

June 14, 2021 Town Council Meeting
(held by Zoom Video Conferencing)

- Approved the Town Meeting Minutes of May 10, 2021.
- Announced the results from the June 7, 2021 Town Election, where Darin Bartram and Conor Crimmins were re-elected to the Town Council.
- Announced that the annual July 4th Bike Parade will be held and that the Kensington Volunteer Fire Department (KVFD) will lead the Parade beginning at 10:00 am at St. Paul Park.
- The Council concurred to sign a letter from the Neighborhood Coalition to the County Council addressing seven critical concerns with the Thrive Montgomery 2050 Draft Plan.
- Held a Variance Hearing for 10221 Montgomery Avenue, in accordance with Section 5-104, “Building Lines”, of the Town Code.
 - A Resolution in support of the Variance request will be prepared for the July 12, 2021, Council Meeting.

Meeting June 14, 2021, 7:00 pm, by Zoom Video Conferencing

Mayor Furman, Council Members Bartram, Crimmins, Engle, and Hill-Zayat; Town Manager Hoffman; and Clerk-Treasurer Engels were present via Zoom Video Conferencing. A moment of silence was observed.

The Town Meeting Minutes from May 10, 2021 were reviewed and approved. See Council Actions.

From the Mayor and Council

Mayor Furman announced the results from the June 7, 2021, Town Election:

Conor Crimmins – 318
Darin Bartram – 246
Tim Willard – 151

Mayor Furman thanked all of the candidates and specifically Tim Willard for his outstanding campaign and highlighting a number of issues important to the community; and noted that Mr. Willard be joining the Greenscape Committee, per his request.

Mayor Furman left the Town Meeting at 7:30 pm to receive the Sentinel Award on behalf of the Thrive 2050 Neighborhood Coalition, along with the Town of Chevy Chase, Woodside Civic Association, and Saratoga Village Neighbors for significant contributions to the Coalition. Council Member Bartram served as Mayor Pro Tem during the Mayor’s absence. Mayor Furman returned to the Town Meeting at 8:23pm.

Thrive Montgomery 2050

Council Member Crimmins presented a draft letter from the Neighborhood Coalition to the County Council addressing seven critical areas of concern with the Thrive Montgomery 2050 plan; and noted that the Town will also be providing testimony at the June 29 Hearing.

Joe Campbell suggested that the core concerns of Kensington be given more emphasis within the letter and requested clarification on the MARC station not being treated as a Metro station.

The Council clarified that a zoning text amendment could be adopted by the County Council that would allow communities within one-half mile of a MARC station to be under the same development standards as communities within one-half mile of a Metro station; and it is important that Thrive Montgomery 2050 clearly differentiates between the two public transportation options.

Council Member Bartram suggested a separate letter could be sent from communities with MARC stations to focus on the differences between MARC and Metro, and specifically the limitations of MARC.

10221 Montgomery Avenue Variance Hearing

A Variance Hearing was held for a 3-foot side yard encroachment into the 10-foot side yard requirement at 10221 Montgomery Avenue for an entirely below-grade 1,016 square foot addition to the main house. The addition is to increase the usefulness of the existing garage and basement. Lauren Clark, the Architect, and the property owner, Bruce Caswell, were present to present the proposed project and answer any questions.

Cindy Tracy, an adjacent property owner, stated that she appreciates past mitigation efforts with respect to storm water drainage; however, she was concerned about the subterrain displacement of water; and questioned additional remedies that will be included.

Beth Pierce, an adjacent property owner, also noted concerns with respect to storm water from significant ground displacement and requested assurance that the architect and contractor will mitigate drainage problems so neighboring properties will not see an increase of water runoff.

Bruce Caswell stated that the project will not change the aesthetics of the property with the exception of the improvements to the garage, as there will be no additional impermeable surface; noted that past rain events have overwhelmed the storm drains and the Town has increased capacity of the existing storm drains in the vicinity and also reconfigured the driveway aprons to mitigate water from entering the property; and noted that he understands his neighbor's concerns and has added drywells and will reevaluate if additional drywells will be necessary following an engineering review.

Council Member Crimmins questioned the discharge location of the sump pump.

Mr. Caswell and Ms. Clark stated the civil engineer will be consulted for the final strategy for the sump pump discharge.

Council Member Engle noted the importance of a holistic approach for adjacent properties and mitigating measures, which could be a condition to make sure downstream impacts are considered.

Council Member Bartram supported the variance as the proposed construction protects and does not disturb existing green space and the openness between houses, which is a condition of the variance.

The Council concurred moving forward with a resolution supporting the variance at the July meeting.

Council Member Engle reported that Compost Crew will be joining the Farmers Market once a month to help educate and sign-up Residents for composting; the Town will also work with Compost Crew to install a composting bin at the Train Station for community use; noted that the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), along with the Council of Governments (COG), are moving forward with the Transportation Land Use Connection (TLC) proposal following the awarding of the grant earlier in the year; the Town will have to support the final proposal and the PBASWG is encouraging public engagement; and noted that the PBASWG has also discussed developing a streetscape design package for developers on potential projects.

Council Member Crimmins stated that the County is working on the proposed agreement for the sale of the Warner Mansion and Carriage House to Washington Landmark Construction and is expected to be completed by the end of June; attended a storm water summit hosted by Delegate Carr, which focused on mitigation strategies attributed to Knowles and Summit Avenue; noted the proposed Kensington Crossing (10619 Connecticut Avenue) held a community meeting, as required by Montgomery Planning; and thanked the Town for helping with Kensington Parkwood's 5th Grade end of year picnic and party.

Council Member Bartram stated that he appreciated the support from the Residents to serve another term and will be addressing accessory dwelling units, setback concerns, and continued traffic issues during the term.

From the Town Manager and Staff

Council Member Engle stated that he, along with Council Member Hill-Zayat and Town Manager Hoffman, met with Pepco engineer Barbara Gonzales and identified possible sites for Level 2 electric charging stations, which includes Town Hall and the Kensington Train Station.

Ms. Gonzales was present and answered questions and noted that Pepco will be providing the infrastructure and costs associated with the charging stations and the Town will be granting use of the property.

The Council discussed the sites and concurred that St. Paul Park was not an optimal site due to the limited spaces and parking restrictions. A resolution will be prepared for the July Town Meeting granting use of the Town Hall and Kensington Train Station parking lots for charging stations.

The Council concurred to move forward with the 4th of July Bike Parade and will recommend wearing masks for those not vaccinated; Mark Hudson has volunteered to coordinate the Parade, Val Deale has volunteered to be the DJ, and the KVFD will lead the Parade.

The Council concurred to have a smaller festival for Labor Day without a parade due to the short planning time available; Town staff will work with the Coordinators and present a plan at the July Council meeting.

The Town Organizational meeting will be an in-person work session to review committees. The date will be determined based on Council schedules and upcoming Town Meetings may be in person with virtual meetings continuing in the fall.

Public Appearances

Jack Gaffey noted upcoming astronomical events.

Joe Campbell stated he supported virtual meetings continuing; noted the Election was well run and hoped for more dissenting views among candidates; suggested a Town tree inventory to identify potential hazards and streamline the process of taking down hazardous trees; and requested the Council consider bidding out the next renewal of the NZI contract which would benefit the Town and provide transparency.

Town Manager Hoffman stated that the NZI Construction contract was awarded through a competitive bid by the City of Takoma Park in 2019 and the Town was piggy-backing on this bid. The contract was awarded for two years with 2019 pricing and noted that the Town has been pleased with NZI and has received mostly positive feedback from Residents.

Council Actions

Council Member Engle moved to approve the Town Meeting Minutes from May 10, 2021. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Crimmins moved to sign the Thrive Montgomery 2050 coalition letter dated June 25, 2021 to be sent to the County Council with seven areas of concern. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Hill-Zayat moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:27 pm. The motion passed unanimously.