



Approved: *[Signature]*
Attest: *[Signature]*
Approved Meeting No. 15-25
June 2, 2025

Meeting Minutes

Monday, May 19, 2025

6:30 PM

Meeting No. 14-25

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

Mayor and Council convened in a Hybrid Open Meeting at 6:35 p.m. on Monday, May 19, 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.

Mayor Monique Ashton welcomed Mini Mayor Dumini Mehta. Mini Mayor Dumini Mehta convened the meeting

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Mini Mayor Dumini Mehta lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Ashton provided a brief overview of Maryland Municipal League Essay contest, and the Mini Mayor for a Day activity in Rockville. Mayor Ashton acknowledged Mini Mayor Dumini Mehta’s family, principal and friends.

Mini Mayor Dumini Mehta read her winning essay; and Mayor Ashton presented her with a certificate of recognition.

3. Proclamation and Recognition - NONE

4. Agenda Review

City Clerk/Director of Council Operations Sara Taylor-Ferrell reported thee were several changes to the agenda, and the briefbook was regenerated and posted to the City’s website.

5. City Manager's Report

City Manager Jeff Mihelich reported the City continues to work on Recreation and Parks permits for the Swim Center and Bullards Park. City departments are preparing for several major events including Memorial Day, Hometown Holidays and Rockville Pride.

6. Boards and Commissions Appointments and Reappointments

A. Board and Commission Appointment and Reappointment

Councilmember David Myles moved new appointment of Nicole Stone to serve a full two-year term until May 1, 2027, as a Rockville Private School Leader, and the new appointment of Shauntae Spagh to serve a full two-year term until May 1, 2027, as a Rockville Public School Leader, and the new appointment of Tanya Aguilar to serve a full two-year term until May 1, 2027, as a Rockville Public School Leader.

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

7. Community Forum

**Community Forum
In-Person/Virtual Speaker List
(May 19, 2025)**

NAME	TOPIC
Daniel Shiralir	May is Mental Health Awareness Month, suicide issues, protecting children from social media.

8. Special Presentations

A. Board of Appeals Annual Report

Alan Frankle, Chair of the City of Rockville Board of Appeals presented the Board of Appeals Annual Report.

Staff recommends that the Mayor and Council receive the Board of Appeals Annual Report.

Questions from the Mayor and Council were addressed by the BOA Chair Alan Frankle. The Mayor and Council provided their thoughts and comments.

FURTHER DISCUSSION

May 19, 2025, Agenda item 8A.

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Timestamp 20:30

9. Consent Agenda

- A.** Authorization for the City Manager to Execute a Cost Sharing Agreement with MDOT SHA for the Final Design of the Hurley Bridge Replacement Project
- B.** Authorize the City Manager to Sign the Administrative Order on Consent (AOC) for the Cross Connection Control Program with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- C.** Approval of Year 50, FY25 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Sub-grantee Contract Agreements and Authorization for City Manager to Sign Agreements
- D.** Approval of Minutes
- E.** Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Grant Agreement with the Maryland Energy

Administration for the FY 2025 Medium-Duty and Heavy-Duty Zero-Emission Vehicle Grant for the Purchase of Two Electric Senior Transit Buses

Councilmember Barry Jackson moved to approve consent agenda items A, B, C, D, and E.

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

10. Public Hearing - NONE

11. Action Items

- A.** Briefing on Project Plan Amendment PJT2025-00023, to Amend the Planned Development for Rockville Center, Inc. to Permit construction of a 12-story multifamily building containing 147 affordable housing units and a parking waiver to provide zero on-site parking spaces located at 41 Maryland Avenue in the PD-RCI (Planned Development - Rockville Center, Inc.) Zone; SCG Development Holdings, LLC, Comstock 41 Maryland LLC, Comstock 44 Maryland LLC, Applicants

Community Planning and Development Services Senior Planner, Christopher Davis provided a Briefing on Project Plan Amendment PJT2025-00023, to amend the Planned Development for Rockville Center, Inc. to Permit construction of a 12-story multifamily building containing 147 affordable housing units and a parking waiver to provide zero on-site parking spaces located at 41 Maryland Avenue in the PD-RCI (Planned Development - Rockville Center, Inc.) Zone; SCG Development Holdings, LLC, Comstock 41 Maryland LLC, Comstock 44 Maryland LLC.

Applicant Kirk Alpeni of SCG Development, Applicant, provided an overview of the overall project.

Staff recommends hold briefing for Mayor and Council and allow the applicant an opportunity to present the proposed development project.

Mayor and Council asked questions and offered feedback to staff and applicant.

Summary:

The Property is identified as Parcel 2-H of the Rockville Town Center subdivision (Plat No. 20464) recorded on June 4, 1997. The Property is approximately 0.42 acres (18,150 square feet) and is located at the southwest corner of Maryland Avenue and East Middle Lane. The Property is a narrow corner lot that is rectangular in shape and mostly flat with a slight upward sloping occurring along its Maryland Avenue frontage. The Property's frontage along East Middle Lane is approximately 82 feet and the Maryland Avenue frontage is approximately 296 feet.

The site is currently improved with a privately owned surface parking lot that has existed since the late

1990s and appears to have been used as a parking facility for the town center area during such time. The site immediately abuts the Victoria Condominiums building at 24 Courthouse Square to the west while also abutting the rear of a commercial building to the south at 30 Courthouse Square.

Parking Waiver

As part of this Project Plan application, the Applicant requests a parking waiver pursuant to Section 25.16.03 of the Zoning Ordinance to reduce the required number of parking spaces to zero on-site spaces.

Next Steps

Following the briefings, the Applicant is encouraged to revise the proposal pursuant to comments received at both the Planning Commission and the Mayor and Council. Such plan revisions will be made before the request is scheduled for consideration by the Planning Commission at a future meeting. The Planning Commission must review the Project Plan application, as revised, at a public meeting and provide an opportunity for public comment. After its review, the Commission shall prepare and transmit its comments and recommendations on the application to the Mayor and Council.

Following the Planning Commission's review, the Project Plan application will be scheduled for a public hearing by the Mayor and Council.

FURTHER DISCUSSION

May 19, 2025, Agenda item 11A.

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THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL WENT INTO A BRIEF RECESS AT 8:04 PM. THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL RECONVENED AT 8:18 P.M.

B. Discussion on Zoning Regulations for Standard Dispensaries of Cannabis

Community Planning and Development Services Chief of Zoning, Jim Wasilak provided an overview of the Zoning Regulations for Standard Dispensaries of Cannabis.

Staff recommends that the Mayor and Council conduct a work session on the potential regulations of the retail sale of cannabis for personal use. Staff further recommends that the Mayor and Council authorize the filing of a zoning text amendment as described in the following agenda item.

Summary:

The Maryland General Assembly passed legislation allowing for the retail sale of cannabis for personal or recreational use in 2023. Prior to that time, the sale of cannabis had been permitted for medical purposes only for eight years and was limited to two medical cannabis dispensaries per legislative district.

The 2023 law allowed the sale of cannabis for personal use from standard dispensaries, which have physical storefronts and are authorized to sell cannabis or cannabis products to patients or consumers.

The Maryland Cannabis Authority limited the number of standard dispensaries by county, with a maximum of 11 authorized in Montgomery County.

The law was adopted with separation requirements between dispensaries and sensitive uses, as well as between dispensaries. The law also included limitations on how municipalities may regulate the location of standard dispensaries via zoning and did not permit municipalities to adopt zoning regulations that would be more stringent than the requirements of the state law. The 2023 law required that Standard Dispensaries not locate within 500 feet of any of the following pre-existing sensitive locations:

- Primary school
- Secondary school
- Childcare center
- Playground
- Recreation Center
- Library
- Place of worship and
- Public Park

In 2024, the Maryland General Assembly adopted clarifying changes to the law that provide some flexibility for municipalities (see Attachment 2 – MCA Zoning Update). The 2024 law allows local jurisdictions to:

- Increase the distance between dispensaries to a half mile
- Establish a 100 feet distance requirement between standard dispensaries and areas zoned for residential use only
- Apply distance limitations used for licensed alcoholic beverage retailers from an area zoned exclusively for residential use
- Reduce the required distance between a licensed dispensary and any sensitive locations as listed
- Reduce the required distance between dispensaries to less than 1,000 feet
- Enforce the distance restrictions when making zoning decisions for licensed dispensaries.

It should be noted the same legislation does not allow municipalities to adopt zoning requirements that are more stringent than the requirements for the sale of alcoholic beverages. Currently, the city does not have restrictions on the location of alcoholic beverage retailers, other than specifying in which zones the sale of alcoholic beverages is permitted. To enact the more stringent limitations described above, the Mayor and Council would have to enact similar restrictions on the sale of alcoholic beverages that do not currently exist. The Mayor and Council may enact cannabis regulations that mirror those of state law to ensure the application of state requirements.

- Direct staff to authorize the filing of a zoning text amendment to mirror the state regulations for the retail sale of cannabis, as drafted for the following agenda item; or
- Direct staff to authorize the filing of a zoning text amendment that includes more stringent

requirements for the retail sale of cannabis as permitted by state law, including increasing the separation between dispensaries from 1,000 feet to one-half mile and prohibiting dispensaries within 100 feet from residentially zoned properties. These changes would require that the same requirements also apply to the sale of alcoholic beverages, which do not currently exist

- Direct staff to not proceed with a zoning text amendment. Dispensaries would be required to comply with state law only.

Next Steps

If the Mayor and Council wish to proceed with the draft zoning text amendment, a vote to authorize its filing must occur.

FURTHER DISCUSSION

May 19, 2025, Agenda item 11B.

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- C. Authorization to File a Zoning Text Amendment to Add a Definition for Cannabis Dispensaries and Add Cannabis Dispensaries as a Conditional Use in Mixed Use and Light Industrial Zones

See discussion in agenda item 11B above.

Councilmember Marissa Valeri moved the authorization to file a Zoning Text Amendment to add a definition for Cannabis Dispensaries and add Cannabis Dispensaries as a Conditional Use in Mixed Use and Light Industrial Zones.

	RESULT: APPROVED [6-1]
MOVER:	Marissa Valeri, Councilmember
SECONDER:	Kate Fulton, Councilmember
IN FAVOR:	Mayor Ashton, Councilmember Fulton, Councilmember Jackson, Councilmember Shaw, Councilmember Valeri, Councilmember Van Grack
OPPOSED	Councilmember Myles

FURTHER DISCUSSION

May 19, 2025, Agenda item 11C.

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12. Worksession

- A. Rockville Emergency Assistance Program (REAP) Work Session

Housing and Community Development Housing Programs Manager, Jane Lyons-Raeder, and Housing Specialist ,Tawana Seigler-King provided an overview of the Rockville Emergency Assistance Program.

Staff recommends Mayor and Council approve the planned alterations to the Rockville Emergency Assistance Program (REAP) as presented and provide feedback on the following questions regarding whether to:

1. Set a \$10,000 maximum asset level requirement for applicants
2. Set an 80% Area Median Income (AMI) maximum requirement for applicants
3. Allow childcare to be added to the eligible assistance types

Summary:

The Rockville Emergency Assistance Program (REAP), established in 1982, provides emergency assistance to eligible City of Rockville residents experiencing a financial crisis. By providing this assistance, REAP improves housing stability and quality of life. The most common uses of REAP are to prevent evictions and utility shut offs. When needed, staff assists clients with housing navigation and make referrals to appropriate available public and private resources to supplement the financial assistance provided by REAP. To receive assistance, applicants must reside in the corporate city limits of Rockville at the time of application and for a period of at least six months prior.

Eligible expenses include:

- Rent payments (up to \$2,000) when the applicant has received a current eviction notice from the court in the form of a Summons to Appear for Failure to Pay Rent, Writ/Warrant of Restitution, or have a Red and White Final Eviction Notice from the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office;
- Utility payments (up to \$1,500) when the applicant has received a discontinuance notice or notice of past-due payment with a shut-off date;
- Prescription payments (up to \$300) for non-narcotic drugs, as well as dental or medical procedures;
- Funeral expenses (up to \$1,000); and
- Other basic needs, when necessary, if resources cannot be obtained free of charge from area agencies or non-profit organizations.

Changes to Client Eligibility:

- **Asset Level:** Staff propose setting a maximum asset level for unemployed applicants of \$10,000 to ensure that we are prioritizing assistance for those who most lack resources of their own to resolve their financial emergency. There is currently no asset limit.
- **Income Limit:** Staff propose setting a household income limit at 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI), as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. There is currently no household income limit for REAP, whereas the county's limit is 60% AMI.

Changes to Assistance Amounts:

- **Total Maximum Assistance:** At the moment, there is no overall limit to the amount of assistance clients may receive. Maximum assistance amounts are set by type of assistance. For example, within a twelve-month period, a client may currently receive a total of \$3,800 in REAP

funds.

- **Increase Maximum Rental Assistance:** The current rental assistance maximum of \$2,000 does not cover the median Rockville rent of \$2,101 per month. Therefore, staff propose to increase the maximum amount of rental assistance to \$3,000.

Changes to Types of Assistance:

- **Add Childcare:** Given recent discussions by the Mayor and Council, staff intends to add childcare as an eligible assistance type, up to a maximum of \$2,000, which would likely pay for a little over a month of childcare expenses while the parent or guardian job searches.
- **Removing Funeral Expenses:** This type of assistance has been rarely used, and when there have been requests for funeral assistance, the balance is frequently significantly more than the maximum, so the client is denied. For this reason, staff recommends removing funeral expenses as an eligible expense.
- **Assistance allowed with approval:** To achieve REAP's goal of housing stability and preventing homelessness, staff have found that the following types of assistance are sometimes needed. Each of the following types of assistance would still need approval from the Housing Programs Manager to move forward with the case, but would have to adhere to certain guidelines:
 - **Security Deposits:** Some clients have such high rental arrears that the best use of city funds may be to assist them with moving to a new rental where they can better afford rent. Staff proposes a maximum assistance amount of \$2,000.
 - **Moving Expenses:** Clients facing housing instability or homelessness frequently need to rely on storage units to keep their belongings and may incur other moving costs as a result of being evicted. Staff recommend a maximum assistance amount of \$500.
 - **Guarantor Fees:** Staff recommend setting a maximum assistance amount of \$1,800.
 - **Hotel Stays:** The City of Rockville is not a part of the Montgomery County Continuum of Care for homelessness and does not provide homelessness services. For those cases, REAP funds to provide a short-term hotel stay can prevent temporary homelessness and entrance into the shelter system. As with all REAP cases, county assistance must always be exhausted first. Staff recommend a maximum assistance amount of \$150 per night for a total maximum of \$3,000.

Status of Bridge Program:

In the past, DHCD has, in parallel, operated the Rockville Bridge Rental Assistance Program (Bridge) to pay off client's rental arrears prior to the start of eviction proceedings. Due to acute needs, the Department has been prioritizing clients facing impending homelessness or utility shut off. Bridge cases may still be approved on a case-by-case basis.

Connection with Federal Employees:

Former federal employees who have lost their job would be eligible for REAP, given that they meet the program's eligibility requirements, such as the residency requirement, household income limit, and asset limit, and are experiencing a verifiable emergency. These applicants would be treated in the same manner as all other applicants. An additional budget allocated for this year only to account for

additional needs related to reduction in workforce for Federal workers, grantees, and contractors. (Note: An additional 100K was added).

Looking Forward:

On May 5, 2025, the Mayor and Council approved \$145,850 for REAP in the Fiscal Year 2026 budget. The City Manager's office intends to bring a \$100,000 budget amendment before the body in June 2025. With a total budget of \$245,850, REAP would be able to assist 61 households at the maximum allowed amount of \$4,000 per household per twelve-month period. However, many clients are successfully assisted with less than the maximum amount of assistance, so staff projects the total number of households assisted will be greater.

Mayor and Council held a lengthy discussion addressing the REAP criteria:

- Should there be 10,000 max asset level requirements for applicant? Mayor and Council support the \$10,000 max asset level.
- Should there be an 80% AMI max requirement for applicant? The Mayor and Council did not support and 800% AMI maximum.
- Should childcare be added to the eligible assistance types?

Next Steps:

After receiving feedback from the Mayor and Council, staff will finalize the internal policies and procedures for the redesigned Rockville Emergency Assistance Program (REAP) and transmit it to the City Manager for final approval. Upon approval, staff will implement the program updates and communicate changes to partner organizations.

FURTHER DISCUSSION

May 19, 2025, Agenda item 12A.

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THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL WENT INTO A BRIEF RECESS AT 9:48 PM. THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL RECONVENED AT 10:00 P.M.

As an addendum to the REAP budget discussion, Mayor and Council added federal contractors and mortgage arrears as eligible for REAP assistance.

B. Work Session on City Election Reform

City Manager Jeff Mihelich provided a brief overview of worksessions and the scheduled community input sessions with dates of the next worksession on June 16 and the Community Engagement on June 5 and 7; with the recommendations back on July 21.

Deputy City Manager Barack Matite, provided an overview of the 2020 Charter Review Commission Report and the 2023 Election Report of the Board of Supervisors of Elections, then introduced the Election Consultant, The Gant Group, who provided an overview of the City Election Reform

presentation.

Staff recommends Mayor and Council receive the City Election Reform presentation and provide recommended changes for the 2027 election.

Summary:

2020 Charter Review Commission

- Tasked to review and make recommendations on Elections-related topics, e.g. size of Council; term limits, representative Districts, etc.
- Report issued on September 30, 2022

Board of Supervisors of Elections

- Mayor and Council received BSE Report on the 2023 Election what outlined accomplishments, issues, and lessons learned
- BSE recommended a complete rewrite of Chapter 8 before the 2027 Election
- Directed staff to schedule a worksession on City Election
- RFP issued and The Grant Group selected for the City Election reform project

Worksession Outcome

Input from Mayor and Council

- Election Laws
- Campaign Finance
- Election Process and Procedures
- Board of Supervisors of Elections
- Other Topics of Interest

Election Process and Procedures

- What aspects of the City's Election process and procedures should be subject to reform?
- Election Procedures?
- Pre-Election?
- Post-Election?

Board of Supervisors of Elections

- What should be the role and responsibilities of the Board of Supervisors of Elections in the administration of City Elections?
- Current?
- Future?

- What should be the role of staff in the administration of Elections?

Other Items

- Are there other topics of interest to the Mayor and Council regarding the City Election?
 - Complete rewrite of Election Code
 - Clear Layout of the election code, election procedures, campaign finance enforcement,
 - Deadlines for making changes to elections during election cycle
 - BSE role and remain independent, conflict of interest, legal representation during election cycle
 - Public Financing
 - Explore the 2023 ballot measures
 - **Question 1** – Voting Age: Currently must be 18 years old to vote. Should Rockville allow 16-17 year olds to vote in City elections?
 - **Question 2** – Non-Citizen Voting: Currently only U.S. citizens who live in Rockville can vote in City Elections. Should Rockville allow residents who are not U.S. citizens to vote in City elections?
 - **Question 3** – Term Limits: Currently there are no term limits for Mayor and City Council members. Should Rockville limit the Mayor and Council members to 3 consecutive terms?
 - **Question 4** – Representative Districts: Currently City Council members are elected at large. That means the entire City votes for all 6 members. Should some or all of the 6 members be elected by representative districts?

Additional Topic

- Rank Choice Voting

Next Steps

- May 19, 2025 – 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM – Mayor and Council Work Session
- Thursday June 5, 2025 – 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM – Session 1 – Community Engagement
- Saturday, June 7, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM – Session 2 - Community Engagement
- Monday, June 16, 2025 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM – Mayor and Council Work Session
- Monday July 21, 2025 – 6:30 Pm – 7:30 PM – Mayor and Council Final Report Presentation

FURTHER DISCUSSION

May 19, 2025, Agenda item 12B.

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13. Mock Agenda

A. Mock Agenda

Mayor and Council reviewed the Mock Agenda.

14. Old / New Business

15. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:32 p.m.

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