

City of Hyattsville

*Hyattsville Municipal Building
4310 Gallatin Street, 3rd Floor
Hyattsville, MD 20781
(301) 985-5000
www.hyattsville.org*



Meeting Minutes

Monday, February 6, 2023

7:00 PM

Register in advance for this webinar:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_cQVsV1qXR02UvPDwmKMLjA

Virtual

City Council

Robert S. Croslin, Mayor
Joseph Solomon, Council President, Ward 5
Danny Schaible, Council Vice President, Ward 2
Sam Denes, Ward 1
Joanne Waszczak, Ward 1
Emily Strab, Ward 2
Ben Simasek, Ward 3
Jimmy McClellan, Ward 3
Edouard Haba, Ward 4
Daniel Peabody, Ward 4
Rommel Sandino, Ward 5

ADMINISTRATION

Tracey E. Douglas, City Administrator

~~Laura Reams, City Clerk, 301-985-5009, cityclerk@hyattsville.org~~

WELCOME TO THE CITY OF HYATTSVILLE CITY COUNCIL MEETING!
Your participation at this public meeting is valued and appreciated.

AGENDA/PACKET: The Agenda/Packet is available for review at the Hyattsville Municipal Building and online at www.hyattsville.org prior to the scheduled meeting (generally available no later than the Friday prior to the scheduled Monday meeting). Please note, times given for agenda items are estimates only. Matters other than those indicated on the agenda may also be considered at Council discretion.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITY ACT: In compliance with the ADA, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting or other services in conjunction with this meeting, please contact the City Clerk's Office at (301) 985-5009. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting.

AUDIBLE DEVICES: Please ensure all audible devices are turned off or otherwise not audible when the City Council is in session. Thank you.

PUBLIC INPUT: If you wish to address the Council during the Public Comment period, please use the "Raise Hand" feature in the virtual meeting interface. Participants may also submit statements electronically using the eComment feature at www.hyattsville.org/meetings or via email to cityclerk@hyattsville.org no later than two (2) hours prior to the start of the meeting. All participants shall remain respectful in their contributions and associated functions of the virtual meeting interface are not intended for public dialogue or discussion.

WAYS TO WATCH THE MEETING LIVE: City Council meetings are broadcast live on cable television channel 71 (Comcast) and channel 12 (Verizon). You may also view meetings live online at hyattsville-md.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?camera_id=2

REPLAY SCHEDULE: The meetings will be re-broadcast on cable television, channel 71 (Comcast) and channel 12 (Verizon) daily at 7:00 a.m., 1 p.m., and 8 p.m. Meetings are also able for replay online at www.hyattsville.org/meetings.

CITY INFORMATION: Sign up to receive text and email notifications about Hyattsville events, government, police and programs at www.hyattsville.org/list.aspx

INCLEMENT WEATHER: In the event of inclement weather, please call 301-985-5000 to confirm the status of the Council meeting.

Meeting Notice:

The Hyattsville City Council will hold its meeting on Monday, February 6, 2023 remotely via video conference. The Council meeting will be conducted entirely remotely; there will be no in-person meeting attendance.

The meeting will be broadcast live on cable television channel 71 (Comcast), channel 12 (Verizon), and available via live stream at www.hyattsville.org/meetings.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

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Members of the public who wish to comment during the virtual Council meeting must register in advance using the link below.

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_cQVsV1qXR02UvPDwmKMLjA

1. Call to Order and Council Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

Also Present:

City Administrator-Tracey Douglas
Deputy City Administrator-Consuela Barbour
Assistant City Administrator-Jim Chandler
City Treasurer-Ron Brooks
Director of Public Works-Lesley Riddle
Director of Community Services-Sandra Shepherd
Director of Human Resources-Jay Joyner
City Clerk-Laura Reams
Deputy City Clerk-Nate Groenendyk

Present:

Mayor Robert Croslin
Council President Joseph Solomon
Council Vice-President Danny Schaible
Councilmember Emily Strab
Councilmember Sam Denes
Councilmember Joanne Waszczak
Councilmember Ben Simasek
Councilmember Jimmy McClellan
Councilmember Edouard Haba
Councilmember Daniel Peabody
Councilmember Rommel Sandino

2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

3. Approval of Agenda

Prior to the approval of the agenda, the following corrections were entered into the record:

-Council Vice-President Schaible was added as a co-sponsor to HCC-229-FY23 Rent Stabilization and Affordability Fund

-Councilmember Peabody was added as a co-sponsor to HCC-237-FY23 Letter to WMATA Opposing Proposed Yellow Line Service Changes

A motion was made by Council President Solomon, seconded by Councilmember Sandino, that the Agenda be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Croslin, Solomon, Schaible, Strab, Denes, Waszczak, Simasek, McClellan, Haba, Peabody, and Sandino

4. Approval of the Minutes**4.a. Approval of the Minutes**[HCC-225-FY23](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council approve the minutes of the Jan 17, 2023 City Council Meeting.

Sponsors: City Administrator

Attachments: [MeetingMinutes January 17 2023](#)

A motion was made by Council President Solomon, seconded by Councilmember McClellan, that this agenda item be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Croslin, Solomon, Schaible, Strab, Denes, Waszczak, Simasek, McClellan, Haba, Peabody, and Sandino

5. Public Comment (7:10 p.m. – 7:20 p.m.) Complete Speaker Card, Limit 2 minutes per speaker

Ethan Sweep introduced himself to the Council as the Community Liaison for U.S. Congressman Glen Ivey's office, and provided his contact information.

Greg Smith thanked the Council for their letter to the Planning Board regarding the Suffrage Point Development and voiced his support for rent stabilization.

Annelies Goger spoke in support of the letter to WMATA opposing the changes in Yellow Line service.

Chuck Perry provided written comment about the Black History Month proclamation and rent stabilization.

Sally Gifford provided written comment in support of the letter to WMATA opposing the changes in Yellow Line service.

David Marshall spoke about his displeasure regarding the level of disturbance the Hyattsville Volunteer Fire Department creates at night.

Trent Leon-Lierman translated for Olga Calix and one other resident who voiced their support for rent stabilization.

Lale Dorr spoke in favor of the letter to WMATA opposing the changes in the Yellow Line service.

6. Community Notices and Meetings**6.a. Main City Calendar: February 7, 2023 - February 21, 2023**[HCC-226-FY23](#)

N/A

Sponsors: City Administrator

Attachments: [City Calendar February 7, 2023 - February 21, 2023](#)

7. City Administrator Update (7:20 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.)

City Administrator Tracey Douglas gave an update on City related news and events.

Council President Solomon asked about the sign designated for Ager Road.

Director of Public Works Lesley Riddle clarified that the plans for installing the sign are underway. City Clerk Laura Reams added that the sign to be purchased for Ager Rd. will be consistent with the signs at Driskell and Centennial Parks.

Council President Solomon requested that the City help to improve the visibility around the construction site at Little Branch Run for safety. Ms. Douglas agreed that the issue should be addressed by the City.

Council President Solomon spoke about the concern of business owners on Hamilton Street regarding unhoused individuals sleeping in front of their stores. Ms. Douglas replied that the City is focused on the issue and will be communicating it's plans to address this soon.

8. Presentations (8:00 p.m. - 8:50 p.m.)

8.a. 2023 Compensation Review Committee Recommendation[HCC-233-FY23](#)

Presentation only, the Council is expected to act on this recommendation on February 21, 2023.

Sponsors: City Administrator

Attachments: [Compensation Review Committee & Recommendation Report 2023](#)
[2022 Comp and Review Committee](#)

Director of the Human Resources Jay Joyner introduced Compensation Review Committee Chair Juan Castillo. Mr. Castillo provided an overview of the committee's process. Committee member Tom Wright explained the committee's recommendations.

Council Vice-President Schaible asked about the committee discussions around the intangible benefits. Mr. Wright responded that the committee was tasked with monetary compensation so intangible benefits were out of their purview.

Councilmember Waszczak asked about the data that was used to determine Mayoral compensation. Mr. Wright explained that the committee took into account the time put in by the Mayor, but ultimately had to use the City Charter as its guideline for determining compensation.

Councilmember McClellan asked about the connection between income level and compensation level, the reasoning behind the committee adhering to the 1% budget rule for compensation of Council and Mayor, and how other cities were used as benchmarks to make recommendations. Committee member Michael Horlick responded that the committee did discuss income level of candidates. Mr. Wright added that based on their surveys, compensation was not a strong factor for candidates deciding to run for office. He reiterated the constraints that the City Charter placed on the committee's scope.

Councilmember Waszczak asked if the Hyattsville Equity Officer had collaborated with the commission. Mr. Wright responded that they did not.

Council President Solomon asked for clarity around how Council could authorize intangible benefits to members of Council. City Administrator responded that Council could pursue that through the budget process.

8.b. FY23 Education Enrichment Grants[HCC-234-FY23](#)

Presentation - the grant approvals are on the consent agenda.

Sponsors: City Administrator

Attachments: [EAC MEMO To council](#)

Director of Community Services Sandra Shepherd introduced Educational Advisory Committee member Melinda Baldwin to present on the Education Enrichment Grants.

Mayor Croslin expressed his support for a final report from recipients to audit the funds being spent. Ms. Baldwin agreed and suggested that the final report be altered to make it easier to submit.

Councilmember Peabody suggested that a final report be required if requested by the City.

Councilmember Strab expressed her support for a streamlined process for a final report, an increase in award allotment, and an increase in total funding of the program.

Councilmember Denes clarified that the Health, Wellness, and Recreation Advisory Committee also requires a final report.

Councilmember Haba agreed that seeing the results of these awards is important.

8.c. City of Hyattsville 2023 Biennial Election Overview[HCC-241-FY23](#)

For presentation only.

Sponsors: City Administrator

Attachments: [Election Presentation to Council](#)

Board of Supervisors of Election Chair Zach Peters, Board Member Juan Castillo, and Deputy City Clerk Nate Groenendyk presented the details and planned outreach events for the upcoming election on May 9, 2023.

Councilmember Strab expressed her support for the outreach efforts.

Councilmember Sandino asked if there were communication plans for sending materials to churches during April for outreach to the Latino community. City Clerk Reams responded in the affirmative.

Councilmember Haba noted that a participant had put a question in the Q & A. Clerk Reams read the question asking if residents would be voting in their wards in the future. Ms. Reams clarified the process by which the method of voting is determined and the considerations given to those decisions. Mr. Peters added that the board is looking into new technologies that could expand the methods of voting moving forward.

Councilmember Strab asked about the progress made with the county to clean up the county's voter roll. Clerk Reams, provided information on the process required by Prince George's County to remove someone from the voter roll and encouraged residents to mark "return to sender" on any mail received that is not addressed to them.

9. Proclamations**9.a. Proclamation Celebrating February 2023 as Black History Month in the City of Hyattsville**[HCC-224-FY23](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council adopt a proclamation recognizing February 2023 as Black History Month in the City of Hyattsville.

Sponsors: City Administrator

Attachments: [CM 0206 Black History Month 2023](#)

A motion was made by Council President Solomon, seconded by Councilmember Peabody, that this agenda item be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Croslin, Solomon, Schaible, Strab, Denes, Waszczak, Simasek, McClellan, Haba, Peabody, and Sandino

10. Appointments

Both appointments were approved on a single vote.

A motion was made by Council President Solomon, seconded by Councilmember McClellan, that these Appointments be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Croslin, Solomon, Schaible, Strab, Denes, Waszczak, Simasek, McClellan, Haba, Peabody, and Sandino

10.a. Appointment to the Code Compliance Advisory Committee

[HCC-227-FY23](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council approve the appointment of Ian Fay (Ward 1) to the Code Compliance Advisory Committee for a term of two (2) years to expire on February 28, 2025.

Sponsors: McClellan

Attachments: [Ian Fay W1, Feb 6, 23 redac](#)

10.b. Appointment to the Education Advisory Committee

[HCC-228-FY23](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council approve the appointment of Deshundra Fortson (Ward 1) to the Education Advisory Committee for a term of two (2) years ending on February 28, 2025.

Sponsors: Strab

Attachments: [Deshundra Fortson redac](#)

11. Consent Items (8:50 p.m. - 8:55 p.m.)

Items listed on the Consent Agenda are considered routine in nature, and are approved in one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless the Mayor/Council request specific items be removed from the Consent agenda for separate action.

A motion was made by Council President Solomon, seconded by Councilmember Sandino, to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Croslin, Solomon, Schaible, Strab, Denes, Waszczak, Simasek, McClellan, Haba, Peabody, and Sandino

11.a. Approval of Election Equipment Vendor for the 2023 Biennial Election

[HCC-230-FY23](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council authorize the City Administrator to execute a contract with Election Systems and Software (ES&S) in an amount not to exceed \$11,000 to be the City's election equipment vendor for City's Biennial Election to be held on Tuesday, May 9, 2023, upon the review and approval by the City Attorney for legal sufficiency.

Sponsors: City Administrator

Attachments: [Hyattsville MD 1-23-23](#)

11.b. Disbursement of FY23 Education Enrichment Grant Funds[HCC-236-FY23](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council authorize the expenditure of \$3,500 to support the grant proposals recommended from the Education Advisory Committee and listed in the attached memo for dissemination of the FY23 Education Enrichment Grants.

Sponsors: City Administrator

Attachments: [EAC Grant Request 2.0](#)
[EAC FY23 Grant Proposals](#)

11.c. Award of Contract for Mail Vendor - 2023 Election[HCC-238-FY23](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council authorize the City Administrator to enter into an agreement with Fort Orange Press for the printing and mailing of ballot packets and ballots for 2023 City Election at a cost not to exceed \$36,000. The agreement will be effective upon the review and approval by the City Attorney.

Sponsors: City Administrator

Attachments: [1.30.23 City of Hyattsville MD Fort Orange Press](#)
[Outgoing Postage Invoice](#)

11.d. Maryland DHCD Grant Agreement Amendment Authorization[HCC-242-FY23](#)

I move the City Council authorize the Mayor to execute an amendment to Strategic Demolition and Smart Growth Impact Fund (SGIF) grant agreement between the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and the City of Hyattsville, which will provide the City a term to June 30, 2024 to complete the expenditure of the fund balance.

Sponsors: City Administrator

Attachments: [Memo - Maryland DHCD Grant Agreement Amendment - 2.1.2023](#)

12. Action Items (8:55 p.m. - 9:25 p.m.)**12.a. Letter to WMATA Opposing Proposed Yellow Line Service Changes**[HCC-237-FY23](#)

I move that the City Council authorize the Mayor to send correspondence to the WMATA Board of Directors opposing the proposed FY-2024 budget and related modifications to Yellow Line service.

Sponsors: Solomon, Peabody, Sandino, Haba, McClellan and Simasek

Attachments: [SOLOMON WMATA proposal for Yellow Line turnback](#)

Council President Solomon gave details on the proposed changes to the Metro's Yellow Line service that would affect West Hyattsville Metro riders.

A motion was made by Council President Solomon, seconded by Councilmember Strab, that this agenda item be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Croslin, Solomon, Schaible, Strab, Denes, Simasek, McClellan, Haba, Peabody, and Sandino

Recused: Waszczak

13. Discussion Items (9:25 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.)

13.a. Rent Stabilization and Affordability Fund[HCC-229-FY23](#)

For Discussion Only.

I move that the Mayor and Council Authorize the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance on regulating the annual rate of increase in rental prices in the City Hyattsville.

Sponsors: Solomon, Schaible, Simasek, Sandino, Haba, Denes, Waszczak and McClellan

Council President Solomon provided background and details for funding and administration of the motion.

Council Vice-President Schaible provided the history of the topic and expressed his support to get the motion passed expeditiously to prevent landlords from raising rents prior to rent stabilization going into effect. He added information regarding the actions taken by surrounding municipalities on this topic and how rent stabilization connects to equity issues in the community.

Councilmember Simasek spoke about the need for rent stability in the City. He added that the Council should be aware of the complexity of the issue and the importance of having all the pieces in place before adopting an ordinance.

Councilmember Waszczak expressed her support for the motion and the impact it will have on preventing displacement in the community.

Councilmember Peabody asked for clarity on the exemptions noted in the motion. Council President Solomon responded that the intent is to exclude single family homes and individuals that are renting out a single room in a house. He added that through discussions, the determination was made to craft regulation based on number of units rather than dwelling type.

Councilmember Peabody asked for clarity around the rental registry. Director of Community and Economic Development Jim Chandler responded that currently, the City has a registry based on rental buildings rather than units. The proposed registry would require the licensing of units. He added that further determination will be made on how to best implement a new fee schedule.

Councilmember Peabody asked if there was a way to prevent rent gouging by landlords by retroactively determining the base rent price. Mr. Chandler replied that the legal department would be consulted on the matter.

Councilmember Strab expressed her concern that landlords may not be able to upgrade their buildings and keep them safe if they are unable to raise the rent. Council President Solomon replied that Maryland State law requires that landlords receive a fair return and that clause allows landlords to apply for exemption if they invest in their property. Council Vice-President Schaible added that he does not believe there is a correlation between landlord divestment in a rental property and localities where rent stabilization is in place. Councilmember Strab asked where Hyattsville fell in the affordability study. Council Vice-President Schaible reported that the study showed significant spikes in rent affecting affordable housing.

City Treasurer Ron Brooks asked if the affordability fund would be part of the ordinance. Council President Solomon replied that the fund would not necessarily have to be a part of the ordinance. Mr. Brooks added that Council should be cognizant of the soon to be completed study that would likely

include recommendations to reduce the amount of revenue the City receives from property taxes. He also told Councilmember Simasek that there is currently a legal review regarding the implementation of a recordation tax at the City level.

Councilmember Sandino expressed his support for the motion and the importance of the Council's work to support marginalized communities in Hyattsville.

Director Chandler asked for clarity around the anticipated start date and cycle of the program. Council Vice President Schaible replied that January 1, 2024 was initially selected but that may change as more details are determined. Director Chandler provided the Council with the current schedule of licensing in the City. He added that it is important to provide information and get feedback from property owners. Director Chandler raised the issue that operationally, licensing on a per unit basis versus a yearly basis per building will be a significant change for staff. He finished by suggesting that the fee structure be determined by ranges of units per building and his anticipation for the need of more staff than what is currently indicated in the ordinance.

City Administrator Tracey Douglas asked that Council to send questions and comments to staff so that those issues can be worked on and addressed with the motion sponsors.

Council President Solomon asked for Director Chandler to set up a meeting with property owners and for City staff to meet with officials from Takoma Park to learn about their system and legal resources.

Councilmember Waszczak expressed her support to get a count of units per building in the City to best craft the licensing fee structure. She asked for clarity around the building age exemptions. Councilmember Simasek explained that new construction was exempted to not discourage new development. Council President Solomon added that he supports looking at the fee structure to incorporate the number of units per building.

14. Council Dialogue (10:00 p.m. - 10:10 p.m.)

15. Motion to Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

A motion was made by Council President Solomon, seconded by Councilmember McClellan, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried by the following vote:

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Aye: | Croslin, Solomon, Schaible, Strab, Denes, Waszczak, Simasek, McClellan, Haba, Peabody, and Sandino |
|-------------|--|