

December 13, 2021 Town Council Meeting Summary (held by Zoom Video Conferencing)

- Approved the Town Meeting Minutes of November 8, 2021.
- Approved changing the formal name of the Traffic Committee to the Mobility and Traffic Committee.
- Introduced Ordinance No. O-03-2021 – An Ordinance to Amend Chapter IV, “Traffic and Vehicles”, Article 3, “Traffic Control”, Section 4-302, “Speed Limits in the Town of Kensington”, to reduce the speed limit along Town maintained streets from 25 miles per hour to 20 miles per hour. The Public Hearing will be held on January 10, 2022, 7:00 pm.

Town Council Meeting December 13, 2021, 7:04 pm, by Zoom Video Conferencing

Mayor Furman, Council Members Bartram, Crimmins, Engle, Hill-Zayat; Town Manager Hoffman, Assistant to the Town Manager Marini, and Clerk-Treasurer Engels were present via Zoom. A moment of silence was observed for the lives and communities affected by the December 10, 2021, tornadoes; Michaela Anne Belford of Chevy Chase View who passed away following an accident on Connecticut Avenue; and Council Member Crimmins’ Aunt who passed away.

The Minutes from the November 8, 2021, Town Council Meeting were reviewed and approved. See Council Actions.

From the Mayor and Town Council

County Bikeshare Program

Sandra Brecher, Chief with the Commuter Services Section, and Gary Erenrich, Special Assistant to the Director, both with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) were present and provided an overview of the Capital Bikeshare Program.

Ms. Brecher discussed the different aspects of the Bikeshare Program, which is a joint system across the region intended for bike transit within a 0.3 – 1.0-mile radius of a network station. In addition to the Bikeshare Stations, the program offers an e-bike and e-scooter program, which currently requires riders to be at least 18 years old to participate. Mr. Brecher advised that three Bikeshare Stations would be recommended for Kensington for the program to succeed, which has a capital cost of roughly \$42,100 each, plus an annual operating cost of \$16,150 per station.

Council Members Bartram and Crimmins discussed concerns over e-bikes and e-scooters with respect to the dockless nature of the program, along with safety concerns, and whether a government sponsored program was necessary when many people are already purchasing e-bikes and e-scooters themselves.

Ms. Brecher and Mr. Erenrich noted that the program is still evolving, and they continue to address safety issues with the e-bikes and e-scooters.

Council Member Engle stated he understood Council Members Bartram and Crimmins concerns over aesthetics and safety issues, but questioned what makes the e-bikes and e-scooters more unique for criticism over safety than the safety of non-electric bikes.

Council Member Hill-Zayat supported the program and noted the convenience aspect of the program rather than owning your own bike or scooter.

The Council concurred for Council Member Engle, along with the Working Group and the Mobility and Traffic Committee (MTC) to work with the County to obtain feedback and metrics to help determine if the programs are beneficial to the Town.

Mayor Furman noted the importance of the Mobility and Traffic Committee addressing this in order to get broader input from the community.

Montgomery County Redistricting Map

Mayor Furman noted that the County Council approved the proposed redistricting Map for Council Districts, which moves the Town from District 1 to District 4. The County Council also made an amendment to the proposed Map by bringing Ken-Gar in to District 4 with the Town, Chevy Chase View, Town of Garrett Park, North Bethesda, Silver Spring, and Takoma Park.

Housing and Building Regulations

Town Manager Hoffman noted that the staff is currently drafting an ordinance that would amend the Town's Housing and Building Regulations to adopt the National Property Maintenance Code and to address certain issues pertaining to projections and setbacks. The ordinance will be presented at a future Council Meeting.

Town Traffic Committee Reorganization

The Mayor and Council discussed the reorganization of the Traffic Committee.

Council Member Engle noted the importance of including the term mobility to the renaming of the Committee to emphasize the priorities and broader issues of mobility.

Jack Gaffey suggested a more useful name would be the 'Traffic and Mobility Committee.'

The Council agreed to change the name from 'Traffic Committee' to 'Mobility and Traffic Committee.' See Council Actions.

From the Mayor and Town Council Reports

Council Member Engle noted that he sent a letter on behalf of the Town to the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) in support of expanding the Ride On Route 4 service from Kensington to Wheaton.

Council Member Engle discussed moving forward with designing bike lane improvements to Kensington Parkway in conjunction with the County's proposed improvements for Kensington Parkway between Everett Street and Saul Road scheduled for spring 2022.

The Council concurred for Council Member Engle to work with the Mobility and Traffic Committee on designs for Council consideration and prioritization with other projects.

Joe Campbell noted the importance of outreach to residents who may be affected by any redesign of Kensington Parkway before Council consideration.

Council Member Engle will provide outreach to the community on design changes.

Jack Gaffey noted the importance of placing bicycle lanes between the curb and parked cars for additional safety to cyclists.

Council Member Engle stated he, along with Mayor Furman, Council Member Bartram, and Town Manager Hoffman, met with the Maryland Department of Transportation – State Highway Administration (MDOT-SHA) to address issues that concern the Town, to include:

lengthening the turn lane from Connecticut Avenue to Eastbound Plyers Mill Road; adding a roundabout or separating the two intersections at Metropolitan Avenue, Plyers Mill Road, and Concord Street; the road diet study for MD193; adding the rapid flashing beacon at Wheatley Street and Metropolitan Avenue; safety concerns at Detrick Avenue and Knowles Avenue; solar powered speed signs on state highways; the MD185 corridor study assessment which should be finished this month; Connecticut Avenue speed reductions; no U-Turn from southbound Connecticut Avenue at East Howard Avenue; and the delay of the Modena Lighting proposal.

Mayor Furman noted that MDOT-SHA stated that in order to review lowering the speed limit of Connecticut Avenue, the area will need to be designated as an urban area.

Council Member Engle noted that the BPPA designation and TLC grant could help in the process of justifying a speed limit reduction along Connecticut Avenue through Kensington.

Council Member Bartram noted that with the near fifty-fifty response rate from the Election survey with respect to expanding voting to non-citizens or subsets of non-citizens, he and Council Member Engle will be drafting a charter resolution for review at a future Council Meeting.

Joe Campbell stated that the result of the non-citizen voting question on the survey was not fifty-fifty (50-50), but fifty-one – forty-nine (51-49) against expanding non-citizen voting, which he noted should be considered.

Council Member Crimmins noted that the developer for the proposed Crossroads at Kensington project at 10619 Connecticut Avenue is working with Montgomery Planning to revise their application and that the required Community Meeting by the applicant has been scheduled for February 3, 2022. Council Member Crimmins plans to convene the Development Review Board

(DRB) prior to the January 10 Council Meeting to review the changes and provide the Town Council with a recommendation from the DRB.

Mayor Furman thanked Mark Hudson and McEnearney Associates for sponsoring the Dog Parade in November; thanked Jen Beaudet, Lindsay Cantor, Barrie Carr, Jon and Susan Gerson, Ann Lichter, Anna Sachs, and Lisa Zelermyer, for the Menorah Lighting Event; thanked Staff, Council Members, and the Kensington Volunteer Fire Department (KVFD) for the Christmas Tree Lighting Event, thanked the K-Town Ladies, Dish and Dram, and Kyle Richards for the Light Up K-Town Event; attended the County Thrive listening session, in which the County will have another listening session December 14th at 7pm; noted that there will be another Late Night Friday Shopping for businesses on Howard Avenue along with Christmas Caroling on Armory Avenue sponsored by KBDA; and Karaoke Caroling at Flinn Park will be on December 23rd at 7pm sponsored by McEnearney Associates and the Kensington Community of Churches.

From the Town Manager and Staff

Town Manager Hoffman stated leaf collection was completed on Friday, December 10; the Bridge Repair RFP has been completed and will be posted later this week for MCDOT recommended repairs to the Kent Street bridge, Kensington Cabin Park bridge, and the Frederick Avenue bridge; the Maryland Municipal League has drafted a bill to fully fund the municipalities for duplicate services the Town provides, which the county taxes residents on; when fully funded the Town will receive approximately \$311,000 instead of the current amount of \$180,000; and improvements have been made to St. Paul Park, which added additional parking spaces and now has two handicap spaces.

Public Appearances

Jack Gaffey noted the upcoming astronomical events including the Geminids meteor shower December 13, the Full Moon December 18, the Winter Solstice December 21, Ursids Meteor Shower December 21-22, and the Quadrantid Meteor Shower January 2-3.

Joe Campbell thanked the Town Crew for their responsive leaf pick up; and requested more information on the bridge repair work.

Ordinances, Resolutions, and Regulations

Ordinance No. O-03-2021 – An Ordinance of the Mayor and Town Council to Amend Chapter IV, “Traffic and Vehicles”, Article 3, “Traffic Control”, Section 4-302, “Speed Limits in the Town of Kensington”, to reduce the speed limit along Town maintained Streets from 25 miles per hour to 20 miles per hour was presented for introduction. The Public Hearing will be held on January 10, 2022. See Council Actions.

Council Actions

Council Member Engle moved to approve the Town Meeting Minutes from November 8, 2021. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Engle moved to formally rename the Traffic Committee to Mobility and Traffic Committee. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Bartram moved to introduce Ordinance No. O-03-2021 to amend Chapter IV, "Traffic and Vehicles", Article 3, "Traffic Control", Section 4-302, "Speed Limits in the Town of Kensington", to reduce the speed limit along Town maintained Streets from 25 miles per hour to 20 miles per hour and schedule a Public Hearing on January 10, 2022, at 7 pm. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Hill-Zayat moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:26 pm. The motion passed unanimously.