

November 9, 2020 Town Council Meeting

(held by Zoom Video Conferencing)

- Approved the Town Meeting Minutes of October 19, 2020.
- Acknowledged receipt of the Audit Committee's Report for Fiscal Year 2019-2020 (FY20).
- The Council concurred to send a letter to the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) noting that the Town will reevaluate removing the westbound Stop sign along the 3900 block of Plyers Mill Road at Summit Avenue, once additional pedestrian safety improvements have been made at the intersection.
- The Council concurred to send a letter to Montgomery Planning in support of a Site Plan amendment, which would center the proposed lay-by lane in front of Knowles Manor Senior Living (3906/3910 Knowles Avenue), with the condition that the lay-by lane will allow fifteen (15) minute parking for delivery vehicles.
- The Council concurred to repurpose the public right-of-way along the west end of Kaiser Place as 'Open Space' in return for certain improvements to the area by the developer for the proposed Flats at Knowles Station (10509 Summit Avenue) project. The right-of-way ('Open Space') will remain under the jurisdiction of the Town; however, the developer will be responsible for improvements and maintenance through a Declaration of Covenants.
- The Council concurred to endorse a letter drafted by Montgomery County's municipalities addressing concerns for the proposed Thrive Montgomery 2050 plan; the Town will also submit additional suggested comments to include within the letter.
- Adopted **Resolution No. R-13-2020** - A Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Town of Kensington Proclaiming November to be Municipal Government Works Month.
- Adopted **Resolution No. R-14-2020** - A Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Town of Kensington renewing a lease agreement with Montgomery Municipal Cable, Inc., for the purpose of operating a PEG cable television channel on behalf of certain municipal governments in Montgomery County, Maryland, subject to certain terms and conditions.

Meeting November 9, 2020, 7:00 pm, by Zoom Video Conferencing

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

The Town Meeting Minutes from October 19, 2020 were reviewed and approved. See Council Actions.

From the Mayor and Council

Mayor Furman acknowledged receipt of the Audit Committee's Report for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2020 (FY20).

Town Manager Hoffman stated that the Audit Committee met on October 22 and noted within the Report that they do not have any concerns with the FY20 Audit as submitted.

Summit Avenue Extension

Council Member Crimmins reported that Mayor Furman, Council Member Engle, Town Manager Hoffman, along with himself, met with Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) on November 3, 2020 with regards to an update on the proposed Summit Avenue Extended project; the project will extend Summit Avenue from Plyers Mill Road to Connecticut Avenue, thus creating a bypass to relieve congestion along Connecticut Avenue and Knowles Avenue. MCDOT is currently evaluating construction costs within Phase II, which they hope to complete by June 2021, for consideration by the County Council within the CIP.

Council Member Engle noted that MCDOT will review pedestrian and cyclist safety in the study; and suggested the public commenting period be earlier so any changes or feedback can be incorporated before their budgeting process to avoid delays. He also requested that the Traffic Committee have the chance to review the Phase II study before the Town provides its official comments.

Town Manager Hoffman will follow up with MCDOT on their timeline for community meetings and comment periods.

Joe Campbell questioned why the project was referred to as potential and the timeline for the project and supported the consideration of pedestrian and cyclist safety within the project.

Council Member Crimmins stated Phase 1 and Phase 2 have been fully funded; however, funding is still needed for the next phase and it is important to advocate in support of the project since the budgetary impact of COVID is not known.

3900 Plyers Mill Road

Town Manager Hoffman stated that MCDOT has requested that the Town remove the existing westbound Stop sign along Plyers Mill Road at Summit Avenue. The Traffic Committee reviewed the request and recommended that the Stop sign remain and to also implement the requests by Andrew Arai and the Ken-Gar Community.

Council Member Bartram stated that it was important for residents of the Ken-Gar Community to have input on the intersection and suggested that any change should be in conjunction with pedestrian improvements that are planned.

The Council concurred to send a letter to MCDOT noting that the Town would reconsider removing the westbound Stop sign along the 3900 block of Plyers Mill Road at Summit Avenue, once additional pedestrian safety improvements have been made to the intersection.

Development Review Board - 3906/3910 Knowles Avenue (Knowles Manor Senior Housing)

Council Member Engle recused himself from the discussion.

Council Member Bartram stated that the Knowles Manor Senior Housing project was approved with a lay-by lane connected to the driveway apron; however, as a result of litigation by Neighbors for an Improved Kensington, the applicant agreed to an alternative proposal by Planning staff to separate and center the lay-by lane in front of the building, and to move the bus stop between the driveway apron and lay-by lane. Council Member Bartram noted that the State Highway Administration (SHA) had concerns with the alternative location and believed that it may cause pedestrian safety issues, and proposed a third option which would separate the lay-by lane and bus stop from the driveway apron. Planning staff approved the third option; however, the Planning Board still needs to approve the amendment and the Town was requested to provide support.

Council Members Bartram and Crimmins spoke in support of the site plan amendment, along with allowing fifteen-minute parking within the lay-by lane for deliveries.

The Council concurred to send a letter in support of Site Plan Amendment No. 820190080A with the with the notation that 15-minute parking should be allowed within the lay-by lane.

Joe Campbell questioned the status of Resolution No. R-07-2020 regarding the settlement agreement by Neighbors for an Improved Kensington discussed at previous meetings.

Mayor Furman stated that she, along with Council Member Crimmins, will be meeting with Neighbors for an Improved Kensington to discuss the proposed \$100,000 donation and that it will be on a future Agenda.

Development Review Board - 10509 Summit Avenue (The Flats at Knowles Station)

The Council discussed and reviewed a request by 10509 Summit Venture, LLC, which would repurpose a portion of the public right-of-way along Kaiser Place (Warner Street) as Open Space. The Developer for the proposed Flats at Knowles Station needs additional Open Space to meet County requirements. The Town would maintain jurisdiction over the area; however, the Developer would be required to maintain the Open Space pending an agreement.

Joe Campbell questioned how the Town will ensure the developer maintains open space in future years and who would be responsible for enforcement.

Council Member Bartram stated it will be part of a Declaration of Covenants and the Town will have enforcement authority; the Town could impose penalties which would be binding on applicant and successors.

The Council concurred to send a letter in support to repurpose the public right-of-way along the west end of Kaiser Place as 'Open Space' in return for certain improvements to the area by the developer for the proposed Flats at Knowles Station (10509 Summit Avenue) project.

Thrive Montgomery 2050

Council Member Crimmins noted that he, along with Town Manager Hoffman, met with neighboring municipalities to discuss and draft a letter over concerns with Thrive Montgomery 2050, which is Montgomery Planning's vision for the County over the next thirty years. The draft letter was made available to the Council and public, which outlines concerns within the vision.

The Council concurred to endorse the letter, which will be sent by the Town of Chevy Chase to the Planning Board.

Election Sub-committee

Town Attorney Ferguson will prepare a Charter Resolution for the December meeting with the proposed amendments to the Town's Election process.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Access and Safety Working Group

Council Member Engle reported that the Pedestrian and Bicycle Access and Safety Working Group held a walkability audit training on October 31, 2020. Walkability audits will be conducted throughout Town by block and ratings will be input into a database. The Working Group will report its findings during an upcoming Council meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for December 10.

Council Member Bartram suggested the Town should revisit using GIS for mapping infrastructure in Town; and reported the new Traffic device on Howard Avenue collects data along with showing the current speed and can be relocated to other streets in Town.

Council Member Crimmins thanked the staff for providing tables and cones for the Kensington Parkwood 5th Grade bake sale; and provided an update on State business grants available, along with a grant opportunity from the County Executive.

Mayor Furman reported that the Summit Avenue mural, "Hold Your Light", was completed and that Montgomery Municipal Cable (MMC) developed a video on the mural, along with a video on the Howl-O-Weed Puppy Parade, which are available on the Town's website; noted that Jason Swain completed and installed the statue of David Gregg at Reinhardt Park in honor of Mr. Gregg's 40 years of service to the Town; noted that the Clum-Kennedy Park upgrades are nearing completion; the Town will be promoting our small business community through a marketing campaign, "I Found My Holiday Gifts in Kensington", this season; noted that the formal Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony had been canceled; however, the tree will be lit by December 6; the Hanukkah ceremony will have a sign-up list for each evening; and that the Town Crew will be installing the bike rack at Town Hall following leafing season.

From the Town Manager and Staff

Town Manager Hoffman reported that the tower crane will be removed from the Modena by Solera Senior Living site on November 20, which will temporarily close Metropolitan Avenue; the Town Clock at the Kensington Train Station will require a mechanical restoration; leaf collection has begun and will run through December 11; the brick crosswalks along Kensington Parkway were currently being installed; and noted that road salt alternatives, including brine, would be reviewed for future use.

Public Appearances

Jack Gaffey noted the improvements at Clum-Kennedy Park; suggested magnesium sulfate would be better than sodium chloride which harms the plants; and upcoming astronomical events.

Joe Campbell noted how well Clum-Kennedy Park looks; appreciated the brick pavers on Kensington parkway, which enhances pedestrian safety in the area; and recognized the Town crew for their great efforts on leaf collection.

Jeff Griffith spoke on pedestrian and cycle improvements and the need for improvements to the Summit Avenue sidewalk.

Ordinances, Resolutions, Regulations

Resolution No. R-13-2020 – A Resolution of the Mayor and Town Council of Kensington Proclaiming November to be Municipal Government Works Month was presented. See Council Actions.

Resolution No. R-14-2020 – A Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Town of Kensington renewing a lease agreement with Montgomery Municipal Cable, Inc., for the purpose of operating a PEG cable television channel on behalf of certain municipal governments in Montgomery County, Maryland, subject to certain terms and conditions was presented. See Council Actions.

Town Manager Hoffman stated Montgomery Municipal Cable is housed within Town Hall and their current lease expires November 20, 2020, and the resolution would extend the lease agreement for another ten years.

Council Actions

Council Member Crimmins moved to approve the Town Meeting Minutes from October 19, 2020. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Engle moved to adopt Resolution R-13-2020 – A Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Town of Kensington Proclaiming November to be Municipal Government Works Month. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Crimmins moved to adopt Resolution R-14-2020 – A Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Town of Kensington renewing a lease agreement with Montgomery Municipal Cable, Inc., for the purpose of operating a PEG cable television channel on behalf of certain municipal governments in Montgomery County, Maryland, subject to certain terms and conditions. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Bartram moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:06 pm. The motion passed unanimously.