

November 15, 2022, Town Council Meeting Summary (held in person and by Zoom Video Conferencing)

- Approved the Town Meeting Minutes of October 11, 2022.
- Acknowledged receipt of the Audit Committee's Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2022.
- Continued Resolution No. R-06-2022 – A Resolution of the Mayor and Town Council of Kensington authorizing the Town Manager to establish a corner clearance prohibition at the following locations: 1) the south side of Carroll Place, from the projected west curb line of Hadley Place to a point 50' westward; 2) on the west side of Hadley Place, from the projected south curb line of Carroll Place to 40' southward; and 3) on the south side of Montgomery Avenue, from the projected east curb line of Hadley Place to a point 25' eastward.
- Approved Resolution No. R-29-2022 – A Resolution of the Mayor and Town Council of Kensington Authorizing a Contribution in the amount of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars from the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 (FY23) Budget to the Noyes Children's Library Foundation for the Restoration and Renovation project at Noyes Children's Library.
- Approved Resolution No. R-30-2022 – A Resolution of the Mayor and Town Council of Kensington condemning hate and violence and declaring the Town of Kensington as a safe and welcoming community for people of all backgrounds regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or political affiliation.
- Approved Resolution No. R-31-2022 – A Resolution of the Mayor and Town Council of Kensington Approving the new Employee Handbook to comply with all Federal, State, and County regulations.
- Approved Resolution No. R-32-2022 – A Resolution of the Mayor and Town Council of Kensington Proclaiming November to be Municipal Government Works Month in Kensington, Maryland.

Town Council Meeting November 15, 2022, 7:01 pm, held in person and by Zoom Video Conferencing

Mayor Furman, Council Members Bartram, Crimmins, Engle, Lichter, Town Manager Hoffman, Assistant to the Town Manager Marini, and Clerk-Treasurer Engels were present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and a moment of silence was observed.

The Minutes from the October 11, 2022, Town Meeting were reviewed and approved. See Council Actions.

From the Mayor and Town Council

Audit Committee Report

The Mayor and Council acknowledged receipt of the Audit Committee's Report for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2022, (FY22), which recommended the audited financial statements of the Town be accepted as submitted.

Noyes Children's Library Renovation Project (Courtesy Review)

Hamid Omidvar, Chief of Building Design and Construction with Montgomery County, and Greg Wiedemann, Widemann Architects, were present to review the proposed renovation to Noyes Children's Library, which is scheduled to begin construction next year and be completed in 2024. The project consists of converting the attic into a finished second floor, renovating the first floor, and adding a finished basement level, along with adding an elevator, and bringing the facility into compliance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Noyes Library project will be jointly funded by Montgomery County and the Noyes Children's Library Foundation.

The Mayor and Council supported the project and noted the importance of addressing accessibility and pedestrian safety with the addition of sidewalks and crosswalks; and the importance of considering environmental design and sustainability.

Joe Campbell questioned if there would be any disruption to traffic during the construction period.

Leslie Olson questioned how parking for after-hours activities will be addressed.

Mr. Omidvar stated the accessibility has not been addressed yet and will require a traffic study and collaboration between the Town and County; the entrance features can be modified or extended later to address this; there are no planned road closures during construction; and there are no additional provisions for parking besides the neighboring streets.

State Highway Administration (SHA) Update

Council Member Engle stated that he, along with Mayor Furman and Council Member Bartram, met with SHA to discuss the following priorities: rapid flashing beacon on Metropolitan at Wheatley Street; adding a driver feedback system to Metropolitan Avenue; proposed full signal on Connecticut Avenue at Washington Street; Connecticut Avenue and Plyers Mill Road intersection queuing; Connecticut Avenue speed limit reduction; pedestrian improvements along Knowles Avenue at Detrick Avenue; long-term plan for Connecticut Avenue between Plyers Mill Road/Metropolitan Avenue and University Boulevard; and lane reduction along University Boulevard.

Also discussed was a separated pathway for bicycles and pedestrians along the Connecticut Avenue bridge; and adding a mural to the Connecticut Avenue bridge crossing to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the B&O railroad.

The Council discussed the full signalization of the intersection of Connecticut Avenue at Washington Street and will advise SHA that the Town does not wish to pursue this further at this time, as the pedestrian concerns may have been corrected following an update to the pedestrian crossing signal.

Council Member Engle will draft a letter to SHA to get their support for implementing some of the recommendations on the TLC grant; and draft a letter along with Council Member Bartram to the County Council regarding the Summit Avenue Extended project.

Mobility and Traffic Committee (MTC)

Council Member Bartram noted that the MTC met on October 18 and discussed the Town's SHA priority list; and reviewed the intersection of Carroll Place, Montgomery Avenue, and Hadley Place following a complaint about pedestrian safety. The MTC recommended that the Town move forward with corner restrictions for the intersection, as outlined within draft Resolution No. R-06-2022. The MTC also reviewed the Town's primary enforcement locations for our secondary police officers and recommended concentrating on Stop signs through the end of the year; supported a speed hump along Carroll Place following a traffic study; and will review the Town's vehicles restrictions along St. Paul Street following a complaint by Kensington Heights due to the redirection of traffic.

Joe Campbell commented on the non-compliance and lack of enforcement of the left turn restrictions on the south side of Town.

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) 2023-24 School Calendar

Council Member Crimmins informed Residents a survey is available from MCPS for input on the school calendar year start/end date and breaks for 2023-2024 school year.

Mayor and Council Reports

Council Member Lichter reported the Greenscape Committee met and will be focusing on preserving and enhancing the tree canopy in Town.

Council Member Engle reported the Green Team met and will be working on the Sustainable Maryland designation and that the next meeting will be on November 21; and the Pedestrian and Bicycling Access and Safety Working Group held a successful Walktober event and has started the walkability audit process, and the next meeting will be on December 20.

Jonah Chen, a boy scout from Troop 439, inquired about the Green Team and was interested in volunteering.

Council Member Crimmins welcomed Baby Cat Brewery, which is now open; attended GIGS' last concert of the season, which was well done and ended by 9 pm.

Town Council Meetings in December, January, and February will be held by Zoom.

From the Town Manager and Staff

Town Manager Hoffman stated leaf collection will run through December 16; and Ecology Services Refuse & Recycling, LLC, accepted the one-year renewal for trash, brush, and recycling.

Public Appearances

Leslie Olson stated the wooden poles and equipment placed in St. Paul Park for the security cameras distract from the park.

Town Manager Hoffman stated the cameras could only be in certain areas of the park, and the posts will be painted dark green to blend in with the vegetation.

Joe Campbell questioned the reason leaf collection began later, what citations were referenced, and the status of the bridge repairs.

Town Manager Hoffman stated the Town had to wait for the County site for leaf collection to open prior to starting our collection; noted that the Montgomery County Police Officers that the Town employs have been enforcing Stop signs and issuing warnings/citations; and WRA Engineering will be providing an RFP for review and hopefully a project engineer will be on board by mid-January for the bridge project.

Larry Wannemacher requested the Town consider a location for his sculpture artwork created from metal parts of the old cement factory that would be an artistic and historic tribute to the Town.

Mayor Furman stated most community art in Town is on private property through an agreement with the property owner.

Ordinances, Resolutions, and Regulations

Resolution No. R-06-2022 - A Resolution of the Mayor and Town Council of Kensington authorizing the Town Manager to establish a corner clearance prohibition at the following locations: 1) the south side of Carroll Place, from the projected west curb line of Hadley Place to a point 50' westward; 2) on the west side of Hadley Place, from the projected south curb line of Carroll Place to 40' southward; and 3) on the south side of Montgomery Avenue, from the projected east curb line of Hadley Place to a point 25' eastward was presented. The Resolution was continued.

Town Manager Hoffman stated that the Resolution was presented in March and brought back following the recommendation of the Traffic Engineer and the Mobility and Traffic Committee (MTC) to help improve safety at the intersection with clearance prohibitions and vegetation management. The Town's Traffic engineer is not recommending an all-way stop due to the low volume of traffic.

The neighboring residents of the intersection requested additional information with regards to the proposed distances on the parking regulations, vegetation management, and if an all-way Stop could be considered.

Town Manager Hoffman and the Traffic Engineer will schedule an on-site meeting with the residents to review the proposed recommendations and answer any questions.

Resolution No. R-29-2022 – A Resolution of the Mayor and Town Council of Kensington Authorizing a Contribution in the amount of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars from the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 (FY23) Budget to the Noyes Children's Library Foundation for the Restoration and Renovation project at Noyes Children's Library was presented. See Council Actions.

Resolution No. R-30-2022 – A Resolution of the Mayor and Town Council of Kensington condemning hate and violence and declaring the Town of Kensington as a safe and welcoming community for people of all backgrounds regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or political affiliation was presented. See Council Actions.

Council Member Lichter stated the Resolution is to reaffirm the Town’s stance against the rise of hate crimes and create a welcoming and safe community for all. Since the incident at St. Paul Park, the Town has worked with law enforcement and the investigation continues; and the Racial Justice Committee will be hosting a community training with the Anti-Defamation League on January 18.

Resolution No. R-31-2022 – A Resolution of the Mayor and Town Council of Kensington Approving the new Employee Handbook to comply with all Federal, State, and County regulations was presented. See Council Actions.

Town Manager Hoffman stated the Resolution was amended to include “substantially in the form attached upon final review by the Town Attorney”, to make conforming changes and add a federal regulation pertaining to nursing mothers.

Town Manager Hoffman stated Council Members Crimmins and Lichter met with staff to review the new Employee Handbook and that their changes and recommendations have been incorporated. The current handbook was revised in 2011 and a new handbook was needed to comply with regulations.

Mayor Furman recommended a policy to review the handbook every two years for changes in regulations.

Resolution No. R-32-2022 – A Resolution of the Mayor and Town Council of Kensington Proclaiming November to be Municipal Government Works Month in Kensington, Maryland, was presented. See Council Actions.

Council Actions

Council Member Engels moved to approve Town Meeting Minutes from October 11, 2022. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Crimmins moved to approve Resolution No. R-29-2022 authorizing a Contribution in the amount of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars from the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 (FY23) Budget to the Noyes Children’s Library Foundation for the Restoration and Renovation project at Noyes Children’s Library. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Lichter moved to approve Resolution No. R-30-2022 condemning hate and violence and declaring the Town of Kensington as a safe and welcoming community for people of all backgrounds regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or political affiliation. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Crimmins moved to approve Resolution No. R-31-2022 approving the new Employee Handbook to comply with all Federal, State, and County regulations in substantially the form submitted pending final review by the Town Attorney. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Engle moved to approve Resolution No. R-32-2022 Proclaiming November to be Municipal Government Works Month in Kensington, Maryland. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Bartram moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:58 pm. The motion passed unanimously.