

**CITY OF NEW CARROLLTON MINUTES  
COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2022**

The Council Workshop Meeting was held at 7:00 p.m., on Wednesday, December 7, 2022, as a virtual meeting. Attending were Chairperson Cynthia DB Mills; Councilmembers Lincoln Lashley, Katrina Dodro, and Briana Urbina; Mayor Phelecia Nembhard; Chief of Police David G. Rice; Director of Public Works Andre Triplett; Finance Director Lorna Grant-Charles; Information Technology Administrator Andrew Facey; Code Enforcement Colleen Ferguson; and City Clerk Araceli Guzman-Benitez. Other attendees: From PGPCS Jason Washington, Director of Alternative Infrastructure Planning and Development and Shawn A. Matlock, Director of Capital Programs (Councilmember Allyne Hooks was absent)

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Mills called the Workshop meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

**2. REPORT OF COUNCIL CHAIRMAN ( PGPCS)**

Chairperson Mills recognized the topic about Prince George’s County Public School proposal to purchase City property.

Councilmembers Urbina and Dodro stated that they have many questions relating to the projections of growth and population of the area, and student growth for the specific campus.

Chairperson Mills questioned if the City will be responsible for crossing guards or would it be a responsibility of the State or what will New Carrollton be responsible for?.

Mr. Shawn Matlock director of Capital programs stated that there are several schools on topic Margaret Brent being one of them; Margaret Brent will be built bigger and the children currently traveling via bus to Glenridge Elementary will walk to Margaret Brent and they will take buses off the road; there will be three emerging campuses, (Two elementary and one middle school campuses.

Mr. Jason Washington stated that the proposal is part of the blue print schools phase two accelerated delivery program that they have State money and a timeline to deliver the new schools; they are finishing phase one but for phase two, it is the idea to replace the schools connected to New Carrollton within 10 years; it was required by the State to put together a plan to incorporate a cycle one plan for those school that need to be replaced as quickly as possible utilizing State money; they went through a six month process to determine with the State that those are the schools that need to be replaced; if the City decides that this is not something they want to pursued than the school board would have to put the New Carrollton schools back into CIP program and would have to find other schools to be replaced; as it relates to school projections Margaret Brent will hold 830 students capacity; Robert Frost will be built with a target capacity of 2000 K-8; the idea is to build schools that allow for growth naturally that allows for better use of the site and the school by the students while moving older buildings off of the assets of the school system, to allow better use of funds; anything else related all beings associated for instance buses and operations of the schools it is the responsibility of Prince George’s County Public Schools; the goal is not to acquire resources from the City to support the development of the schools; to be able to get State money they need to have a signed deal by July

1, 2024; the investment is approximately 210 million dollar for those two schools; they are in need of the land to fulfilled the education specifications for the K-8 which required a multipurpose field and a ball field, the land will be for additional activity for students and for Margaret Brent is for additional parking and movement on the site however if unsuccessful in acquiring the property adjacent to Margaret Brent, the school will still be built more narrowed.

Mr. Matlock added one more point about the importance of replacing the buildings due to the evaluation from the State, which points to critical for the need to be replaced.

Chairperson Mills asked a question about an assessed value to pay for the property. Mr. Matlock explained the reason for the purchase and explained that they are willing to pay fair value market.

Chief Rice asked a question about public safety, and traffic impact; Robert Frost is a school that causes back traffic trouble, he asked for the possibility about making the entrance to Robert Frost to be through Good luck Road; Mr. Washington explained the process.

Councilmember Urbina asked a question about the plans from Prince George's County for existing buildings and if they and if the City can be awarded right to purchase.

Councilmember Dodro asked a question about the trees that need to be cut-down and replaced; a discussion followed. Councilmember Dodro requested a copy of the presentation from August.

Councilmember Lashley had a question about Lamont Elementary not mentioned on the plan; a discussion followed.

Mr. Washington asked about what the next step is and what is the timeline to abide by; a discussion followed.

### **3. REPORT OF THE MAYOR AND ADMINISTRATION**

Chairperson Mills recognized Mayor Nembhard.

Chief David Rice greeted everyone; he started by addressing that there was vandalism on Riverdale Road with a swastika, the police addressed the issue but because it happened on County property, the County took a report and in turn it was forward to Prince George's County Hate crime team and Homeland Security; the City tried removing the paint and that there is no time for hate crimes in the city of New Carrollton; he announced that on December 17 there will be a Santa with a badge at the Metro Points Hotel, there are 20 kids and they need wrapping paper; he invited everyone to participate; the kids are chosen based on the fact that if they do not step-in, those kids will not have a Christmas. Stats for November: 987 calls for service – 15 accidents- 2 assaults – 3 burglaries – 1 death report – 17 disorderly - 11 domestic violence – 10 thefts – 5 theft from auto – 6 stolen autos – 4 recovered autos – 13 CDS – 25 suspicious persons – 199 traffic stops – 54 quality of life – 41 parking – 163 State citation – 66 safety and equipment repair orders – 2 criminal citations – 83 warnings for a total of = 355 citations.

Director of Public Works Andre Triplett announced that the leaf collection is temporary suspended being that the truck caught on fire and the main leaf machine's engine blew-up; the leaf collection is suspended until further notice; the trash toters, the last update will be Monday, January 23 we will begin distribution of those toters, those days may change due to shipping and weather related delays; the trash packers that were ordered are scheduled to be delivered late

summer or fall of 2023, once those trucks came in, two in-service trucks will be removed from inventory and placed on Govdeals for auction; the City has procured quotes for street paving and sidewalk work, currently working on two County contracts, seeking the approval to proceed using budget of ARPA funds street paving in the amount of \$1,500.00 and \$300.00 hundred thousand for sidewalk repairs, the quotes provided are for comparison purposes and are estimates only; the paving work is for Jodie street in its entirety and also Lamont Drive, Goodluck Road to Carrollton Pkwy, I am asking permission to move some money in the current ARPA budget maybe we can go all the way from Lamont Drive, Goodluck Road to Riverdale Road; the granting of this request will secure and encumber with the funding of the obligation of the ARPA funds, he requested to be emailed for any questions; Stats for the month of November are as follows: Senior van 52, bulk pick-ups 269, sum-pump discharge 0, trees trimmed 9, trees removed 0, trees planted 15, potholes filled and vehicles in for service 11.

City Clerk Araceli mentioned the report for November:

Shredding Events - November 5 Stats:

- 118 service visitors and 4,980 pounds of paper was shredded (the number is 50% less compared to the last two years) (there will be a Shredding event on April, date and time TBD)
  - The ARPA Gift card distribution November 16 (well organized)
  - Board of Elections met Nov 23 & 30 (Discussion upcoming City Election May 1, 2023)
- Upcoming events:
- Holiday Decorating Contest (last day to Register Friday, December 9) (Judging – Monday, December 12 at 6:00 pm)
  - Santa with a Badge (December 17)

Councilmember Lashley thanked and asked a question to the Chief about the incident on the Swastika/vandalism on Mahoney/Riverdale Road; he asked that if the perpetrators are tracked down would they be charged with a hate crime; Chief Rice responded yes to question; the next question was for Mr. Triplett, about the truck that broke down and may need repair or to replace it, and if he has adequate money in the budget or would it require a budget amendment or tap into the ARPA funds to do so; Mr. Triplett stated yes they might have to top of the budget for the truck but they will need a new leaf machine, the truck itself can be fixed but it will take time to fix; he announced that on December 10 there will be funeral service for former Delegate Tawana Gaines at Jenkins Funeral Home at 7474 Landover Road.

Councilmember Urbina asked a question to Public Works, when was the purchase made for the toters and what was the purchase amount; the item was over budget and she hopes to pass a budget amendment right away to get the trucks back in shape; Mr. Triplett answered that it was about \$150; a discussion followed. (DPW will need money for a new leaf machine or repair); she addressed the Chief about a hate crime, which happened at the library previously earlier this year; Chief Rice stated that he will get an update from the County and will communicate back.

Councilmember Dodro was wondering about the status in the search of an Administrator; she also had a question about the ARPA gift card distribution, and wants to know why it is just a drive through event, that residents are voicing their opinion about extending the help to those residents who do not drive or who work at the time of our distributions; a discussion followed. She also asked about a report on the current budget from the administration.

Councilmember Urbina announce that she invited two people to speak on the topic of Non-Citizen Voting, one being Delegate Elect Deni Taveras who has another engagement. Chairperson Mills agreed.

Chairperson Mills thanked Mr. Triplett for responding to a concern about ice from the water-main leak.

**4. NON-US CITIZENS TO VOTE CITY MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS**

**16 YEAR OLD RESIDENTS TO VOTE ON CITY MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS**

Chairperson Mills recognized Councilmember Urbina.

Councilmember Urbina brought the topic about Non-US Citizens Voting on City Municipal Elections who brought it up many times during her tenure in the council; if bring forward as a vote of referendum in New Carrollton, we will be the sixth city in the State of Maryland to do so; and probably the only City who is not doing it with such a large concentration of immigrants including Colmar Manor, Mount Rainier, Brentwood City of Hyattsville and Takoma Park: she invited all those Mayors but unfortunately were not able to come due to the Inaugural Ball of the County Executive; but Delegate Elect Deni Taveras was able to provide a comment.

Delegate Elect Deni Taveras started by greeting everyone she followed by thanking everyone for allowing her to serve as County Council District 2 in the last eight years; she thanked the sponsors that have put forth this proposal of Non-Us Citizen Voting and 16 Year old Voting; this are two incredibly important proposals. (She explained the benefits and beneficiaries further).

Delegate Joseline Peña-Melnyk was honored and thankful to be able to speak in support to allow Non-US Citizens the right to vote; she explained that she is one of six Latinos in the Maryland General assembly along with Delegate Elect Deni Taveras out of 188 members; she represents Prince George's and Anne Arundel County district 21; testifying as a citizen, as Joseline Peña-Melnyk who came from Dominican Republic at the age of eight; she went to discuss the importance of Non-Us Citizen voters because they are citizens in the community who care about the same issues and concerns as everyone else.

Councilmember Urbina read a message from Mayor Rocio Treminio-Lopez who is in support of Non-US Citizen Voting legislation, who is proud of undocumented residents who are in path to citizenship; a unaccompanied child who crossed the border and later became a US citizen as well as the Mayor of Brentwood. (First Latina Mayor in the State of Maryland).

Resident Katina Rojas explained that she is not an immigrant but she is American Born; she explained that the undocumented population pay taxes as everyone else; this is not a controversial legislative request or move, this is not as popular and there have been challenges but it can be done if everyone recognize the importance of all our documented citizens and it is not all Latinos; there is a vibrant African, Asian, and Vietnamese population. (She explained more in depth).

Mayor Celina Benitez explained that the City of Mount Rainier has Non-US Citizen Voting since 2017, allowing for all residents to be treated equally; she thanked the Mayor and Council for having her. (She explained more in depth).

Chairperson Mills thanked the speakers, and she asked Councilmember Urbina if a committee is needed to work on the topic; Councilmember Urbina stated that they need to work on drafting

language for voter referendum that will go on ballots for the next election; she explained that she reviewed sections of the charter to change the language; the draft can be forward to the Mayor, Council, Clerk as well as to the City Attorney to draft the actual language, so that in turn they can vote on the language as a Council to approve the language; she mentioned that it would be the same process as when the Mayor and Council pay was voted on 2018; Chairperson Mills stated that on the next meeting they will vote on whether they agreed to have the process done; Councilmember Urbina spoke about the next steps and whether they will expand voter access to Non-Citizens and 16 Year Olds, lot of education will be needed, must allocate money in the budget; Chairperson Mills asked whether both topics will be brought together or separate; they agreed to be separate.

Councilmember Lashley stated that there are several categories for undocumented residents to be in: Student visa, temporary visa or permanent resident, the question was is there a particular category that will not qualify for these, or will all undocumented residents will qualify regardless of their category; Councilmember Urbina explained in depth the categories and how some people are only here temporary and not necessarily here to vote but that she envisions that this will cover all people who live as residents in the City of New Carrollton by demonstrating via proof of residency within the City; Councilmember Lashley asked whether there would be path for citizenship and would she help them if need be; Ms. Urbina responded yes that she envisions to help more in depth about the citizenship topic and being that New Carrollton has its first immigrant Mayor, she is sure that the Mayor would be excited to contribute to the topic.

Chairperson Mills asked how voter registration would work; Councilmember Urbina explained.

Councilmember Dodro explained if they put the referendum forward, that the process to register to vote are there for everyone; that there is a group of people who are here legally but not necessarily undocumented; there are people from African countries and Hindu speakers; she hopes to bring this referendum forward.

5. **2023 ELECTION PLANNING – VOTE BY MAIL OR VOTE IN PERSON**

Chairperson Mills recognized City Clerk Araceli to start the topic.

Board of Elections Chairperson Davis stated that the board is in preparation for the next election, assembling thoughts and moving forward the board needs to know if we are going to have a standard vote in person or vote by mail election; Mr. Davis explained that the board supports the vote by mail and the information provided shows that vote by mail had higher voter participation, as the board of election a decision is needed in order to move forward.

Councilmember Dodro requested election data expenses; City Clerk provided the information; Councilmember Dodro stated that she hopes to have more options to bring people in person as much as possible; to make sure that the information is out there to allow people to request absentee ballot without restrictions; to expand early voting time; \$44,000.00 is a high number for a vote by mail election and the number might be higher due to rising postage cost; Mr. Davis responded that if they chose a vote by mail than absentee ballot and early voting will not be required; Councilmember Dodro stated that she does not support vote by mail but she supports improving the in person process.

Councilmember Urbina stated that she has different ideas but is concerned about cost and about vote by mail because some residents voiced that mail in ballots were being picked up by candidates; she raised her concerns to the board, and to the County and State level but that there was nothing done; but until there is a revamp of the charter with strict ethics laws for everyone who runs for office to make sure that everyone behaves accordingly; she explained ways to improve methods to make sure everyone participates including senior citizens; she suggested a QR code for people to be able to access voter status and information about the candidates; she is not in favor of vote by mail.

Councilmember Lashley stated that \$44,458.26 is a too expensive for an election and he is also concerned with voter fraud; he asked if the Board of Election can create controls and measures to avoid voter fraud; Mr. Davis that they never had voter fraud issues but that the biggest issued has been to bring people to vote; a discussion followed about what is the opinion of residents in terms to vote by mail.

Monica Casañas Mayor of Colmar Manor spoke in support of extending voting to everyone who lives in the community; she explained that this people are property- owners and that they just past a Charter resolution to allow for everyone to have a voice in reference to what happens in their community; she asks to expand the right to vote to everyone considering expanding democracy and end allowing your neighbor to have a voice in what happens in their community.

## 6. PROCLAMATIONS

Chairperson Mills presented the topic.

### a) School Choice Week (January 22-28, 2023):

Councilmember Dodro does not support School Choice Week; she explained that it has to do with segregation.

Councilmember Urbina is not in support of School Choice Week due to the origins of the topic, which has systemic Jim Crow origins.

Councilmember Lashley stated that he has the same concerns as his colleagues.

### b) Black History Month (February 1-28, 2023)

Councilmember Lashley had a concern about the date for Black History Month Proclamation.

Chairperson Mills stated that School Choice Week should be extended to everyone; a discussion followed about the topic.

Councilmember Dodro continue to explain the topic of School Choice Week; she suggested other proclamations about education in May.

## 7. COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS. ONLY INFORMATION THAT WILL BENEFIT THE RESIDENTS OF NEW CARROLLTON

Chairperson Mills recognized Councilmember Lashley.

Councilmember Lashley invited everyone to participate in Shop with a Cop event for December

17 at Metro Points Hotel.

Chairperson Mills asked the Council if they can create flyers to say no hate is accepted here and posted at the Library; a discussion followed about the topic.

Chief Rice agreed with the topic; he explained that Prince George's County have jurisdiction over the schools but because the New Carrollton police presence is no longer present, the bullying at the schools have gotten out of control. A discussion followed.

Councilmember Urbina suggested contacting the County's Municipal liaison Ms. Ross to get more information about funding; she requested that the City's Holiday Decorating contest be extended.

City Clerk Araceli commented on the topic about the City's Holiday Decorating contest registration, she agreed that it could be extended through Monday, December 12 Mid-day.

Councilmember Dodro announce that every second Saturday of each month, she has a meet and greet at the library; Chairperson Mills responded that it is not a Council function.

#### **8. MEETING MINUTES**

Chairperson Mills requested that they review the following meeting minutes:

- a.) Council Workshop meeting minutes (November 2, 2022)
- b.) Council Legislative Meeting Minutes (November 16, 2022)

#### **9. REVIEW OF PAID BILLS**

Chairperson Mills requested that they review the following list of bills:

Batch #1 (October 27, 2022); Batch #2 (November 08, 2022); Batch #3 (November 21, 2022); Batch #4 (November 25, 2022).

#### **10. PUBLIC COMMENT – (RESIDENTS' CONCERNS, AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION AND PHONE CALLS) WHEN ADDRESSING THE COUNCIL PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS FOR THE RECORD**

Chairperson Mills invited the public to provide comments.

Resident Ce-Ce – Had a comment about bullying and the fighting and addressed the Chief about the topic; Chief Rice responded about the topic of bullying.

Resident Stephen John – Addressing two questions brought up on October 5<sup>th</sup>, on November 9<sup>th</sup> Council Chairperson closed a meeting just because she can simply can; Mr. John further extended his discontent with the outcome of closing a meeting without proper voting of the other councils; Mr. John requested an answer from the Chairperson.

Resident Pat Jackman – 5813 Lamont Drive; she thanked Councilmember Urbina for inviting the delegate and the other Mayors for opening up the voting process to immigrants; she thanked the Chief for clarification on the topic of the swastika, and she asked where is the Mayor; she wants the Council and the Mayor to send a message to the residents about no space for hate crime in the City; she is requesting that the issue is addressed.

Councilmember Urbina responded to Ms. Jackman that a statement about the topic was posted from the Police Department on their social media.

**11. REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS NOT ALREADY SUBMITTED**

Chairperson Mills asked the Council if they had any questions for future agenda.

Councilmember Urbina stated that they voted as a Council on the Composting, people signed up and received demonstrations on the topic; Mr. Triplett stated that the topic is still being discussed; she pressed the topic of reorganization of the Council.

Chairperson Mills stated that she would take priority on topics; she further discussed on topics.

Councilmember Urbina and Dodro stated that the reorganization of the C

**12. ADJOURNMENT**

Chairperson Mills call the adjournment.

There being no further business, Chairperson Mills moved the motion to adjourn the Council Workshop Meeting for Wednesday, December 7, 2022. There was no response to adjourn the meeting. Chairperson Mills closed the meeting at 9:34 pm.

The meeting ended at 9:34 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Araceli Guzman-Benitez

*Araceli Guzman Benitez*

City Clerk

Adopted by the City Council on January 18, 2023.

Note: The official recording of the City of New Carrollton’s Council Workshop Meeting of Wednesday, December 7, 2022, has been posted to the City of New Carrollton’s website: [www.newcarrolltonmd.gov](http://www.newcarrolltonmd.gov).