

CITY OF WESTMINSTER, MARYLAND
Mayor and Common Council Meeting of September 28, 2009

A meeting of The Mayor and Common Council was held in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 1838 Emerald Hill Lane, Westminster, Maryland on the evening of September 28, 2009, at 7:00 P.M. Mayor Utz; Council President Halstad; Council Members Albert, Wack, Pecoraro and Chiavacci; City Administrator Wolf; Director of Public Works Glass, Chief of Police Spaulding, Director of Planning, Zoning, and Development Review Beyard, Director of Recreation and Parks Schroers, and Acting City Treasurer Ehlers; City Attorney Walsh; Comprehensive Planner Hynes; and City Clerk Taylor were present.

Lyndi McNulty, President of the Greater Westminster Kiwanis Club, presented the Club's plan to raise funds to donate a "T-3" conveyance to the Westminster Police for patrolling. Chief Spaulding thanked the Club for its efforts.

Executive Director Timmi Pearce of the Historical Society of Carroll County and Curator Catherine Baty, author of the recently-published pictorial book Images of America: Westminster, presented a signed copy of the book to the Mayor and Common Council.

MINUTES:

Upon Motion of Mr. Chiavacci, seconded by Dr. Wack and unanimously passed, the minutes of the meetings of August 24, 2009 (closed session) and September 14, 2009 were approved.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Mayor Utz conducted a public hearing on the 2009 Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Beyard summarized previous hearings and some of the comments received about the Plan during the 60-day review period. He complimented staff on the positive feedback

received during the review period. There being no further comment, Mayor Utz closed the hearing and the record at 7:17 P.M.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

Mr. Pecoraro moved to approve the Consent Calendar, which consisted of the August 2009 Departmental Operating Reports, the Third Amendment to Parking Lease Agreement No. A-590 (Albion Lot), and the Justice Assistance Grant Program for 2009. Dr. Wack seconded and the Motion passed, with Mrs. Albert abstaining.

REPORTS FROM THE MAYOR:

Mayor Utz reported on the success of Fallfest and other recent activities. He also noted that he, Mrs. Albert, and Mr. Chiavacci observed a sobriety checkpoint operation two weekends earlier. Lastly, the Mayor reported that staff has been working quite hard on the amended budget.

REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES:

Mr. Chiavacci complimented Chief Spaulding and staff on their successful sobriety checkpoint operation.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

Mr. Chiavacci moved to adopt Ordinance No. R09-8, which would adopt the 2009 Westminster Comprehensive Plan. Dr. Wack seconded and the Motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:^a Dr. Wack presented a proposed budget amendment that would address recent cuts in State funding for local governments. The amendment would institute a hiring freeze, cut certain expenditures, divert contingency reserve funds to operating accounts, convert funding for the Episcopal Housing Project to operating accounts, reduce department budgets by specified amounts, revise the take-home vehicle policy, and add into the budget savings from the County having reduced tipping fees. The changes would remove \$818,804 from the City's Fiscal Year 2010 budget in order to offset the State cuts. Dr. Wack observed that the State will impose further cuts possibly as early as January and certainly by the beginning of Fiscal Year 2011. He

noted that a City tax increase is quite possible. Dr. Wack stressed the importance of receiving public input concerning City expenses. Dr. Wack and Ms. Wolf expressed the need for an expense model similar to the model recently produced for the water/sewer rate structure study. Mayor Utz, Dr. Wack, and Mr. Pecoraro commended Ms. Wolf and staff on their work. Upon Motion of Mr. Pecoraro, seconded by Dr. Wack and unanimously approved, the budget amendment was adopted.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Mr. Schroers thanked the staff, volunteers, Westminster Police Department, and Westminster Fire Company for making the recent Fallfest a success. He further announced upcoming Recreation and Parks events. Mr. Schroers summarized certain funding the Department would receive from the State. Finally, he thanked the Babylon family for its donation to replace the concession stand at City Park.

Mr. Glass announced that he would meet with the Maryland Department of the Environment the next day in order to discuss funding for the Enhanced Nutrient Removal upgrade for the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Mr. Beyard reported that the streetscape project in the Tri-Street Area is underway. He also reported that the City received a block grant in the maximum awardable amount of \$800,000 from the State for the Episcopal Housing project on Union Street.

Mr. Ehlers announced that the City will receive \$36,000 from the State in tax monies previously underpaid.

Chief Spaulding reported that the Department will be sending another Lieutenant to the FBI Academy. He also reported that a "Slush and Slide" event to benefit the Special Olympics would take place on Saturday, October 3, 2009 at the Town Mall.

Ms. Wolf remarked that, notwithstanding the new budget cuts, many important City projects will move forward.

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

Council President Halstad welcomed Tyler Simmons of Scout Troop No. 321.

City resident Connie Simmons discussed the condition of Old New Windsor Pike and asked that the repaving project be rescheduled as soon as possible. Mr. Glass assured her that the road was at the top of the list for repaving. Mr. Pecoraro asked that Public Works explore whether any other measures can be taken in the meantime.

City resident and businesswoman Lori Graham provided updates on the recent Fallfest and related activities and on the upcoming Holiday Parade. She also complimented Ms. Hynes for her work on the Comprehensive Plan.

Council President Halstad adjourned the meeting at 8:17 P.M.

Laurell E. Taylor
City Clerk