

City of Rockville

City Hall
111 Maryland Ave
Rockville, MD 20850

Approved: 
Attest: 
Approved Meeting No. 03-25
January 27, 2025



Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 6, 2025

6:30 PM

Meeting No. 01-25

WebEx

Mayor and Council

| Attendee Name | Title | Status |
|----------------|---------------|---------|
| Monique Ashton | Mayor | Present |
| Kate Fulton | Councilmember | Present |
| Barry Jackson | Councilmember | Present |
| David Myles | Councilmember | Present |
| Izola Shaw | Councilmember | Present |
| Marissa Valeri | Councilmember | Present |
| Adam Van Grack | Councilmember | Present |

1. Convene - 6:30 PM

Mayor and Council convened in an Open Meeting at 6:32 pm on Monday, January 6, 2025, in the Mayor and Council Chambers, City Hall, 111 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland, and via Webex.

Staff Present: City Manager Jeff Mihelich, City Attorney Robert E. Dawson, and City Clerk/Director of Council Operations Sara Taylor-Ferrell.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Monique Ashton led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Proclamations and Recognitions

A. Certificate of Recognition – Nation Day of Mourning for the passing of President James Earl Carter, Jr.

Mayor Monique Ashton read, and Councilmember Barry Jackson moved the certificate of recognition for January 9, 2025, as a National Day of Mourning for the passing of President James Earl Carter, Jr., and presented it to Dr. Jeni Stepanek, President of the Mattie J.T. Stepanek Peace Foundation.

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| MOVER: | RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS] Barry Jackson, Councilmember |
| SECONDER: | Marissa Valeri, Councilmember |
| IN FAVOR: | Mayor Ashton, Councilmember Fulton, Councilmember Jackson, Councilmember Myles, Councilmember Shaw, Councilmember Valeri, Councilmember Van Grack |

A. Proclamation Declaring Lunar New Year 2025 in Rockville, Maryland

Councilmember Adam Van Grack moved the proclamation declaring Lunar New Year 2025 in Rockville, Maryland, and presented it to John Lin, Chair of the Rockville Asian Pacific American Task Force.

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| MOVER: | RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS] Adam Van Grack, Councilmember |
| SECONDER: | Marissa Valeri, Councilmember |
| IN FAVOR: | Mayor Ashton, Councilmember Fulton, Councilmember Jackson, Councilmember Myles, Councilmember Shaw, Councilmember Valeri, Councilmember Van Grack |

B. Proclamation Declaring January 20, 2025, as Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in Rockville, Maryland

Councilmember Izola Shaw moved the proclamation declaring January 20, 2025, as Martin Luther King, Jr., Day in Rockville, Maryland, and presented it to Dr. Carolyn I. Coleman, 1st Vice-Chair, and Cherri Branson, Esq., 2nd Vice Chair, of the Montgomery County Branch of the NAACP.

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| RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS] |
| MOVER: Izola Shaw, Councilmember |
| SECONDER: Kate Fulton, Councilmember |
| IN FAVOR: Mayor Ashton, Councilmember Fulton, Councilmember Jackson, Councilmember Myles, Councilmember Shaw, Councilmember Valeri, Councilmember Van Grack |

4. Agenda Review

City Clerk/Director of Council Operations Sara Taylor-Ferrell reported no changes to the agenda.

5. City Manager's Report

City Manager Jeff Mihelich thanked the Public Works and Facilities teams for their hard work clearing snow during the snow emergency. City Manager Mihelich announced that snow emergency would remain in effect through 4:00 pm on Tuesday, January 7, 2025. The City would continue to perform curbside pickup of refuse and recycling.

6. Boards, Commissions, Committees and Task Force Certificates of Appreciation - 7:00 PM

A. Boards, Commissions, Committees, and Task Force Certificates of Appreciation

Mayor Monique Ashton and Councilmembers read the list of residents who as of 2024, have concluded their work with City Boards, Commissions and Taks Forces; and each will be recognized with a Certificate of Recognition that will be mailed.

FURTHER DISCUSSION

January 6, 2025, Agenda item 6A.

https://rockvillemd.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=4953

Timestamp 26: 46

7. Community Forum

| NAME | TOPIC |
|----------------------|---|
| Senator Cheryl Kagan | Pre- Legislative session remarks, 301 numbers changing to 410 only, podcast with Mayor Ashton |
| Peter Lovell | Town Center Master Plan |

| NAME | TOPIC |
|---------------|---|
| Jake Jakubek | Town Center Master Plan |
| Anita Powell | Lincoln Park Neighborhood Design Guidelines |
| Duane Rollins | Town Center Guidelines |

FURTHER DISCUSSION

January 6, 2025, Agenda item 7.

https://rockvillemd.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=4953

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8. Special Presentations - NONE

9. Consent Agenda

A. Adoption of Resolution to approve Montgomery County, Maryland’s \$1,500,000.00 Housing Initiative Fund Loan to RHE Scarborough Square, LLC, owner of the Scarborough Square Townhomes & Apartments.

Councilmember Marissa Valeri moved to approve consent agenda item A.

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| MOVER: | RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS] Marissa Valeri, Councilmember |
| SECONDER: | Barry Jackson, Councilmember |
| IN FAVOR: | Mayor Ashton, Councilmember Fulton, Councilmember Jackson, Councilmember Myles, Councilmember Shaw, Councilmember Valeri, Councilmember Van Grack |

FURTHER DISCUSSION

January 6, 2025, Agenda item 12A.

https://rockvillemd.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=4953

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10. Public Hearing - NONE

11. Action Items - NONE

12. Worksession

A. Worksession on amendments to the Lincoln Park Neighborhood Conservation District Plan and consideration of Design Guidelines.

Senior Planner, Christopher Davis, provided a brief overview on amendments to the Lincoln Park Neighborhood Conservation District Plan, and considerations of Design Guidelines.

Questions from the Mayor and Council were addressed by staff. The Mayor and Council provided their thoughts and comments.

Worksession Summary:

Mayor and Council conduct a work session and provide direction to staff on the proposed amendments to the Lincoln Park Neighborhood Conservation District Plan and Design Guidelines.

Plan amendment: The proposed Lincoln Park Conservation District Plan Amendment will update and clarify existing building standards for construction and implement new design guidelines that have been developed specifically for single-family detached homes. The Plan amendment and design guidelines are intended to continue the district’s goals of conservation of older neighborhoods such as Lincoln Park, which have distinctive identities worthy of retention, while also providing a clear set of design requirements that are aligned with such goals and will guide the construction of new homes and additions in a predictable manner.

Should the Mayor and Council adopt the proposed Plan amendment and approve the Lincoln Park Design Guidelines, the proposed zoning text amendment TXT2024-00267 (ZTA) would update Article 10 and Article 14 of the Zoning Ordinance to implement the design guidelines and bring the conservation district overlay zone into conformance with the Plan amendment.

Design Guidelines Project: The purpose of the Lincoln Park Design Guidelines project is to establish a clear set of expectations and a predictable review framework for residents, design professionals, contractors, City staff, and officials when designing and reviewing a new detached home or an addition to an existing home. If approved, compliance with the design guidelines would be required for a building permit to be issued for the construction of a significant renovation or an addition to a single-unit detached dwelling. The goals of the project are as follows:

- To conserve and strengthen the unique identity and sense of place that exists among residents in the neighborhood;
- To promote complementary and context-sensitive development between new and existing structures while also allowing creative design; and
- To maintain and enhance a walkable and pedestrian-friendly environment.

Content of the Design Guidelines: The guidelines are composed of 10 specific design issues ranging from building orientation and materials to parking and trees. The framework of the guidelines was developed through collaboration with the City’s consultant and feedback received from residents. While the structure of the guidelines mirror that of other adopted design guidelines in the city, such as the East Rockville Design Guidelines, the Lincoln Park Design Guidelines have been calibrated to the specific needs and feedback expressed by Lincoln Park residents. It is important to note that the design guidelines look to build off the existing building requirements for Lincoln Park and address challenges residents have experienced with the current conservation district standards. To modify any of the existing standards, the conservation district must be revised.

Process to Implement the Design Guidelines To adopt and apply these guidelines, the process is not a simple one because three different items need to be changed.

1. The existing Lincoln Park Neighborhood Conservation District Plan must be modified to recommend changes to the Conservation District zone and to reference new design guidelines.
2. To be consistent with the Conservation District Plan, the Neighborhood Conservation District zoning text and associated standards must be amended to address neighborhood issues and implement the guidelines.
3. The Zoning Ordinance must be amended to reference the design guidelines so they may be implemented through the building permit review process.

The Plan amendment, amendments to the district, and design guidelines seek to provide a robust set of guidelines that will allow property owners to build new detached homes and construct additions to existing homes that are generally compatible with the look and feel of the longstanding Lincoln Park neighborhood.

Next Steps: Mayor and Council provide direction to staff on whether the guidelines can move forward as proposed, and accordingly, direct staff to prepare Resolutions for the Plan Amendment and design guidelines along with an Ordinance to implement the associated ZTA, for consideration by the Mayor and Council at the January 27, 2025, meeting.

FURTHER DISCUSSION

January 6, 2025, Agenda item 12A.

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THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL WENT INTO A BRIEF RECESS AT 9:35 PM. THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL RECONVENED AT 9:44 PM

B. Worksession on the Town Center Master Plan - Part III

Principal Planner Andrew Reitelbach, and Chief of Long Range Planning, Katie Gerbes provided a presentation on the Town Center Master Plan – Part III.

Questions from the Mayor and Council were addressed by the staff. The Mayor and Council provided their thoughts and comments.

Worksession Summary:

Mayor and Council hold a work session to review, discuss, and provide final direction on the draft Town Center Master Plan. The adoption of the updated Town Center Master Plan will serve as an amendment to the Rockville 2040 Comprehensive Plan, replacing the existing Planning Area 1 chapter in its entirety.

MD-355 Corridor Character Area: At the December 16th work session, staff introduced the concept of a third character area focused on increasing heights and development intensity along the MD-355 corridor. This area was initially referred to as the “Transit Oriented” character area. During the

December 16th work session, Mayor and Council expressed their desire to see this area renamed as “MD-355 Corridor” character area. Throughout this staff report, this character area will be referred to by its new name, MD-355 Corridor.

On December 16th, Mayor and Council agreed that heights in this MD-355 Corridor character area should be 235 feet of base building height with up to 100 feet of additional bonus height. Mayor and Council did not, however, determine the boundary of this character area. Staff are seeking direction from Mayor and Council on January 6th as to which properties should be included in the new character area. To inform that decision, Mayor and Council requested two pieces of additional information from staff.

Parking: Beyond the boundary of the MD-355 Corridor character area, the other main policy within the Plan that needs direction by Mayor and Council is the recommendation to eliminate minimum parking requirements within Town Center.

Numerous municipalities around the country have been reducing or eliminating minimum parking requirements as one strategy to encourage more housing development, especially in areas near transit corridors.

The creation of any additional housing would also produce more MPDUs through the City’s standard requirements. In addition, project developers may be more likely to take advantage of the bonus height program, with its resulting 5% increase in MPDUs, if there is more flexibility permitted in providing the number of parking spaces expected to be needed for each development, rather than what is mandated by the City.

Montgomery County Case Study – ZTA 23-10: During the December 16th work session, Mayor and Council asked to see additional information about the three projects in the pipeline within Montgomery County that qualify for no parking minimum because of ZTA 23-10. The location and unit count/type of each of the three projects are listed in the table below. There was also discussion as to if the public sector was a partner in any of these projects. Montgomery County owns a portion of land utilized for the MHP Amherst project and is contributing their land in exchange for a future community park as a part of the development. This project is much different than the others because it has a significant amount of area dedicated to performing arts which would require adequate parking.

Options for Parking and Staff’s Recommendation: Based on past discussions with Mayor and Council on the proposal to eliminate parking minimums, staff presents four options for the body to consider at their January 6th meeting. These options are:

- **Option 1:** Retain the proposal in the approved Plan where parking minimums are eliminated throughout the entire planning area.
- **Option 2:** Revert to the proposal in the first draft of the Plan, where parking minimums are eliminated within ½ mile of Metro and ¼ mile of bus rapid transit, then evaluate if minimums elsewhere need to be modified.
- **Option 3:** Align parking minimums to each character area. Staff proposes eliminating parking minimums within the MD-355 corridor and core character areas and reducing minimum parking requirements in the edge character area by 25%.

- **Add On:** An additional item that could be added on to any of the proposals outlined above is to require a property owner to submit a “parking plan” along with the development application. The purpose of this additional document would be to provide a statement of justification explaining how the owner determined the amount of proposed parking and how they believe it will be sufficient to foster a successful project. Information provided in this “parking plan” should include the number of units/breakdowns of land uses within a project, how the proposed number of parking spaces was calculated (including handicap spaces), anticipated mode share of project users and comparable evidence demonstrating the proposed parking will be sufficient.

Next Steps:

Mayor and Council are tentatively scheduled to adopt the Plan on January 13, 2025.

FURTHER DISCUSSION

January 6, 2025, Agenda item 12B.

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13. Mock Agenda

Mayor and Council directed staff to add the Town Center Master Plan Adoption to the January 27 Meeting agenda.

14. Old/New Business

There was no Old/New Business reported.

15. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:27 pm.

RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER: Marissa Valeri, Councilmember

SECONDER: Adam Van Grack, Councilmember

IN FAVOR: Mayor Ashton, Councilmember Fulton, Councilmember Jackson, Councilmember Myles, Councilmember Shaw, Councilmember Valeri, Councilmember Van Grack