

Town of Riverdale Park
Work Session Minutes
January 30, 2023
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
CM Hala Mayers, Ward 6

John N. Lestitian, Town Manager
Jessica Barnes, Town Clerk/Director of Administrative Services
Ryan Chelton, Director of Development Services
Rosa Guixens, 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
Robert Turner, Deputy Chief of Police

Absent

CM Karen Mejia, Ward 5

Call to Order

Mayor Thompson called the Work Session to order at 7:31 p.m.

Agenda Approval

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

Presentations

Swearing-in of Board of Code Appeals

Mayor Thompson administered the Oath of Office to the members of the Board of Code Appeals: Ryan McAllister, Sarah Billington, Lora Katz, and Dave Sutton.

Swearing-in of Board of Elections

Mayor Thompson administered the Oath of Office to the members of the Board of Elections: Sarah Zolad, Heather Cronk, Jahera Otieno, Patti Doyle, and Michael Lynch.

Proclamation recognizing the opening of Manifest Bread

Mayor Thompson read a proclamation recognizing the opening of Manifest Bread.

From Programs to Strategy - Investing in East of the River Neighborhoods

Town Manager Lestitian provided an overview of the programs and strategy for investing in the neighborhoods located East of the Anacostia River.

Director Barnes discussed engagement, communication, and outreach efforts and the changes needed to reach all segments of the community.

Director Chelton discussed the Town programs that were available to residents and businesses as well as potential next steps. Director Chelton also discussed the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) projects planned for the neighborhoods East of the River.

CM Lingua discussed CKAR CDC's role as a community stakeholder and Town Manager Lestitian discussed working with community partners. CM Lingua stated that CKAR CDC's input would be valuable, and Town Manager Lestitian agreed.

CM Smith asked about the demographic information included in the presentation and Director Barnes provided clarification. CM Smith discussed his support for printing the *Town Crier* in Spanish.

CM Faulx noted that the neighborhoods that needed more attention were getting attention, and he was supportive of the initiative.

Ms. Billington stated that the CIP projects were exciting and suggested geolocating the projects on maps to garner more feedback from the community.

Mayor Thompson stated that he looked forward to the Spanish version of the *Town Crier*.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Alan Thompson reported:

- Reminder to Council to complete the Town Manager's performance review document by midnight on February 6th, reminder regarding performance goals for next year.
- The Legacy M-UTC meeting will be held on Wednesday night and The Lofts will be presenting.
- COVID-19 Update: a lot of encouraging news, case rate is trending down, and wastewater surveillance is trending down, hope for lower rates of infection moving into the spring.
- Long covid report: 11% of those who had covid are currently reporting long covid symptoms; total of 6% of the U.S. population.
- Discussion regarding police encounter with Tyree Nichols and video footage released that showed 71 separate instructions given to Mr. Nichols which were contradictory and impossible to comply with; future discussions with the Town Manager, Council, and public to ensure that the Town is doing enough.

Town Manager's Report

Town Manager John Lestitian reported:

- Discussion regarding murder of Tyree Nichols, on behalf of the staff team and especially the police officers, prayers are with the family of Mr. Nichols; and the callous disregard for another human being is simply evil.
- Feedback from the community on how to ensure that it never happens in Riverdale Park.

Council Committee & Ward Reports

CM Richard Smith, Ward 1

CM Richard Smith reported:

- Thank you for proclamation for Manifest Bread.
- Mr. Bake cupcake shop in Le Fantome was nominated for the James Beard Award.
- Recognition of new state senator, Senator Alonzo Washington
- Riverdale Park Station: thank you to Town Manager for communication on safety, seeking an update on road transfer.
- Discussion regarding murder of Mr. Nichols by police in Memphis; Riverdale Park police officers do a great job but the institution of policing is broken, all officers involved were educated and well-trained; do not know the answer but what we have been doing has not been working; need to find things that do work.

CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2

CM Aaron Faulx reported:

- Discussion regarding recent loss.
- Discussion regarding the impact of substance abuse on all communities; recognition of those who came through their addiction; thinking of the families still struggling.
- Condolences from Mayor Thompson.

CM David Lingua, Ward 3

CM David Lingua reported:

- Very sad day in the City of Memphis; must have honest and frank discussions in the community to come out stronger.
- Deferred remainder of report to February Legislative Meeting

CM Thomas Sadiq, Ward 4

CM Thomas Sadiq reported:

- Discussion regarding situation in Ward 4 involving an unhoused individual and concerns regarding his well-being. CM Lingua asked if the County had been contacted. Chief Guixens provided an overview of the efforts to assist the individual.

CM Hala Mayers, Ward 6

CM Hala Mayers did not have a ward report.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Discussion Items

1. Fence Permit Request: 6-foot vinyl fence at 5010 Nicholson Street

Director Barnes provided an overview of the fence permit request for 5010 Nicholson Street.

CM Lingua discussed his concerns regarding residents receiving bad information from contractors regarding permits. CM Lingua noted that the Town may need to evaluate codifying penalties for contractors.

There were no objections to adding the fence permit request for 5010 Nicholson Street to the Consent Agenda. CMs Smith, Faulx, and Sadiq gave a thumbs up.

2. FY2023 Revenue Update

Deputy Director of Finance Services Gentry Jones provided an overview of the revenue categories in comparison to the previous three fiscal years.

Deputy Director Jones discussed the impact of the County's delay in issuing property tax bills and the change in the threshold for tangibles.

CM Lingua asked about line item 4114 and Deputy Director Jones stated that he would follow-up with additional information following the meeting.

CM Lingua asked about the Safe Speed for Students program and the estimated projection in comparison to the budgeted amount. Deputy Director Jones provided additional information. Town Manager Lestitian discussed the FY2023 revenue projections and noted that the Town would likely exceed the revenue projections.

3. Ordinance 2023-OR-03 regarding Ward Boundaries and Ordinance 2023-OR-02 regarding Ward Boundaries

Mayor Thompson discussed the legislative process related to the two ordinances. Mayor Thompson discussed the consensus map and additional minor adjustments.

CM Lingua suggested that 5024 Oglethorpe may want to be reconsidered. Mayor Thompson stated that he deferred to the CMs opinion.

Ms. Billington asked about the ward split on Oglethorpe Street and requested that the residents impacted be encouraged to participate in the next meeting. Ms. Billington stated that she would talk to her neighbors and CM Lingua offered to deliver the maps to the impacted properties. Mayor Thompson discussed connectivity, the number of residents in each Ward, and the legal requirements related to redistricting.

CM Lingua stated that he would drop off copies of the maps to other impacted properties and Mayor Thompson stated that he would be happy to make copies of the maps.

4. Ordinance 2023-OR-01 regarding 2023 Town Election

Director Barnes discussed Ordinance 2023-OR-01 regarding the 2023 Town Election. Mayor Thompson discussed the impact of redistricting.

5. Acquisition of Vehicles– Suspension of Competitive Bidding

Public Projects and Services Director Ivy Lewis provided an overview of the requested action.

CM Smith asked if it made more sense to allow the Town Manager to make the purchase without a deadline and then notify the Council afterwards. Town Manager Lestitian discussed the need to find balance and noted that the Council could consider a Charter Amendment in the future.

6. Tenant Protection Legislation: Amendments to Chapter 55

Development Services Director Chelton provided an overview of potential amendments to Chapter 55.

CMs Smith, Faulx, and Lingua expressed their support for the legislation.

Town Manager Lestitian recognized Director Chelton for his proactive approach. CM Smith thanked Director Chelton and requested that the legislation be well publicized.

Mayor Thompson noted that there were some additional clarifications needed but he looked forward to seeing the legislation develop.

7. Defined Benefit Plan Board of Trustees Appointments

Finance and Employee Services Director Paul Smith provided an overview of the requested action.

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

8. Legacy Mixed-Use Town Center (M-UTC) Local Design Review Committee Nominations

Mayor Thompson discussed the changes to the Legacy M-UTC membership requirements and stated that he would reach out to the current LM-UTC members to see if they were interested in serving again.

9. Town Election: Election Judges and Board of Elections Appeals Members

Director Barnes discussed the appointment of Election Judges and Board of Elections Appeals Members for the upcoming Town Election.

10. Affirmation of Quiet Zone: 140905K Queensbury Road

Director Barnes discussed the recent correspondence from the Federal Railroad Administration related to affirmation of the Quiet Zone at the Queensbury Road railroad crossing.

CM Lingua and CM Faulx expressed support for the continuation of the Quiet Zone.

There were no objections from the Mayor, Council, or public to proceeding with the affirmation of the Quiet Zone at the Queensbury Road railroad crossing.

11. Minutes

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

New Business

CM Faulx reported that he had recently shared a constituent concern regarding trash with staff and Director Lewis replied within an hour with an action plan and potential causes. CM Faulx stated that the constituent was extremely happy. CM Faulx stated that the staff team was fantastic and professional. Mayor Thompson thanked the DPW team for their work.

Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:58 p.m.