

Town of Riverdale Park
Work Session Minutes
February 28, 2022
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
Gentry Jones, Deputy Director of Finance Services
Ivy Lewis, Director of Public Projects and Services
Rosa Guixens, Acting Chief of Police
Paul Smith, Director of Finance Services

Absent

CM Karen Mejia, Ward 5

Call to Order

Mayor Thompson called the Work Session to order at 7:24 p.m.

Agenda Approval

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

Presentations

Review of Residential Trash Collection Program: Ivy Lewis, Director of Public Projects and Services

Public Projects and Services Director Ivy Lewis provided an overview of the Town's residential trash collection program and the transition to JEDA Trucking. Director Lewis discussed the scope of services included in the Town's contract with JEDA Trucking.

Mr. Jesse Tartt of JEDA Trucking reported that there had been very few issues since starting in August 2021. Mr. Tartt stated that learning the community was initially a challenge, but the routes had become pretty natural now. Mr. Tartt reported that residents were very friendly. Mr. Tartt stated that COVID-19 had made staffing a challenge, but things were running very smoothly.

CM Sadiq stated that he was extremely impressed by the vendors diligence in collecting a piece of paper that had blown out of a trash can. CM Sadiq suggested that the Town make sure to note on the website when trash collection was occurring when Town offices were closed.

CM Smith complimented the professionalism of JEDA staff and asked how the pay and benefits were for JEDA employees. Mr. Tartt stated that both were above industry standard and outlined the benefits his workers received. Mr. Smith asked if Mr. Tartt would be neutral if the workers chose to unionize and Mr. Tartt replied that he had 28 employees and 28 families to take care of. CM Smith thanked Mr. Tartt for their service to the Town.

Resident Lora Katz asked about the Town's trash tonnage compared to other jurisdictions and Mr. Tartt replied that the Town's contract had started during the COVID-19 pandemic, so the tonnage was extremely high for all jurisdictions. Mr. Tartt stated that it was difficult to make an appropriate comparison.

Ms. Katz asked if it cost more to dispose of trash versus yard waste and Mr. Tartt replied that there was a significant difference in the price. Ms. Katz asked if there was anything else that residents could do to reduce the tonnage, and Mr. Tartt replied that residents were doing their part. Director Lewis reported that staff had established baselines to make more accurate comparisons of tonnage and trends.

Director Lewis discussed the data compiled through the Town's Report-a-Concern app. Ms. Katz asked how the concerns were tracked and Director Lewis provided an overview. Director Lewis noted that some residents chose to reach out to the vendor directly instead of using Report-a-Concern. CM Lingua reported that the magnet distributed with the new trash cans had the phone number and website address for the vendor. Mr. Tartt discussed JEDA's approach to customer service. Town Manager Lestitian reported that a very small number of complaints had been received, in comparison to the number of households that receive trash collection services, over the last five months.

Mayor Thompson stated that he had received very positive feedback from residents. Mayor Thompson asked about the impact of wet bulk items on tonnage and Mr. Tartt stated that there was not a lot that could be done about bulk items getting wet due to weather.

Mayor Thompson thanked Mr. Tartt for being proactive during the recent snow event.

Micro-Mobility in Riverdale Park: Alex Keating, VeoRide

Development Services Director Ryan Chelton provided an overview of VeoRide and introduced Alex Keating, Director of Public Policy and Partnerships for VeoRide. Mr. Keating discussed VeoRide's products and services and reported that VeoRide was in the process of finalizing an updated agreement with the University of Maryland, College Park, and University Park.

CM Sadiq stated that he enjoyed using VeoRide but noted that there were few places for scooter parking (bike racks) in Town. Mr. Keating stated that VeoRide would work with the Town to determine where the scooters could be parked. Mr. Keating discussed the options available including geofencing. Mr. Keating reported that VeoRide typically responded to complaints regarding vehicles in the public right-of-way within 2 to 3 hours.

CM Sadiq asked how the vandalism of scooters was handled. Mr. Keating provided an overview of how VeoRide handled vandalism but noted that it was not a frequent issue. CM Sadiq asked how to report issues through the VeoRide app and Mr. Keating provided an overview.

CM Smith asked about the nature of the agreements with the other jurisdictions. Mr. Keating provided an overview and noted that the agreements were separate for each jurisdiction to reflect the different requirements for each jurisdiction. Mr. Keating discussed how an agreement could be created for Riverdale Park.

CM Smith asked if there were any administrative costs that could be incurred by the Town. Mr. Keating discussed the fines for that were included in most contracts in case VeoRide was not responsive to issues. CM Smith asked about the standard length of a contract and if there were options to exit a contract. Mr. Keating discussed the different aspects of standard VeoRide contracts.

Town Manager Lestitian thanked Mr. Keating for speaking with the Town again as micromobility was part of the Town's vision and commitment to transportation. Town Manager Lestitian noted that VeoRide currently operated in Riverdale Park, specifically on University Research Court and in Riverdale Park Station, and further discussion with the Town was needed.

CM Lingua discussed articles that he had read about VeoRide and his concerns related to bikes and scooters being left throughout Town. CM Lingua discussed his concerns regarding a business operating in the public right-of-way. Mr. Keating reported that at times agreements with partners had ended or changed as the market conditions changed. Mr. Keating stated that it was important to determine what the right parking solution was for each partner.

Mayor Thompson discussed the locations of bike racks in Town Center and the difficulties related to placing bike racks in other areas near Town Center. Mayor Thompson also discussed a recent article in *Strong Towns* that considered the importance of observing behavior related to where people were naturally leaving their bikes, perhaps by using chalk lines, before selecting parking locations. Mr. Keating discussed options relating to geocaching.

CM Sadiq asked when the Council would meet with VeoRide again and Town Manager Lestitian stated that the Town would follow-up with Mr. Keating as there seemed to be general support from the Council to pursue an agreement.

FY2023 Budget Presentation: FY2023 Revenue Projections and Constant Yield Tax Rate

Gentry Jones, Deputy Director of Finance Services, provided an overview of the FY2023 Revenue Projections. Deputy Director Jones noted that the revenue projections were conservative due to the geopolitical situation and COVID-19. Deputy Director Jones discussed each revenue category to include the estimated actuals, budgeted amount, and FY2023 projections.

Mayor Thompson stated that it was amazing that the Town had exceeded the anticipated revenue by the end of February, and he appreciated the careful and conservative approach taken.

Mayor Thompson also stated that he was concerned about the Safe Speed for Students program and asked at what point money would have to be returned to the State. Town Manager Lestitian discussed the requirements of the program. Mayor Thompson asked if there was a line item in the budget to make the payment to the State, if needed. Town Manager Lestitian discussed how the payment would be made, if needed. Town Manager Lestitian noted that as the revenue increased for the program the expenditures also increased which may exceed the allocated authority to spend and an adjustment to the budget may be needed.

CM Smith thanked Deputy Director Jones and stated that he did not want to get to the point where the Town's budget relied on people doing something that they were not supposed to do.

Development Services Director Chelton discussed the Town's constant yield tax rate. Director Chelton also discussed the diversity of the Town's assessable base. Director Chelton noted that there was a small reduction in the assessable base related to the industrial section.

CM Lingua noted that the difference between the potential revenue associated with the Town's tax rate and the constant yield tax rate was less than \$10,000 and Director Chelton replied in the affirmative. Mayor Thompson discussed the amount of the reduction in the Town's assessable base.

Town Manager Lestitian discussed how the Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) related to the Calvert Tract (Riverdale Park Station) impacted the State's calculations for the Town's constant yield notice.

Mayor Thompson stated that he was looking forward to hearing more about the investigation into the decrease in the Town's assessable base in the industrial section.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Alan Thompson reported:

- Sun setting at 6:00 p.m. and days are getting longer.
- Recently saw the draft agenda for the Town's Tree Summit- looking forward to it.
- Town Manager's Evaluation: CMs Smith, Lingua, Mejia, and Mayers needed a print copy of the evaluation. Mayor Thompson asked if a Closed Meeting could be held on March 7th at 6:30 p.m. There were no objections. Mayor Thompson requested that staff schedule and announce the Closed Meeting.
- COVID-19 Update: case rates dropped substantially; County mask requirement ended today but may be a bit early; 15 County residents died last week of COVID-19; CDC is moving the goal posts and new metrics were released over the weekend; reminder to relax a little bit but wear your mask, avoid poorly ventilated spaces, and stay safe.

Town Manager's Report

Town Manager John Lestitian reported:

- Keeping staff COVID-19 protocols in place; currently one staff member isolated with COVID-19
- Follow-up on recent fund manager presentation: response to question regarding investment in firms with forced labor- answer is no; response to question regarding sustainability score- currently not hitting the benchmark; spoke with the Board of Trustees, will ask PNC to look into options to raise the score without lowering the yield, and report back to the Council; response to question regarding the fund's investments in Russia- do have a small amount invested in a firm headquartered in Russia (\$11,000 of \$11 million fund), will discuss options with the Board of Trustees and PNC, and will report back to the Mayor and Council.

Council Committee & Ward Reports

CM Richard Smith, Ward 1

CM Richard Smith reported:

- Thank you to Town Manager for providing more information.
- Would like the Town to divest from Russian firms; discussion regarding friends who are refugees from Ukraine.
- New restaurant opened in Ward 1- Taqueria los Perez (Madison Street and Route 1)

CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2

CM Aaron Faulx reported:

- Hope everyone is doing well.
- Discussion regarding Black History month; black history is our history; should not be limited to a month.
- Renamed the park in Town and won second place in Black History month contest at school.
- Continue to look at history and continue to seek out what can be done to right the wrongs.

CM David Lingua, Ward 3

CM David Lingua reported that the CKAR CDC meeting was postponed, and the next meeting would be held on March 8th at 7:30 p.m. CM Lingua stated that he would have more information prior to the March 8th meeting.

CM Thomas Sadiq, Ward 4

CM Thomas Sadiq stated that he did not have a Ward report.

CM Hala Mayers, Ward 6

CM Hala Mayers stated that she did not have a Ward report.

Public Comments

Resident Lora Katz asked if the representative from the Maryland Department of Agriculture's Mosquito Control Program would be on the agenda for the March 7th Mayor and Council meeting and Director Barnes replied in the affirmative.

Discussion Items

1. Fence Permit Request: 4508 Oliver Street; 6-foot wood fence

Administrative Services Director Jessica Barnes provided an overview of the fence permit request for 4508 Oliver Street and introduced the applicant, Erin Scheithe.

CM Smith stated that, if there were no objections, he would like to have the fence permit request placed on the Consent Agenda.

CM Lingua asked if the neighbors had been contacted. Ms. Scheithe replied in the affirmative and reported that everyone was in favor of the fence.

There were no objections to placing the fence permit request on the March 7th Consent Agenda.

2. Variance Request: Variances of 13 feet front yard depth and 22% net lot coverage for 4514 Riverdale Road

Administrative Services Director Barnes provided an overview of the variance request for 4514 Riverdale Road and introduced the applicant. The applicant, Ms. Shank, provided an overview of the project and reported that they were planning to rebuild the original covered porch that was removed by the previous owner.

CM Smith stated that the request was to replace a porch that was in place up until last year and he was supportive of the request.

Mayor Thompson stated that he reviewed historical aerial photos as well as Google street view photos which showed that the original porch was in place until recently. Mayor Thompson discussed his concerns related to the request for a substantial lot coverage variance and asked that the applicant consider future changes to reduce the lot coverage such as making the driveway permeable or installing a rain garden to improve stormwater management on their property.

CM Faulx discussed the Prince George's County Rain Check Rebate program and the types of projects that may be eligible.

CM Lingua stated that the applicants needed to address potential stormwater concerns and strongly suggested that they look into the programs available. Ms. Shank stated that the porch was going over a paved area, but they would look into the raincheck rebate program and the other suggestions made by the Council.

Ms. Katz stated that she supported the request and appreciated the Mayor and Council's suggestions related to stormwater management. Ms. Katz stated that the porch would add to the aesthetics of the neighborhood.

3. FY2022 Revenue Update

Deputy Director Jones provided an overview of the revenue categories compared to the previous three fiscal years.

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

4. Committee to Design Town's Common Seal

Town Manager Lestitian provided an overview of the draft resolution regarding the appointment of a committee to redesign the Town Seal.

Mayor Thompson stated that the resolution looked reasonable and it was a good idea to bring in professional support for the project. Mayor Thompson asked if staff envisioned the Council establishing deadlines when the committee appointments were made. Town Manager Lestitian replied that staff did not envision deadlines being set when the appointments were made as there were many variables that may impact deadlines for the project.

5. Licensing Agreement with International Code Council

Development Services Director Chelton provided an overview of the licensing agreement with the International Code Council that was needed to establish the Town's property

maintenance code. Director Chelton noted that the agreement was reviewed by Town Attorney Sussman.

Mayor Thompson asked what the cost would be and Director Chelton stated that the cost was \$1,800.

Mayor Thompson noted that the title of Chapter 67 would need to be updated as the new property maintenance code would also apply to commercial buildings.

6. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Update

Development Services Director Chelton provided an update on the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and potential programs and partnerships.

Mayor Thompson stated that based on his previous experience, Sowing Empowerment and Economic Development, Inc. (SEED) was extremely qualified and would be a great partnership.

Mayor Thompson stated that it was important that businesses in Town were prepared for future challenges by making improvements to things like HVAC systems, windows, and air purification systems. Town Manager Lestitian stated that the amended Business Growth Grant Program would also assist businesses with capital projects.

Mayor Thompson stated that he would review the draft resolutions carefully to see if there were any other questions or comments.

7. Minutes

Mayor Thompson asked the Council to review the minutes and inform staff of any changes or corrections that were needed.

New Business

There was no new business.

Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:53 p.m.