

May 8, 2024, Town Council Meeting Summary (held by Zoom Video Conferencing)

- Approved the Town Meeting Minutes of April 10, 2024.
- Continued the Sign Variance Hearing to allow the monument sign to exceed six feet (6') in height from grade for 10335 Kensington Parkway until June 12, 2024.
- Approved an Alcohol Waiver for the KensingtonCAN! Party Around the Fountain event at Flinn Park on May 16.
- Approved the installation of a Little Library, in coordination with Girl Scout Troop 34116 and the Spring Bilingual Montessori Academy, at St. Paul Park.
- Adopted Ordinance No. O-02-2024, as Amended – An Ordinance of the Mayor and Council of the Town of Kensington to Appropriate and Adopt the Fiscal Year 2024 – 2025 (FY25) Budget and to Levy a Tax on Certain Real and Personal Property under the provisions of §6-203 of the Tax-Property Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, as Amended.

Town Council Meeting May 8, 2024, 7:00 pm, held by Zoom Video Conferencing

Mayor Furman; Council Members Bartram, Crimmins, and Lichter; Town Manager Hoffman; Assistant Town Manager Marini; and Clerk-Treasurer Engels were present. Council Member Engle was necessarily absent. A moment of silence was observed.

The Town Meeting Minutes from April 10, 2024, were reviewed and approved as amended to correct the reference to the West Howard Avenue sign.

Town Election

Town Manager Hoffman stated that the 2024 Town Election will be held on Monday, June 3, 2024, 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm, at Town Hall. Certificates of Nomination are due by 4:00 pm on Monday, May 13, 2024, and Mayor Furman and Council Members Lichter and Engle are running for re-election. If needed, a Candidate Forum will be held in person, and via Zoom, on May 23, 2024, at 7:00 pm.

10335 Kensington Parkway (Sign Variance)

Glen Kessler, Compass Art Center at 10335 Kensington Parkway, was present to request a Sign Variance in accordance with Section 6-104 (c) of the Town Code, in which Mr. Kessler requested that the Council allow the existing monument (freestanding) sign to remain at its current height (6'4"). The applicability requirement within the Town Code requires that all signs come into compliance once altered following changes in sign text, tenancy changes, property ownership changes, or business name changes.

Mr. Kessler stated that it was cost prohibitive to remove the existing sign and for the construction of a new monument, which was necessary to advertise multiple organizations within the building.

The Mayor and Council discussed the cost of removal and construction; whether the existing signage could include the building in the rear; a special waiver for this property; the type of change

required for a variance; the undue hardship based on the sign being over by only 4 inches and the cost of replacing the sign; and the enforcement of non-compliant signs.

Town Manager Hoffman clarified that the foundation for the sign is included in the height of the sign and any existing waivers for signs were included in the existing sign ordinance.

Town Manager Hoffman will clarify the variance requirements with the Town Attorney and the variance will be continued at the next Town meeting. See Council Actions.

Mr. Kessler will provide a cost estimate for removal of the existing sign and installation of a new monument sign.

KensingtonCan! – Flinn Park Alcohol Waiver

Town Manager Hoffman stated KensingtonCan! is planning to hold a business event on May 16 at Flinn Park, and an alcohol waiver from the Council is needed to serve alcohol at the event. See Council Actions.

St. Paul Park Little Library

Alex Berman and his daughter from Girl Scout Troop 34116 have requested to add a Little Library at St. Paul Park; and Diann Sanderson, Head of School with Spring Bilingual Montessori Academy, has agreed to provide books and to monitor the library.

Town Manager Hoffman requested council approval for the location of the Little Library, which would be opposite of the bear bench, along the lead walk approaching the pavilion. See Council Actions.

Spring Bilingual Montessori Academy Bench Installation Request

Diann Sanderson, Spring Bilingual Montessori Academy, has requested to install a bench in honor of their founder, Anna Neri, at St. Paul Park near the walkway from their gate to the playground area.

The Mayor and Council discussed the proposed bench and location and concurred to suggest a different design and determine a location once the playground improvements are completed.

From the Public

There were no public appearances.

From the Mayor and Town Council

Council Member Crimmins reported the Town received the Community Parks and Playground (CPP) State Grant for a playground expansion at St. Paul Park, which will connect the existing swing area to the playground with new ADA compliant equipment and surfacing that allows for

greater mobility; noted that he has been working with the business community on the parking issues; and suggested the Town design a parking map to share with businesses.

Council Member Bartram noted the traffic improvements, which includes the rush hour traffic restriction sign on University Boulevard at St. Paul Street, along with the Rapid Flashing Beacon and driver feedback sign along Metropolitan Avenue.

Council Member Lichter noted an alcohol waiver will be needed for the upcoming Juneteenth event on June 15 at St. Paul Park; thanked the Town staff for the first Community Budget Forum, which went well and provided education on the Town's budget and planned projects; noted a summary of the forum and link to the presentations would be made available; and noted that a Tree Care 101 workshop for Town residents would be held on May 18.

Mayor Furman stated she, along with Council Member Lichter, attended the County Council's Jewish American Heritage Month Proclamation Ceremony; noted that KensingtonCan!'s Party by the Fountain will be held on May 2 from 5:30 to 7; and reported that HB0212 passed, which will allow a pilot program for noise abatement monitoring systems geared towards vehicles with loud exhaust in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.

Assistant Town Manager Marini reported the benches were raffled off and the winners have been notified.

Town Manager Hoffman stated a closed session will be scheduled.

Ordinances, Resolutions, and Regulations

Ordinance No. O-02-2024 – Ordinance No. O-02-2024 of the Mayor and Council of the Town of Kensington to Appropriate and Adopt the Fiscal Year 2024 – 2025 (FY25) Budget and to Levy a Tax on Certain Real and Personal Property under the provisions of §6-203 of the Tax-Property Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland was presented as amended. See Council Actions.

Town Manager Hoffman stated the Public Hearing was held on April 10 and additional comments were received at the May 1 Budget Forum; and he is proposing amendments to the originally introduced Budget on March 20.

Council Actions

Council Member Crimmins moved to approve the Town Meeting Minutes from April 10, 2024, as amended, to change “and the Explore Kensington sign for the “west” Howard Avenue business district to “and the West Howard Avenue sign for the Howard Avenue business district” on the first page. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Crimmins moved to continue the sign variance for the Compass Art Center, 10335 Kensington Parkway, until June 12, 2024. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Lichter moved to approve the alcohol waiver for the KensingtonCan! business event at Flinn Park on May 16. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Crimmins moved to approve the location, opposite of the bear bench, along the lead walk approaching the pavilion at St. Paul Park, for installation of the Little Library. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Crimmins moved to adopt Budget Ordinance No. O-02-2024, as Amended - to Appropriate and Adopt the Fiscal Year 2024 – 2025 (FY25) Budget and to Levy a Tax on Certain Real and Personal Property under the provisions of §6-203 of the Tax-Property Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland as amended from the introduced Ordinance with reallocation of the second ARPA payment removed from income and expense. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Lichter moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:21 pm. The motion passed unanimously.