an opportunity for the Town to comment on the Prince George's County Climate Action Plan. Town Manager Lestitian stated that staff were seeking direction regarding what should be included in comments submitted by the Town. Town Manager Lestitian stated that staff could create a draft letter and work with Mayor Thompson to finalize the language in the letter.

Mayor Thompson stated that he would review the Prince George's County Climate Action Plan and provide comments.

Mayor Thompson asked if the Green Team would be able to provide feedback and Ms. Katz replied that it was unlikely due to the tight timeline. Ms. Katz noted that the Plan aligned with the Town's vision and commitment to sustainability.

There were no additional questions from the Mayor, Council, or public.

9. Statewide redistricting

Town Manager Lestitian stated that staff were seeking direction regarding whether the Mayor and Council would like to comment on the Statewide Redistricting process.

Mayor Thompson provided an overview of the discussion at a recent Prince George's County Municipal Association (PGCMA) meeting and stated that the Council may want to weigh in.

10. Town Manager Annual Performance Review Process

Mayor Thompson provided an overview of the Town Manager's Annual Performance Review process and timeline. Mayor Thompson stated that he would provide a schedule and format at the next meeting.

11. Minutes

Mayor Thompson asked the Council to provide staff with any changes or corrections needed to the minutes.

New Business

There was no new business.

Unfinished Business

Council Committee Appointments

Mayor Thompson discussed the Council Committees outlined in Chapter 2, Section 2-1 of the Town Code. Mayor Thompson provided an overview of how the Council Committees operated in the past and reported that, in addition to the standing committees, there would be a Community Affairs Committee and an Economic Development and Recovery Committee.

Mayor Thompson stated that the draft committee assignments would be sent to the Council for their review and comment prior to the next meeting.

Greater Riverdale Cares and Route 1 Community Cares

CM Lingua discussed recent outreach from former University Park Mayor John Tabori regarding funding for the Greater Riverdale Cares and Route 1 Community Cares restaurant assistance and food distribution program. CM Lingua stated that a request had been sent to the Town, and other municipalities, seeking .5% of the projected ARPA funds. CM Lingua discussed the need for the program as well as the expansion of the program to William Wirt Middle School. CM Lingua outlined the benefits to the restaurants participating in the program. CM Lingua stated that he was not opposed to allocating .5% of the projected ARPA funds to the program.

Town Manager Lestitian reported that Town staff had responded to the inquiry regarding funding for the program and informed the representatives of the program that there would be an application process for non-profits to apply for ARPA funds. Town Manager Lestitian stated that the same message had been shared with other organizations seeking ARPA funds.

Mayor Thompson stated that a consistent schedule and process were important. Mayor Thompson asked if current funds could be used to mitigate current situation, perhaps from the Economic Development Fund. Town Manager Lestitian stated that staff could come up with different options regarding funding. Town Manager Lestitian stated that staff planned to have an application process in place by March but could do so sooner if the Mayor and Council wanted.

Mayor Thompson stated that the Town had been generous with contributions to the program in the past and could look for options to address with the current needs. CM Lingua stated that he would like to assist the program through the end of 2022 as it would help Town businesses and residents. CM Lingua stated that he also wanted to be sure that staff had adequate time to develop a consistent and transparent process for receiving requests for ARPA funds. CM Lingua noted that the Town had been involved with the program prior to the allotment of ARPA funds.

Town Manager Lestitian stated that the Town had received another request from a different organization to address food insecurity which highlighted the need for a consistent and fair process. CM Lingua noted that he had spoken with a representative from the other organization, Passion and Compassion Ministries, as well.

CM Faulx asked how much money was available in the Social Concerns line item and Town Manager Lestitian reported that \$8,000 remained. CM Faulx stated that an open dialogue with the Council was needed, and he did not want to piece meal the requests for ARPA funds.

Mayor Thompson stated that the topic would be discussed at the December meeting.

Town Manager Lestitian stated that he would work with the Finance team to determine if funding was available.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:16 p.m.