

Town of Riverdale Park
Work Session Minutes
August 29, 2022
7:30 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

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

Absent

CM Karen Mejia, Ward 5
CM Hala Mayers, Ward 6

Call to Order

Mayor Thompson called the Work Session to order at 7:30 p.m.

Agenda Approval

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

Presentation

Town's response to Stormwater Management

Town Manager Lestitian reported that staff were seeking feedback and input from the Mayor, Council, and public on the Riverdale Park Resilience Initiative.

Development Services Director Ryan Chelton discussed proposed amendments to existing programs and Code sections as well as new programs that were proposed to be created.

Public Projects and Services Director Ivy Lewis discussed partnering with the County as well as opportunities for future grant funding.

Town Manager Lestitian stated that the Town, since at least 2014 based upon a resolution from that timeframe, had been asking the County to design, fund, and construct stormwater management systems.

CM Faulx thanked staff for their work and stated that he felt the County's response was "more of the same". CM Faulx asked if there was an order of projects or different priority levels. Director

Lewis stated that staff needed to determine which projects would qualify for the County's program and then seek funding sources for the other projects.

CM Sadiq asked if staff had quantified what the cost would be for the proposed amendments to existing programs and Director Chelton provided additional information. Town Manager Lestitian discussed the types of projects that could potentially receive Town grant funds.

CM Smith stated that he felt that the County's response was more of "not our problem" and not solution driven. CM Smith stated that the Town's proposal was great and noted that the problem would continue to grow due to climate change. CM Smith stated that climate change needed to be considered with every decision that was made. CM Smith stated that he applauded the staff's efforts but wanted to think bigger and seek a much larger investment.

Town Manager Lestitian discussed the BRIC process and noted that the project costs were \$4 million for one project and \$3 million for the other. Town Manager Lestitian stated that the Town's projects were not selected, and he agreed with CM Smith's comments.

CM Lingua stated that he was pleased to see the Emergency Assistance Program augmented and he was happy with the Flood Prevention and Damage Mitigation Program. CM Lingua asked about single family and multifamily rentals and how the International Property Maintenance would apply as it related to flood prevention. Town Manager Lestitian provided additional information and stated that staff would need to consult with the Town Attorney regarding adding requirements to the Town's current licensing program.

CM Lingua also recommended seeking a defined timeline from the County, including outreach to the Town's federal partners, and potentially involving the Prince George's County Municipal Association.

CM Lingua discussed the Longfellow Street stormwater project as an example of how the Town could partner with the County provided that it could be done in a timely manner. Town Manager Lestitian discussed the potential creation of a stormwater CIP project.

Mayor Thompson noted that the 2014 resolution was focused primarily on Wells Run and the Nine Pond project. Mayor Thompson stated that it was his understanding that permits had been issued recently for the Nine Pond project and work should start soon. Mayor Thompson discussed his recent meeting with the Mayors' Association and noted that other jurisdictions would likely follow the Town's lead.

Mayor Thompson stated that the proposed programs looked good. Mayor Thompson stated that the Town needed to continue to push forward, and he would meet with Eric Olson prior to next meeting.

Town Manager Lestitian stated that partnering with the County was important and the Town was seeking modest reforms.

Mayor Thompson stated that it was his recollection that WSSC paid for and installed a backflow prevention device for a resident in 2014.

CM Faulx suggested promoting the Chesapeake Bay Trust's Rain Check Rebate Program and perhaps suggesting projects that could be done for residents in the flood prone area. CM Lingua stated that he supported CM Faulx's recommendation.

Mayor Thompson noted that the Town needed to coordinate with the County as it was their infrastructure.

Town Manager Lestitian thanked the Mayor and Council for their feedback and input.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Alan Thompson reported:

- Deepest sympathy: death of former Ward 3 CM Ellen Heineke and death of Joanne Hampton, a Town resident for over 50 years.
- Overview of recent conversations with former Mayor Archer regarding Sister City Program and an international discussion regarding stormwater management to include discussion of the problem, perspectives, and possible solutions.
- COVID-19 Update: two CMs have had COVID-19 recently; the overall situation is better than it was, and numbers are much lower however school will be starting soon and the weather will be getting cooler, so a resurgence is anticipated; stay safe and if you get COVID-19 please isolate.
- RPSC Tree Summit will be held on September 10th (virtual event)
- September 13th Pre-application Community Meeting to discuss the Lofts at Riverdale Park; some significant concerns have been noted.
- Redistricting Committee: has met twice this year; Ward 1 has many more residents and there will likely be a more substantial change to the Ward boundaries.
- Seeking update on Town Seal Design Committee

Town Manager's Report

Town Manager John Lestitian reported:

- Thank you to staff team: Department of Public Works (DPW), police officers, and the communications team for their work during recent flood events
- Active shooter training held at Riverdale Elementary School
- Update on violent crime in Town and cases closed
- Employee Assistance Mental Health program underway
- Filled long-term vacancy in DPW; 4 DPW staff members live in Town; discussion regarding incentive for living in Town
- Short Term Disability benefit recently implemented
- Cybersecurity training for the staff team
- Two successful Virtual Community Meetings held regarding permit parking
- Walk & Talk held on August 20th; thank you residents for joining
- Longfellow Stormwater Management Project has been completed
- Movement on CIP projects over the summer; making good progress
- Applied for Community Parks and Playgrounds Grant for \$225,000 for 54th Place Tot Lot project
- Town recently awarded Urban Tree Grant for \$41,000
- Verizon transition from copper lines to fiber at Town Hall underway
- Update on Adam and Emily Plummer Park
- Security Camera Invitation to Bid (ITB) has been released

- Updates will be to ethics ordinance (notice from State Ethics Commission)
- Discussion regarding black bunting at Town Hall in recognition of the death of a former or current elected official
- Overview of important dates
- Progress made on Riverdale Park Station transfer of infrastructure

Council Committee & Ward Reports

CM David Richard Smith, Ward 1

CM Richard Smith reported:

- Town Seal Committee: working to schedule a meeting
- Appreciates staff updates on the recent flooding; plans to schedule a walk through with County, State, and Federal level elected officials and candidates
- Potential development of the Lofts at Riverdale Park: public meeting about removing the lots from the M-UTC zone and putting them into a new zoning category; concerned about rezoning to inhibit M-UTC's ability to make decisions; advocate of dense housing but the scale is concerning; hoping to keep the decisions local
- Glad to hear road project in Riverdale Park Station is moving forward; looking forward to discussion regarding road projects
- Missed previous meeting due to COVID-19; masks work, please consider masking when you are able to.
- Ordinance to require developers to adopt a policy of neutrality on unions; interested in incorporating in Town Code.
- Town staff response to flooding- very thankful for the staff team

CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2

CM Aaron Faulx reported:

- Best of luck to PGCPSS students and staff on their first day of school; have a safe and productive school year; discussion regarding concerns about guns in schools
- District 2 School Board election on November 8th, be sure to reach out to candidates to discuss the needs of our community
- Picture from constituent regarding high grass at MNCPPC property, outreach needed
- Recently attended Redistricting Committee Meeting; we are lucky to have Mayor Thompson; thank you for your efforts.

CM David Lingua, Ward 3

CM David Lingua reported:

- Town Seal Committee will be meeting this fall and winter
- Effort to help with pollinator projects: helping residents who have gardens or want to garden; Ward 3 neighbor would like to have a townwide plant swap to share extra plants that you may have

CM Thomas Sadiq, Ward 4

CM Thomas Sadiq reported:

- Contracted COVID-19 at a concert but doing well
- Seeking updates on briefing from Veoride. Town Manager Lestitian provided an update on outreach efforts and CM Smith noted that he had seen scooters parked in Ward 1
- Concerns regarding housing crisis; needs of cars are being put over the needs of people; let developer build more houses and deal with the traffic later.

Mayor Thompson reported that CM Mejia had a work conflict and CM Mayers had a scheduling conflict and were unable to attend the meeting.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Discussion Items

1. Fence Permit Request: 4711 Riverdale Road; 6-foot wood fence in backyard (Ward 1)

Director Barnes provided an overview of the fence permit request for 4711 Riverdale Road and introduced the applicant. Ms. Traeger discussed her project and the reasons for the fence.

Mayor Thompson asked if the fence would match the fence next door and the applicant replied in the affirmative.

CM Smith stated that he had not spoken with the neighbors yet but would like to add the fence permit request to the September 12th Consent Agenda. There were no objections.

2. Street Closure Request: 6200 block of 43rd Street on September 17, 2022, from 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. for annual Block Party (Ward 1)

Director Barnes provided an overview of the street closure request for a block party.

CM Smith stated that he would like to add the street closure request to the September 12th Consent Agenda. There were no objections.

3. FY2023 Revenue Update

Deputy Director Jones provided an overview of the revenue categories over the last three fiscal years.

CM Lingua asked about line items 4402 and 4401 and Deputy Director Jones provided additional information.

Town Manager Lestitian noted that the revenue net expenditures paid for the CIP projects in the following year, and he hoped that the Town would get to the point where current year revenue paid for the current year CIP projects.

4. Residential Permit Parking Program Community Outreach Update

Director Barnes provided an update on the community outreach related to the Residential Permit Parking Program.

CM Lingua noted that some residents were without power during one of the virtual community meetings. Director Barnes discussed the outreach to residents.

CM Sadiq stated that he received positive feedback from residents and that residents appreciated the efforts from staff. CM Sadiq stated that the residents were very happy to have a forum to discuss their concerns.

5. RISE Zone Rental Program

Director Chelton provided an overview of the RISE Zone Rental Assistance program and the potential funding source.

CM Lingua asked if staff were anticipating applications for the program and Director Chelton replied in the affirmative. CM Lingua asked if the proposed contribution would be sufficient, and Director Chelton stated that he was unsure of what the other jurisdictions were planning to contribute but he expected the program to have a substantial impact. CM Lingua stated that he hoped to see a substantial contribution from the County to ensure that the program would be successful.

Mayor Thompson stated that he wanted to see an amount of funding that was appropriate for the opportunities available. Mayor Thompson discussed a new building on River Road that was coming soon.

Mayor Thompson asked if it would be an external fund and Director Chelton replied that the University of Maryland had offered to monitor the fund. Town Manager Lestitian stated that the funds would remain with the Town until there was an applicant. Town Manager Lestitian stated that the Town would likely see a return on the investment through personal property taxes.

Town Manager Lestitian stated that staff were looking to move forward with the program and there were no objections.

6. Farmers Market Agreement

Director Chelton provided an overview of the Farmers Market Agreement and noted some of the changes incorporated into the agreement.

CM Smith stated that he was proud of the Farmers Market, and it added value to the community. CM Smith stated that he looked forward to supporting the Market and Mayor Thompson agreed.

Director Chelton stated that staff hoped to have the agreement in two weeks for the Mayor and Council's approval.

7. Community Conversations Initiative

Director Barnes provided an overview of the Community Conversations Initiative.

8. Update on Trolley Trail Lighting Project (CIP Project # CIP20PP03) and 54th Avenue Lighting Project (CIP Project # CIP21PW03 Street Light Improvement)

Director Lewis provided an overview and update on the Trolley Trail Lighting Project.

CM Sadiq asked about the impact of lowering the number of lights from 9 to 5 lights in Phase 2 and Director Lewis provided an overview.

Mayor Thompson asked if the lights were ornamental, and Director Lewis explained that one light may be added to a Pepco pole.

Mayor Thompson asked about capacity issues and Director Lewis explained that additional supply boxes were needed. Mayor Thompson stated that it was a reasonable path forward.

Special Projects Coordinator Nouman Haider provided an overview and update on 54th Avenue Lighting Project.

Town Manager Lestitian clarified that the project would be back before the Council in October.

Mayor Thompson stated that Ward 2, 4, and 6 would be impacted by the project and he was looking forward to feedback from CM Mayers.

9. Minutes

Mayor Thompson asked that the Council make staff aware of any changes needed to the minutes.

New Business

CM Lingua discussed the upcoming meetings for public comments on the M-NCPPC budget. CM Lingua stated that he would like to advocate for the redesign and installation of the restrooms at Riverside Neighborhood Park; a final determination of the status of the main field at Riverside Neighborhood Park; consideration of the installation of volleyball courts and half basketball courts; and continued support for programs at Riversdale House Museum.

Mayor Thompson discussed the potential conversion of a portion of a community park to create a storm surge area.

CM Sadiq discussed the playground on Silk Tree Drive and stated that it needed to be refurbished as it needed more than just minor repairs.

CM Faulx stated that he would like to see more amenities added for residents.

Mayor Thompson stated that speaking at the meetings was more powerful and recommended to all CMs that they consider attending one of the meetings which were typically held during the third week in September.

CM Smith stated that he appreciated CM Lingua's knowledge of community affairs and noted that it would be nice to see a proper baseball field at Riverdale Community Park as well as a stocking program for Gosling Pond.

Mayor Thompson noted that they may need to focus their budget requests and recommendations.

Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:18 p.m.