

**Town of Riverdale Park**  
**Work Session Minutes**  
**February 27, 2023**  
**7:30 p.m.**

**In Attendance**

Mayor Alan K. Thompson  
CM Richard Smith, Ward 1  
CM David Lingua, Ward 3  
CM Karen Mejia, Ward 5  
CM Hala Mayers, Ward 6

John N. Lestitian, Town Manager  
Jessica Barnes, Town Clerk/Director of Administrative Services  
Nouman Haider, Special Projects Coordinator  
Gentry Jones, Deputy Director Finance Services  
Ivy Lewis, Director of Public Projects and Services  
LaVerne Peakes, ARPA Project Manager  
Paul Smith, Director of Finance and Employee Services  
Robert Turner, Deputy Chief of Police

**Absent**

CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2  
CM Thomas Sadiq, Ward 4

**Call to Order**

Mayor Thompson called the Work Session to order at 8:23 p.m.

**Agenda Approval**

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

**Presentations**

Update on Waggertail Dog Park: Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC)

Ms. Tanya Hedgepeth, Park Planning Supervisor for M-NCPPC, introduced Shubha Punase, Northern Area Park Manager for M-NCPPC.

Ms. Hedgepeth discussed some completed and planned park projects at Riverdale Community Park to include pickle ball overlays on the tennis courts, diamond field upgrades, the conversion of a recreation building into a comfort station, and a new playground through a partnership with Kaboom.

Ms. Hedgepeth discussed Waggertail Dog Park and the challenges with flooding due to its location within a flood plain and topography. Ms. Hedgepeth discussed the impact of the flooding on the trees as well as the engineering for major renovations that would be needed.

Ms. Hedgepeth discussed the short term and long-term improvements that could be made to the dog park.

CM Lingua asked about the timeframe for short term and long-term improvements and Ms. Hedgepeth stated that she was not certain, but she would talk with the maintenance team and get back to the Town.

CM Smith asked if the flooding issues would be mitigated through the project at Gosling Pond or if the related construction was impacting the flooding at Waggertail Dog Park and Ms. Hedgepeth stated that she was not sure. Mayor Thompson stated that he did not think that the work at Gosling Pond was impacting the flooding at Waggertail Dog Park.

Mayor Thompson stated that he was pleased to hear about the short-term improvements as there were many residents who used the dog park. Ms. Hedgepeth stated that she understood the concerns as a dog person.

Maryland Department of Agriculture Mosquito Control Program: Brian Prendergast, Mosquito Control Program Manager

Stormy Keyes, Administrative Aide for the College Park office of the Mosquito Control Program, discussed the MDA mosquito spray program and reported that the spraying would occur on the same night, there were no changes to the pesticides used, and there would be no spraying near the Town's pollinator gardens.

Mayor Thompson asked about the exemption for individual homes and Ms. Keyes provided additional information. Ms. Keyes also discussed the complaint portal.

CM Lingua asked if MDA had considered alternative pesticides/larvicides and Ms. Keyes stated that there were no changes to the chemicals being used this year.

There were no questions or comments from the public.

Revenue, FY2023 Estimated Actuals, FY2024 Projections: Gentry Jones, Deputy Director of Finance Services

Deputy Director of Finance Services Gentry Jones provided an overview of the FY2023 Estimated Actuals and FY2024 Projections for the major revenue categories.

CM Lingua thanked Deputy Director Jones for his report and stated that staff did a great job on the projections and costs appeared to be managed well.

Town Manager Lestitian noted that it would be a difficult budget season and staff had some questions regarding the constant yield notice received from the State. Town Manager Lestitian discussed the anticipated challenges for FY2024.

Mayor Thompson stated that he was surprised by the changes to personal property taxes, and he would like more information. Town Manager Lestitian discussed the legislation that changed the exemption amount from \$2,000 to \$20,000.

CM Lingua asked about the concerns related to the FY2026 Budget and Town Manager Lestitian provided additional information.

#### General Fund Projections: Gentry Jones, Deputy Director of Finance Services

Deputy Director Jones discussed the Fund Balance projections for FY2024 and provided updates. Deputy Director Jones also discussed the updates to the General Fund Reserve History based on information provided by the auditors. Deputy Director Jones discussed the decrease in revenue net expenditures and other challenges for the FY2024 Budget.

Town Manager Lestitian discussed the impact of ARPA funds, the timing of future development and redevelopment in Town, and the Purple Line.

CM Lingua asked about the status of the Town's debt service and Town Manager Lestitian noted that one loan would expire in 2026 which would free up approximately \$300,000 per year.

CM Smith asked about major expense categories and Town Manager Lestitian replied that salary and benefits costs were a large portion of the Town's expenses. CM Smith asked about the departments with the largest expenses and Town Manager Lestitian stated that the expenses correlated to the size of the department and gave a breakdown of department sizes.

Mayor Thompson thanked Deputy Director Jones for his presentation.

#### **Mayor's Report**

Mayor Alan Thompson reported:

- COVID-19 is still out there, please be careful.
- Attended Maryland Mayor's Association (MMA) conference in Annapolis last week: overview of topics covered.

#### **Town Manager's Report**

Town Manager John Lestitian reported:

- Constant Yield notice received from Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT)
- Legacy Mixed-Use Town Center (LM-UTC) Local Design Review Committee will meet on March 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Board of Elections will meet on March 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- State of the Town will be held on March 13<sup>th</sup> via Zoom.
- Community Conversation on Walk, Bike, Drive Safety Initiative will be held on March 18<sup>th</sup> via Zoom.
- The Town Seal Design Committee will meet on March 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- Discussion regarding parking contract with OptoPark and challenges related to support for parking platform and equipment. Identified a potential new vendor to get through the next few months, and a Request for Proposal (RFP) will go out in the next few weeks.
- Update from Director Lewis regarding the Riverdale Park Station infrastructure transfer process

#### *Discussion:*

- Mayor Thompson stated that he noticed the new stops signs in Riverdale Park Station.
- Resident Zachary Schulman thanked the Town for the work related to stop signs in Riverdale Park Station. Mr. Shulman stated that he had noticed an improvement but

there was still missing lettering on the roads at 45<sup>th</sup> and Woodberry Road. Mr. Schulman discussed the continued issues with trucks at the FedEx store and asked if there was a plan to mitigate the impacts or if parking regulations would be enforced. Town Manager Lestitian provided additional information.

- Resident Jim Schmitz noted that when the road transfer was completed there were two streetlights that needed to be repaired or replaced as they had been knocked down by large trucks. Mr. Schmitz discussed his concerns regarding large trucks travelling through the community. Mayor Thompson discussed automated enforcement related to trucks.
- Resident Leo Dorsey stated that the stop signs were an improvement and discussed the need for roadway markings for the new stop signs and parking.
- Resident Ms. Schmitz stated that she was in favor of more enforcement.
- Mr. Dorsey stated that vehicles were parked on crosswalks which made it difficult to use the sidewalks.

## **Council Committee & Ward Reports**

### **CM Richard Smith, Ward 1**

CM Richard Smith reported:

- Discussion regarding telecommunication wires. Noted that it was a major issue in Ward 1 and service providers needed to be good neighbors.

### **CM David Lingua, Ward 3**

CM David Lingua reported:

- Recently presented proclamation to Samantha Ferris in recognition of 16 years of service to Riversdale House Museum, and the Town.

### **CM Karen Mejia, Ward 5**

CM Karen Mejia had to leave early.

### **CM Hala Mayers, Ward 6**

CM Hala Mayers did not have a ward report.

## **Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

## **Discussion Items**

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

Director Barnes reported that volunteers were still needed to serve as Election Judges and members of the Board of Election Appeals.

2. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Update

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Manager LaVerne Peakes provided an update on ARPA expenditures.

CM Lingua noted that SNAP benefits were expiring on March 1<sup>st</sup> and asked if the Town was able to meet the increased need. Ms. Peakes provided additional information about the Town's programs.

### 3. Proposed Chapter 75: Stormwater Management

Town Manager Lestitian discussed the proposed new chapter of the Town Code, Chapter 75 Stormwater Management. Town Manager Lestitian noted that staff had researched the cost for a licensed engineer to assess a property for suitable resiliency measures and stated that staff are exploring the possibility of establishing a new program to offset the cost.

CM Lingua asked about the impact of the transfer of ownership of a property and Town Manager Lestitian provided additional information.

Mayor Thompson asked if both multifamily and single-family rental properties would be included, and Town Manager Lestitian clarified that it would only include those rental properties located in a flood plain.

### 4. Emergency Amendment to Property Maintenance Code: Prohibiting Parking on Unprepared Surfaces

Town Manager Lestitian reported that a review of the Town Code revealed that in 2018, a definition of a prepared surface was added but the applicable authority had been deleted and staff requested that the Council consider an emergency amendment at the next meeting.

Mayor Thompson stated that it was clearly a mistake that needed to be addressed.

CM Smith asked about the reason for the prohibition and Town Manager Lestitian provided additional information.

Mayor Thompson stated that gravel is considered improved, and CM Smith stated that pervious surfaces would be preferable.

### 5. 54<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Spring Lane Sidewalk Improvement Project

Special Projects Coordinator Nouman Haider provided an overview of the project, budget, and the results of the procurement process.

Mayor Thompson stated that he was very excited that the project was moving forward and that there was a good response to the bid process.

### 6. CIP 22PW04: 54<sup>th</sup> Place Pocket Park and Tot Lot – Public Process

Town Manager Lestitian reported that the Town needed to go through a public process to abandon 54<sup>th</sup> Place as an alley. Town Manager Lestitian stated that the project was funded through a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and was a much-needed project for the area.

Mayor Thompson stated that he was glad to see the project moving forward.

Town Manager Lestitian stated that staff would work with Town Attorney Sussman to draft the necessary documents.

7. TRP Mosquito Mitigation Initiative

Director Barnes provided an overview of the TRP Mosquito Mitigation Initiative, a proposed resident driven initiative to reduce the mosquito population in Town.

8. Minutes

Mayor Thompson requested that the Council review the minutes and make staff aware of any changes that were needed.

**New Business**

There was no new business.

**Unfinished Business**

There was no unfinished business.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 p.m.