

Town of Riverdale Park
Legislative Meeting Minutes
February 6, 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 Karen Mejia, Ward 5 (arrived at 8:10 p.m.)

John N. Lestitian, Town Manager
Jessica Barnes, Director of Administrative Services/Town Clerk
Ryan Chelton, Development Services Director
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

Absent

CM Hala Mayers, Ward 6

Call to Order

Mayor Thompson called the Legislative Meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and a moment of silence was observed.

Approval of Agenda

CM Faulx made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by CM Sadiq. Vote: 4-0-1 (Favorable)

Roll Call Vote:

Mayor Alan K. Thompson: Abstained
CM Richard Smith, Ward 1: Aye
CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2: Aye
CM David Lingua, Ward 3: Aye
CM Thomas Sadiq, Ward 4: Aye
CM Karen Mejia, Ward 5: Absent
CM Hala Mayers, Ward 6: Absent

Discussion:

Mayor Thompson asked that Mr. Luis Murillo from Congressman Glen Ivey's Office address the Council at the beginning of the presentations section of the agenda.

There were no stated conflicts of interest.

Presentations

Luis Murillo with Congressman Ivey's Office

Mr. Luis Murillo from the District Office for Congressman Glenn Ivey introduced himself and discussed a grant newsletter that would be available soon. Mr. Murillo stated that Congressman Ivey and his staff were always available to help and encouraged the Council to reach out.

Mayor Thompson thanked Mr. Murillo for attending and stated that he would subscribe to the newsletter. CM Lingua also thanked Mr. Murillo for attending the meeting and for discussing the grants that were available to the Town.

Swearing-in of Deputy Chief Election Judge

Mayor Thompson administered the Oath of Office to Anne (Kate) Kelly, Deputy Chief Election Judge. Mayor Thompson and CM Faulx thanked Ms. Kelly for her service.

Proclamation in recognition of Black History Month

Mayor Thompson read a proclamation in recognition of Black History Month in English and Spanish.

Fund Balances and Projections: Gentry Jones, Deputy Director of Finance Services

Deputy Director of Finance Services Gentry Jones discussed the Fund Balance Projections in preparation for the FY2024 budget. Deputy Director Jones provided an overview of each fund, the initial projections, and the updated projections. Deputy Director Jones discussed the general fund reserve history from FY2021 to FY2023.

Mayor Thompson asked about the general fund balance for FY2023 in comparison to FY2021 and FY2022 and Deputy Director Jones discussed the transfers that were made to other funds. Town Manager Lestitian asked if it was expected that the Town would land in a range similar to previous years and Deputy Director Jones replied in the affirmative.

CM Lingua asked how close the estimates were to the actual amounts by percentage and Deputy Director Jones stated that the Town had outperformed the estimates but did not have the exact percentage.

Capital Improvement Project (CIP) Updates and Projections: Public Projects and Services Director Ivy Lewis and Development Services Director Ryan Chelton

Public Projects and Services Director Ivy Lewis provided an overview of the CIP projects included in the presentation.

Director Lewis discussed the project stages and the number of projects in each stage. Director Lewis and Director Chelton discussed each of the following projects:

- Riverdale Park Station Traffic Calming Improvements
- 47th Avenue to Taylor Linear Park
- Pollinator Gardens
- Community Garden and Food Forest
- Welcome Signage
- Bus Stop Improvements
- Town Center Underpass
- Electric Charging Station
- Adam and Emily Plummer Park
- 54th Place Pocket Park and Tot Lots

- Town Center Trail and Parking Lot Redesign
- Municipal Center Renovation
- Building Weatherization and Stabilization
- DPW Building Renovation & Parking Lot Development
- Pedestrian Walkway and Queensbury Road Security
- Community Security Camera System
- Traffic Signs Project
- 54th Avenue Street Light Project
- Trolley Trail Lighting Project
- Longfellow Street Stormwater Project

Director Lewis discussed the status of the Municipal Center Renovation Project and the timeline for moving forward. CM Lingua discussed his concerns related to the impact of the delays due to the County's permitting process. Director Lewis discussed the COVID-19 related supply chain and market issues. CM Lingua asked about the specific impacts of the pandemic and Director Lewis discussed the increases in costs.

Town Manager Lestitian discussed the challenges related to working through the County's permitting process. CM Lingua asked about the cost of the permitting delays and Town Manager Lestitian suggested that the new bids for the project would be a more accurate reflection of the cost of the delays. CM Smith asked if staff had worked with the County delegation and Town Manager Lestitian replied in the affirmative. CM Smith asked if there would be any other time when a County permit would be needed and Director Lewis stated that she did not think so. Town Manager Lestitian discussed the staff's resilience.

Director Lewis discussed the Boys and Girls Club project and CM Lingua stated that it was a great space. CM Faulx stated that it was exciting to see improvements at the Boys and Girls Club.

Town Manager Lestitian discussed the funding of the 54th Avenue Streetlight project and potential ways to move forward as the Town did not receive any bids through the previous two procurement processes. CM Lingua discussed his position on the Town acting as the general contractor and stated that it was an important project to complete. CM Faulx gave a thumbs up.

Director Chelton discussed the CDBG Funded Sidewalk projects and noted that several potential vendors attended the pre-bid meeting. CM Lingua asked about the location of the project and Director Lewis provided additional information.

CM Smith asked about the crosswalk near Mabel Munch Park and Director Lewis discussed the status of the project. Town Manager Lestitian stated that more money would be needed in FY2024.

CM Lingua discussed a potential sidewalk project along Oglethorpe Street, from 48th Avenue to Taylor Road (along the north side), and potentially working with M-NCPPC and the Riversdale Historical Society regarding a joint effort. Town Manager Lestitian stated that the project was included on staff's preliminary list of potential CIP projects. CM Lingua discussed the potential community impact of the project.

Economic Update, Part 2: Deputy Director of Finance Services Gentry Jones and Development Services Director Ryan Chelton

Deputy Director Jones discussed the impact of federal interest rates, US inflation, US jobless claims, US home sales, and personal income, on the Town.

Mayor Thompson thanked Deputy Director Jones for the informative presentation.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Alan K. Thompson reported:

- COVID-19 update: case rates are high but stable, community index has dropped, nationwide deaths are still 3-4,000 per week, impacts of long COVID-19, please be as safe as possible
- Discussion regarding the murder of Tyree Nichols
- Overview of the recent LMUTC meeting and the Lofts: several changes made but some additional details still needed; discussions continue.
- Chambers Funeral Home project will come back to LMUTC in March
- Discussion regarding the redistricting process: started in August of 2021, thankful for contributions of the Redistricting Committee, thank you to the Council

Town Manager Report

Town Manager John N. Lestitian reported:

- Constant Yield Notice: will arrive on February 14th; advises of the assessable base for next year; majority of revenue comes from real property taxes
- Recent email breach, please change your password, Director Barnes will be reaching out to CMs
- Holiday closing for Presidents Day

Monthly Finance Report

Gentry Jones, Deputy Director of Finance Services, reported, subject to audit:

January

Revenue: \$1,262,160

Expenditures: \$714,448

Year-to-Date

Revenue: \$6,864,834

Expenditures: \$4,729,360

CM Lingua made a motion to adopt the Finance Report, subject to audit. The motion was seconded by CM Sadiq. Vote: 5-0-1 (Favorable)

Roll Call Vote:

Mayor Alan K. Thompson: Abstained

CM Richard Smith, Ward 1: Aye

CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2: Aye

CM David Lingua, Ward 3: Aye

CM Thomas Sadiq, Ward 4: Aye

CM Karen Mejia, Ward 5: Aye

CM Hala Mayers, Ward 6: Absent

Discussion:

CM Lingua asked about projections and Deputy Director Jones provided more information.

Correspondence Summary

The Correspondence Summary was included in the Meeting Materials.

Fire Department Report

The Fire Department Report was included in the Meeting Materials.

Council Committee & Ward Reports

CM Richard Smith, Ward 1

CM Richard Smith reported:

- Discussion regarding Black History Month: important time to learn about wrongs done to the black community
- New business, Manifest Bread, seeking sidewalk dining

CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2

CM Aaron Faulx reported:

- Happy Black History Month, theme is Black Resistance and Maryland has some of the most important historical figures, including Adam and Emily Plummer
- Discussion regarding Plummer Park and potential monument to the unnamed enslaved

CM David Lingua, Ward 3

CM David Lingua reported:

- No agenda for CKAR CDC meeting yet, should meet on February 7th from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
- No RPBA meeting this month, will be rescheduled for March
- Riverdale Park Sustainability Committee Meeting scheduled for February 14th, overview of agenda and Sustainable Maryland recertification; encouraged residents to participate
- Final day for Samantha Ferris at Riversdale House Museum after 16 years, moving on to College Park Aviation Museum

CM Thomas Sadiq, Ward 4

CM Thomas Sadiq reported:

- Discussion regarding ongoing issues related to students from Parkdale High School
- Student at William Wirt Middle School brought a handgun to school, troubling trends with guns in school

CM Karen Mejia, Ward 5

CM Karen Mejia did not have a report.

Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items and Consent Agenda Items

Resident Lora Katz discussed a fire near Greg's Towing and Mayor Thompson reported that there was illegal burning of building materials. Town Manager Lestitian provided an overview of the situation.

Consent Agenda

Motion to approve consent agenda items:

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

2. Minutes: January 17, 2023, Special Work Session; December 20, 2022, Public Hearing; April 4, 2022, Legislative Meeting; February 28, 2022, Work Session

CM Lingua made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. CM Smith seconded the motion. Vote: 5-0-1 (Favorable)

Roll Call Vote:

Mayor Alan K. Thompson: Abstained
CM Richard Smith, Ward 1: Aye
CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2: Aye
CM David Lingua, Ward 3: Aye
CM Thomas Sadiq, Ward 4: Aye
CM Karen Mejia, Ward 5: Aye
CM Hala Mayers, Ward 6: Absent

Legislative Action Items

1. Motion to adopt Ordinance 2023-OR-03 regarding Ward Boundaries as introduced

CM Faulx made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2023-OR-03 regarding Ward Boundaries as amended. CM Lingua seconded the motion. Vote 5-0-1 (Favorable)

Roll Call Vote:

Mayor Alan K. Thompson: Abstained
CM Richard Smith, Ward 1: Aye
CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2: Aye
CM David Lingua, Ward 3: Aye
CM Thomas Sadiq, Ward 4: Aye
CM Karen Mejia, Ward 5: Aye
CM Hala Mayers, Ward 6: Absent

CM Faulx made a motion to replace the map as introduced with the map as amended. The motion was seconded by CM Lingua. Vote: 5-0-1 (Favorable)

Roll Call Vote:

Mayor Alan K. Thompson: Abstained
CM Richard Smith, Ward 1: Aye
CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2: Aye
CM David Lingua, Ward 3: Aye
CM Thomas Sadiq, Ward 4: Aye
CM Karen Mejia, Ward 5: Aye
CM Hala Mayers, Ward 6: Absent

Discussion:

Mayor Thompson provided an overview of the legislative process and the minor adjustments made to the ward boundary map.

CM Smith thanked Mayor Thompson and the Redistricting Committee.

2. Motion regarding Ordinance 2023-OR-02 regarding Ward Boundaries

There was no motion regarding Ordinance 2023-OR-02 regarding Ward Boundaries.

3. Motion to adopt Ordinance 2023-OR-01 regarding 2023 Town Election

CM Faulx made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2023-OR-01 regarding 2023 Town Election. The motion was seconded by CM Lingua. Vote: 5-0-1 (Favorable)

Roll Call Vote:

Mayor Alan K. Thompson: Abstained
CM Richard Smith, Ward 1: Aye
CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2: Aye
CM David Lingua, Ward 3: Aye
CM Thomas Sadiq, Ward 4: Aye
CM Karen Mejia, Ward 5: Aye
CM Hala Mayers, Ward 6: Absent

4. Motion to adopt Resolution 2023-R-03 Defined Benefit Plan Board of Trustees Appointments

CM Smith made a motion to adopt Resolution 2023-R-03 regarding Defined Benefit Plan Board of Trustees Appointments. The motion was seconded by CM Faulx. Vote: 4-0-2 (Favorable)

Roll Call Vote:

Mayor Alan K. Thompson: Abstained
CM Richard Smith, Ward 1: Aye
CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2: Aye
CM David Lingua, Ward 3: Abstained
CM Thomas Sadiq, Ward 4: Aye
CM Karen Mejia, Ward 5: Aye
CM Hala Mayers, Ward 6: Absent

Discussion:

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

Mayor Thompson thanked staff for their work on the Board of Trustees.

Mayor Thompson administered the Oath of Office to the members of the Defined Benefits Plan Board of Trustees: Deputy Director of Finance Services Gentry Jones, Deputy Chief of Police Robert Turner, and Records and Permit Parking Manager Tracey Perrin.

5. Motion to adopt Resolution 2023-R-05 Acquisition of Vehicles– Suspension of Competitive Bidding

CM Lingua made a motion to adopt Resolution 2023-R-05 Acquisition of Vehicles– Suspension of Competitive Bidding as amended. The motion was seconded by CM Faulx. Vote: 5-0-1 (Favorable)

Roll Call Vote:

Mayor Alan K. Thompson: Abstained
CM Richard Smith, Ward 1: Aye
CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2: Aye
CM David Lingua, Ward 3: Aye
CM Thomas Sadiq, Ward 4: Aye
CM Karen Mejia, Ward 5: Aye
CM Hala Mayers, Ward 6: Absent

CM Smith made a motion to strike the word “gas” for the ONS vehicle specifications.
The motion was seconded by CM Lingua. Vote: 5-0-1 (Favorable)

Roll Call Vote:

Mayor Alan K. Thompson: Abstained
CM Richard Smith, Ward 1: Aye
CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2: Aye
CM David Lingua, Ward 3: Aye
CM Thomas Sadiq, Ward 4: Aye
CM Karen Mejia, Ward 5: Aye
CM Hala Mayers, Ward 6: Absent

Discussion:

Director Lewis provided an overview of the requested action.

CM Lingua asked if the SUVs would be able to accomplish the same scope of work and
Director Chelton replied in the affirmative.

CM Smith asked if the vehicles were American made with union labor and Director
Chelton replied in the affirmative.

Resident Lora Katz stated that she would like to see the vehicle specification listing only
allow for electric or hybrid vehicles. Mayor Thompson discussed the vehicle
specification listing. Town Manager Lestitian discussed the need to find balance between
sustainability and providing services.

CM Lingua noted that there was nothing stopping the Town from switching to an electric
model, if they were available at a good price, before 10 years. CM Faulx agreed and
stated that he did not want to impact staff negatively.

Mayor Thompson asked about the availability of the requested vehicles and the condition
of the current vehicles.

6. Motion to approve the affirmation of Quiet Zone 140905K Queensbury Road

CM Faulx made a motion to approve the affirmation of Quiet Zone 140905K Queensbury
Road. The motion was seconded by CM Lingua. Vote: 5-0-1 (Favorable)

Roll Call Vote:

Mayor Alan K. Thompson: Abstained
CM Richard Smith, Ward 1: Aye

CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2: Aye
CM David Lingua, Ward 3: Aye
CM Thomas Sadiq, Ward 4: Aye
CM Karen Mejia, Ward 5: Aye
CM Hala Mayers, Ward 6: Absent

Discussion:

Director Barnes provided an overview of the requested action.

Mayor Thompson discussed his support for the Quiet Zone.

Unfinished Business

1. Legacy Mixed-Use Town Center (LMUTC) Local Design Review Committee Nominations

Mayor Thompson reported that the current members of the LMUTC were happy to be reappointed. Town Manager Lestitian stated that staff would prepare the resolution.

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

Director Barnes discussed the need for volunteers to serve as Election Judges, Alternate Election Judges, and members of the Board of Elections Appeals for the Town Election on May 1st.

New Business

1. Property Maintenance Code: Flood Protection for Rental Properties

Director Chelton provided an overview of the proposed legislation.

CM Lingua asked if it would apply to air BNBs and Director Chelton clarified that it would only apply to those who were applying for a Town rental license. Town Manager Lestitian stated that the County regulated short term rentals, but staff would look into it further and report back to the Council.

Mayor Thompson asked if staff had determined the cost and availability of civil engineers to conduct the studies. Town Manager Lestitian stated that staff would provide more information at the next Council Meeting. Mayor Thompson stated that he thought that it was a good idea.

2. Mayor Thompson stated that the supplements to the SNAP program, provided by the federal government, were ending this month and it may have an impact on Town residents.

Adjournment

CM Faulx made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:24 p.m. The motion was seconded by CM Smith. Vote: 5-0-1 (Favorable)

Roll Call Vote:

Mayor Alan K. Thompson: Abstained
CM Richard Smith, Ward 1: Aye

CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2: Aye
CM David Lingua, Ward 3: Aye
CM Thomas Sadiq, Ward 4: Aye
CM Karen Mejia, Ward 5: Aye
CM Hala Mayers, Ward 6: Absent