The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland convened via video conference at 9:02 A.M. on Tuesday, March 2, 2021.

PRESENT

Councilmember Tom Hucker, President            Councilmember Gabe Albornoz, Vice President
Councilmember Andrew Friedson                     Councilmember Evan Glass
Councilmember Will Jawando                        Councilmember Sidney Katz
Councilmember Nancy Navarro                      Councilmember Craig Rice
                                      Councilmember Hans Riemer
The President in the Chair.

PRESENTATIONS

A. Proclamation was presented by Mr. Rice in Recognition of Arjun Krishnan.

B. Proclamation was presented by Ms. Navarro Commemorating Women's History Month: Women at the Forefront of the COVID-19 Battle.

GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Announcements - Agenda and Calendar Changes

Ms. Singleton, Clerk of the Council, announced an addendum to the agenda, stating a correction in the date of the Closed Session Minutes: [November] February 4 and 9, [2020] 2021; and a correction for introduction of a Supplemental [Special] Appropriation to Montgomery County Public Schools’ (MCPS) FY21 Capital Budget and Amendment to the FY21-26 Capital Improvements Program - $216,204 for Planned Life Cycle Asset Replacement: MCPS.
The Council is seeking applicants for a partial term on the Public Election Fund Committee. The deadline to apply is March 10, 2021, at 5:00 P.M.

B. Acknowledgement – Receipt of Petitions

Acknowledged receipt of a petition from residents of Montgomery County supporting the reopening of cigar lounges in Montgomery County.

C. Action – Approval of Minutes

Approved the minutes of November 10, 12, 16, and 17, 2020, and the closed session minutes of February 4 and 9, 2021, without objection.

COUNCIL SITTING AS BOARD OF HEALTH

A. Update - Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and County Public Health Planning, and Discussion of the Equity in the Vaccine Rollout

Participating in the discussion were Dr. Gayles, County Health Officer and Chief of Public Health Services, and Dr. Crowel, Director, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS); and Dr. Stoddard, Director, Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (OEMHS).

Received information from Dr. Gayles that the number of COVID cases has improved, but currently has plateaued; that impacts of variant strains of the virus is concerning and the rate of transmission is higher now than during the second peak; over 14% of the County’s population has been vaccinated; and that the Johnson and Johnson vaccine has been approved but no formal guidelines received from the State on distribution prioritization. Dr. Crowel reported that a higher number of doses would be allocated to highly impacted areas, that preregistration needs to be encouraged, and they are working with community partners to help in those areas. Dr. Stoddard said they are working with the State for designation of a mass vaccination site in the County.

Responding to questions from Councilmembers, the panel indicated the capacity exists in the County to administer more vaccine doses as they become available, that they are working with the State to identify independent living communities and areas with a large senior population; and acknowledged the need to increase vaccination efforts in communities of color; and efforts are underway to offer vaccinations to all educators and staff prior to March 15.
DISTRICT COUNCIL SESSION

(4) Briefing - Ashton Village Center Sector Plan
Participating in the discussion were Mr. Anderson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board; Ms. Wright, Director, and Mr. Pratt, Senior Planner, Upcounty, Planning Department.

Received an overview of the Ashton Village Sector Plan. Ms. Navarro commented on the area’s need for connectivity and that height and density issues are concern to the community. A public hearing is scheduled on the Plan later this afternoon.

(5) CONSENT CALENDAR

Approved the following consent calendar items listed below. Ms. Navarro made the motion, which carried without objection.

A. Introduced a supplemental appropriation to the County Government’s FY21 Operating Budget, Department of Police, Department of Correction and Rehabilitation, Sheriff’s Office, and the State’s Attorney’s Office - $264,568 for Governor’s Office of Crime Control and Prevention (GOCCP), Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), Byrne Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Grant Funding. A public hearing and action are scheduled for March 16, 2021, at 1:30 P.M.

B. Introduced a supplemental appropriation to the County Government’s FY21 Capital Budget and amendment to the FY21-26 Capital Improvements Program (CIP), Department of Transportation (DOT) - $472,000 for Intelligent Transit System. A public hearing and action are scheduled for March 16, 2021, at 1:30 P.M.

C. Introduced a supplemental appropriation to MCPS’ FY21 Capital Budget and Amendment to the FY21-26 CIP - $216,204 for Planned Life Cycle Asset Replacement: MCPS. A public hearing and action are scheduled for March 23, 2021, at 1:30 P.M.

D. Introduced/Adopted Resolution 19-747, resolution to Amend Resolution 19-472, Section G, FY21 Designation of Entities for Non-Competitive Contract Award Status: GNV Design, LLC, for public awareness campaign to support to DHHS’ clients and crime victims.

F. Adopted Resolution 19-749, confirming the County Executive’s appointment to the Commission on Children and Youth: Kirsten Andersen.

G. Adopted Resolution 19-750, confirming the County Executive’s appointment to the Board of Investment Trustees and Board of Trustees for Consolidated Retiree Health Benefits Trust: Jennifer Bryant.

The meeting recessed at 12:22 P.M. and reconvened at 1:32 P.M.

(4) PUBLIC HEARING - Ashton Village Center Sector Plan

The public hearing was conducted. Additional material for the Council’s consideration should be submitted by the close of business on March 6, 2021. Planning, Housing and Economic Development (PHED) committee worksessions are tentatively scheduled for April 5 and 19, 2021.

(6) PUBLIC HEARING - Subdivision Regulation Amendment (SRA) 21-01, Exemptions - Alcohol Production and Agritourism

The public hearing was conducted. Additional material for the Council’s consideration should be submitted by the close of business on March 9, 2021. A PHED committee worksession will be scheduled at a later date.

(7) PUBLIC HEARING/ACTION - Resolution to approve amendments to Bethesda Urban Partnership (BUP) Bylaws

The public hearing was conducted and the record closed.

Adopted Resolution 19-751, approving the subject resolution for BUP. Mr. Friedson made the motion, which carried unanimously.

(8) PUBLIC HEARING - Supplemental Appropriation to the County Government’s FY21 Capital Budget and Amendment to the FY21-26 CIP, Department of General Services (DGS) - $92,000 for Council Office Building Renovations

The public hearing was conducted. Additional material for the Council’s consideration should be submitted by the close of business on March 10, 2021. Action is tentatively scheduled for March 16, 2021.
A. **Introduction - Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) 21-01, Sign Ordinance - Bus Shelter Advertising**

Introduced draft #1 of ZTA 21-01, sponsored by the Council President at the request of the County Executive. A public hearing is scheduled for April 6, 2021, at 1:30 P.M.

B. **Action - Hearing Examiner’s report and recommendation on Local Map Amendment (LMA) H-138 for property located at 7206 and 7212 Carroll Avenue, Takoma Park, Maryland, more particularly described as Parcels N923 and N968 of Section 1, S.S. Carroll's Addition to Takoma Park and Part of Lot P2, Section 3, S.S. Carroll’s Addition to Takoma Park**

Ms. Hannan, Director/Hearing Examiner, Office of Zoning and Administrative Hearings (OZAH), provided a summary on LMA H-138 for the expansion of the Takoma Park Montessori School. Upon questioning by Mr. Riemer, noted that there was no opposition to the application.

Adopted Resolution 19-752, approving LMA H-138. Mr. Riemer made the motion, which carried unanimously.

(10) **ACTION - Fiscal Policy**

Participating in the discussion were Ms. Michaelson, Council Executive Director; Mr. Smith, Legislative Analyst; and Mr. Coveyou, Director, Department of Finance.

Ms. Navarro, Chair of the Government Operations and Fiscal Policy (GO) Committee, provided introductory remarks noting the County last updated its fiscal policy in 2011 following the Great Recession, and the importance of a provision that requires that the County replenish reserves within one to three years following an economic recession. She noted the importance of rigorous standards and strong financial management to maintain a AAA bond rating, Montgomery County being one of the few counties holding a AAA rating from all three rating agencies.

Ms. Navarro summarized the Committee recommendations to amend and restate Resolution No. 17-312, as contained in the staff report. She noted that fiscal discipline will be of utmost importance during these uncertain times.

Mr. Smith reviewed the recommended amendments.
Adopted Resolution 19-753, amending and restating Resolution 17-312 - Reserve and Selected Fiscal Policies. The GO Committee made the motion, which carried unanimously.

(11) **INTRODUCTION/SUSPENSION OF RULES/ACTION - Resolution to Approve Second FY21 Savings Plan**

Introduced the subject resolution and approved without objection the motion made by Mr. Katz to suspend the rules to allow immediate action.

Adopted Resolution 19-754, approving the second FY21 Savings Plan, without objection.

**COUNTY COUNCIL**
**FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**
**IN LEGISLATIVE SESSION - Day #7**

(11.5) **Introduction of Bills**

A. **Bill 10-21, Economic Development - Economic Development Strategic Plan - Economic Development Corporation - Duties**

Introduced draft #10 of Bill 10-21, sponsored by Councilmember Friedson, and co-sponsored by Councilmembers Riemer and Navarro. A public hearing is scheduled for March 23, 2021, at 1:30 P.M.

Mr. Albornoz and Mr. Katz requested to be added as co-sponsors of the bill.

B. **Bill 11-21, Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation - Bylaws - Live Video Streaming of Open Meetings**

Introduced draft #3 of Bill 11-21, sponsored by Councilmembers Glass and co-sponsored by Councilmember Hucker. A public hearing is scheduled for March 23, 2021, at 1:30 P.M.

Councilmembers Jawando, Katz, Navarro, Albornoz, and Rice requested to be added as co-sponsors of the bill.
(12) **Call of Bills for Final Reading:**

A. **Bill 47-20, Ethics, Ethics Commission - Conflicts of Interest - Financial Disclosure - Amendments**

Ms. Navarro, Chair of the GO Committee, and Mr. Drummer, Senior Legislative Attorney, reviewed the Committee’s recommendation, as contained in the staff report.

Enacted draft #7 of **Bill 47-20**, as shown at the end of these minutes.

The GO Committee made the motion and the bill was enacted by a roll call vote:


The meeting adjourned at 2:58 P.M.

This is an accurate account of the meeting:

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Selena Mendy Singleton, Esq.
Clerk of the Council
AN ACT to:

(1) require employees to attend a public ethics training course;
(2) amend the law governing appeals of a decision by the Ethics Commission;
(3) amend the law governing the Ethics Commission’s resolution of complaints;
(4) [[modify the restrictions on a public employee's participation in certain matters;]]
(5) [[repeal an exception to the restrictions on outside employment for an elected official;]]

[[[6]]] [[(5)]] clarify an exception to soliciting or accepting certain small gifts;
[[[7]]] [[(6)]] modify the procedures for administering the financial disclosure process; and
[[[8]]] [[(7)]] generally amend the law governing public ethics.

By amending
Montgomery County Code
Chapter 19A, Ethics
Sections 19A-6, 19A-10, 19A-11, 19A-12, 19A-16, and 19A-18

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following Act:
Sec. 1. Sections 19A-6, 19A-10, 19A-11, 19A-12, 19A-16, and 19A-18 are amended as follows:

19A-6. Authority and duties of Commission; appeal of Commission decisions.

(a) Authority. The Commission may:
   (1) conduct investigations under Section 19A-9;
   (2) authorize the issuance of summonses and subpoenas, and administer oaths and affirmations;
   (3) impose sanctions under Section 19A-10;
   (4) adopt regulations to implement this Chapter under method (2);
   (5) extend a deadline for distribution or filing of forms for up to 6 months if the Commission finds that the deadline creates an unreasonable burden. An extension may apply to an individual or a class of individuals. The extension must be in writing. However, the Commission must not extend the time in which a complaint must be filed under Section 19A-10;
   (6) conduct public education and information programs regarding the purpose and implementation of this Chapter;
   (7) publish opinions under Section 19A-7;
   (8) establish procedures to govern the conduct of Commission affairs;
   (9) interpret this Chapter and advise persons as to its application; and
   (10) require each compensated public employee to attend a Public Ethics training course of at least one hour on the following schedule:
       (A) at least once every 3 years for a public employee holding a merit or a non-merit County position who is required to file a financial disclosure statement;
       (B) within 30 days after beginning service as County Executive or Councilmember unless the person has attended a training course within 3 years before that date; and
       (C) at such times as the Commission determines for:
           (i) every other public employee; and
           (ii) a person holding a position described in Sections 19A-17(b)(6), 19A-17(b)(7), 19A-17(b)(8), 19A-17(b)(9) or 19A-17(c)(2); and
   (11) take all other necessary acts to carry out the purposes of this Chapter.

(c) Appeals. [A] The subject of a final decision [of] finding a violation by the Commission on a complaint, or a person aggrieved by a final decision on a request for a waiver[,] or request for other employment approval may [be appealed] appeal the decision to the Circuit Court under the applicable Maryland Rules of Procedure governing judicial review of administrative agency decisions. An appeal does not stay the effect of the Commission's decision unless the court hearing the appeal orders a stay. Any party aggrieved by a judgment of the Circuit Court may appeal that judgment to the Court of Special Appeals.

(d) Request for rehearing or reconsideration.

(1) [A] The subject of a final decision of the Commission finding a violation on a complaint or a person [affected] aggrieved by a final decision of the Commission on a [complaint[,] request for waiver[,] or request for other employment approval may ask the Commission for a rehearing or reconsideration.

19A-10. Complaint; Adjudicatory Hearing.

(a) Any individual may file a confidential written complaint with the Commission. The complaint must allege facts under oath that would support a reasonable person in concluding that a violation of this Chapter or Sections 2-109, 11B-51 or 11B-52(a) occurred.

(2) (A) The complaint must be filed within the later of 2 years after:
   (i) the alleged violation; or
(ii) the complainant learned or should have learned of facts that would lead a reasonable person to conclude that a violation occurred.

(B) A complaint may not be filed more than 6 years after the alleged violation occurred.

(3) The Commission may refer the complaint to Commission staff or the County Attorney for investigation under Section 19A-9 or may retain a special counsel or other person to [conduct an investigation] investigate.

(4) If the complaint does not allege facts sufficient to state a violation of this Chapter or the Commission finds that dismissal is consistent with the purpose of this Chapter, the Commission may dismiss the complaint. The Commission must inform the complainant of its decision to dismiss the complaint. The Commission may inform the subject of the complaint that the complaint was filed and dismissed[.] but must not disclose the identity of the complainant.

(n) The Commission may, at any time, refer to an appropriate prosecuting attorney any information that indicates that a criminal offense may have occurred. The Commission may, at any time, share confidential information about a pending matter with an employee’s appointing official and the County Attorney.


(a) Prohibitions. Unless permitted by a waiver, a public employee must not participate in:

any matter that affects, in a manner distinct from its effect on the public generally, any:

(A) property in which the public employee holds an economic interest;

(B) business in which the public employee has an economic interest; or

(C) property or business in which a relative has an economic interest, if the public employee knows about the relative's interest;

any matter if the public employee knows or reasonably should know that any party to the matter is:

(A) any business in which the public employee has an economic interest or is an officer, director, trustee, partner, or employee;

(B) any business in which a relative has an economic interest, if the public employee knows about the interest;

(C) any business with which the public employee has an active application, is negotiating, or has any arrangement for prospective employment;

(D) any business that is considering an application from, negotiating with, or has an arrangement with a relative about prospective employment, if the public employee knows about the application, negotiations, or the arrangement;

(E) any business or individual that is a party to an existing contract with the public employee or a relative, if the contract could reasonably result in a conflict between private interests and official duties;

(F) any business that is engaged in a transaction with a County agency if:

(i) another business owns a direct interest in the business;

(ii) the public employee or a relative has a direct interest in the other business; and

(iii) the public employee reasonably should know of both direct interests;

(G) any business that is subject to regulation by the agency with which the public employee is affiliated if:

(i) another business owns a direct interest in the business;

(ii) the public employee or a relative has a direct interest in the other business; and

(iii) the public employee reasonably should know of both direct interests; or
(H) any creditor or debtor of the public employee or a relative if the creditor
or debtor can directly and substantially affect an economic interest of the
public employee or relative.

(3) any case, contract, or other specific matter affecting a party for whom, in the prior
year, the public employee was required to register to engage in lobbying activity
under this Chapter.

(b) Exceptions.

(1) If a disqualification under subsection (a) leaves less than a quorum capable of
acting, or if the disqualified public employee is required by law to act or is the
only person authorized to act, the disqualified public employee may participate or
act if the public employee discloses the nature and circumstances of the conflict.

(2) Subsection (a) does not apply to an administrative or ministerial duty that does
not affect an agency's decision on a matter.

(3) Paragraph (a)(1) does not apply to a public employee who is appointed to a
regulatory or licensing body under a statutory provision that persons subject to
the jurisdiction of the body may be represented in appointments to the body.

(4) Subparagraph (a)(2)(A) does not apply to a public employee, if the County
Executive or the County Council appoints the public employee to serve as an
officer, director, or trustee of a business to represent the public interest.

(5) Subparagraph (a)(2)(A) does not apply to a public employee who is an officer,
director, or trustee of an organization, if the public employee discloses the
relationship, is not compensated by the organization, and has no:

(A) managerial responsibility or fiduciary duty to the organization;
(B) authority to approve the organization's budget;
(C) authority to select any officer or employee of the organization; or
(D) authority to vote on matters as a member of the governing body of the
organization.

(6) If expressly authorized by regulation, subsection (a) does not apply to:

(A) a police officer's exercise of the officer's police authority during approved
outside employment; or
(B) a police officer or fire/rescue employee who is exercising the employee's
official duties in an emergency affecting a business or property in which
the employee or a relative of the employee has an economic interest.

[[7] Subparagraph (a)(2) does not apply to an employee’s participation in a matter
affecting a business with a principal place of business outside of the County
where the employee’s economic interest is limited to ownership of publicly traded
securities:

(A) issued by a company that is part of the Standard & Poor's 500 Index; and
(B) the market value of the securities does not exceed $25,000.]

[[8] Subparagraph (a)(1) does not apply to an employee’s economic interest that is
limited to the ownership of publicly traded securities issued by a company with a
principal place of business outside the County if the market value of the
securities does not exceed $50,000.]

19A-12. Restrictions on other employment and business ownership.

(c) Exceptions.

(1) Subsections (a) and (b) do not apply to:

(A) a public employee who is appointed to a regulatory or licensing body
under a statutory provision that persons subject to the jurisdiction of the
body may be represented in appointments to it;
(B) a public employee whose government duties are ministerial, if the
employment does not create a conflict of interest; or
(C) a member of a board, commission, or similar body in regard to
employment held when the member was appointed if the employment
was publicly disclosed before appointment to the appointing authority,
and to the County Council when confirmation is required. The appointing
authority must forward a record of the disclosure to the Commission, which must keep a record of the disclosure on file; or
(D) an elected public employee in regard to employment held at the time of
election, if the employment is disclosed to the County Board of Elections
before the election. The Commission must file the disclosure received
from the County Director of Elections with the financial disclosure record
of the elected public employee].
(2) If expressly authorized by regulation, subparagraph (b)(1)(A) and paragraph
(b)(2) do not prohibit a police officer from working outside employment for an
organization solely because that organization is located in the County or in the
district where the officer is assigned.

19A-16. Soliciting or accepting gifts.

(d) Subsection (c) does not apply to:
(1) meals and beverages consumed in the presence of the restricted donor or
sponsoring entity at a function attended by at least 20 persons or, if fewer than
20 persons attend, meals and beverages consumed in the presence of the
restricted donor or sponsoring entity which do not exceed $50 in value from the
same source in any calendar year;
(2) ceremonial gifts or awards that have insignificant monetary value;
(3) unsolicited gifts, [of nominal value] except for cash or cash equivalents, that do
not exceed $20 in cost[, or trivial items of informational value];
(4) reasonable expenses for food, travel, lodging, and scheduled entertainment of
the public employee, given in return for the public employee's participation in a
panel or speaking at a meeting;
(5) a gift to an elected official, if the gift:
(A) is a courtesy extended to the office; [[(and)]]
(B) consists of tickets or free admission for the elected official and one guest
attended by at least 20 participants, including meals and beverages
served at the event; and
(C) is provided by the person sponsoring the event.
(6) any item that is solely informational or of an advertising nature, including a book,
report, periodical, or pamphlet, if the resale value of the item is $20 or less;
(7) gifts from a relative;
(8) honoraria for speaking to or participating in a meeting if the offering of the
honorary is not related to the employee's official position and is unsolicited; or
(9) a specific gift or class of gifts which the Commission exempts from this Section
after finding in writing that accepting the gift or class of gifts is not detrimental to
the impartial conduct of the business of a County agency.


(h) The Chief Administrative Officer must establish and maintain an electronic system to
facilitate filing of and public access to financial disclosure statements required under this
Article. Any electronic system must report an accurate list of each public employee
required to file a statement under Section 19A-17, whether the employee is required to
file under subsections 19A-17(a), (b), or (c), and include the employee's position,
necessary contact information, the reviewer, and whether the report is an initial, annual,
or final report. This list should be current and correspond to personnel records and
records of memberships in boards, committees and commissions. Any electronic system
must be able to generate reports upon request of the Chief Administrative Officer, the
Council Administrator, or the Commission detailing who is required to file and the current
state of compliance by public employees with financial disclosure filing and review
requirements under this Article. [The County Executive must annually, or more frequently as requested.] The Ethics Commission must, upon request, provide the list of employees designated to file financial disclosure reports to the Council. The Commission must make all necessary accommodations for any person who does not have access to the electronic system.

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