

**COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY
WORK SESSION MINUTES
September 14, 2021**

OPEN SESSION – Elk Room

4:30 P.M.

NOTE: Recording and transcription of this meeting are available on the County website at www.ccgov.org.

PRESENT: Council Members: Robert Meffley, William Coutz, Al Miller, George Patchell, and Jackie Gregory. James Massey, Council Manager; Terry Hale, Council Assistant; Charles MacLeod, Council Attorney, members of the administration, and members of the public.

Call to Order

Council President Meffley called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm and announced that there were five Council Members present, which constitute a quorum.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion made by Councilman Coutz, seconded by Vice President Gregory, the Council moved to approve the minutes of the Council work session of September 7, 2021, as presented. The motion was approved unanimously.

On a motion made by Councilman Coutz, seconded by Vice President Gregory, the Council moved to approve the minutes of the Council closed session of September 7, 2021, as presented. The motion was approved unanimously.

CLOSED SESSION

August 17, 2021

5:36 P.M.

On motion made by Councilman Coutz, seconded by Vice President Gregory, the Council moved to convene a closed session, pursuant to the Maryland Annotated Code, General Provisions § 3-305 (b)(1) to discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom it has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals.

Roll Call Vote: Coutz-Y, Miller-absent, Patchell-Y, Gregory-Y, Meffley-Y

The motion was approved by a vote of 4 to 0. Councilman Miller was absent.

PRESENT: Council Members: President Meffley, Vice President Gregory, Councilman Coutz, Councilman Patchell; James Massey, Council Manager; Terry Hale, Council Assistant. Also: Charles MacLeod, Council Attorney, Chestertown, MD.

Based on legal advice, the Council determined that current central committee members are not eligible to serve on Redistricting Commission. The Council determined to request additional nominees to replace the nominees that are central committee members.

On motion made by Councilman Coutz, seconded by Vice President Gregory, the Council concluded the work session at 6:23 p.m.

Raising Chickens in Residential Zones

Vice President Gregory led discussion on her proposal to allow backyard chickens in certain residential zoning. She summarized the legislation that is based on Howard County's regulations.

Council Members clarified that the Land Use and Development Services Department would be responsible for enforcement. They recognized a trend for families to raise their own food, but stated that homeowner association restrictions will supersede the county's backyard chicken legislation. There was discussion on the maximum number of chickens to be permitted on various lot sizes.

Councilman Miller expressed concern about diseases that could be spread to home and commercial flocks. He requested that the Health Department review the proposed legislation and provide their comments. Council Members also requested that current zoning regulations be reviewed regarding what is permitted currently.

Councilman Patchell discussed his concern for the odor and how it would be measured to determine if a nuisance. Council Members requested research on what has been the experience in other counties.

Solar Legislation

Council Manager Massey reviewed the comments compiled from former Planning Commission members and Councilman Miller who had shared suggestions from the Farm Bureau regarding solar facilities.

Councilman Coutz emphasized the importance of the decommissioning process to ensure that the land would be returned to the original state.

Councilman Miller emphasized that the operator and landowner are responsible to follow the regulations. He also stated that the bond could be used if the land was not restored to its original conditions. He stated the importance of measuring the soil quality prior to the project and recommended that testing should occur yearly, or at least every 3 or 5 years. He stated that class A1 soil is not common but supports the most agriculture production.

Council President Meffley suggested that these suggestions be shared with the administration for their consideration. He confirmed that there were at least ten solar applicants in process of applying.

Dan Schneckenburger, Director of Administration, stated that the Planning Commission will be meeting on September 20 to discuss this legislation. He stated that the administration is anxious to adopt solar facilities legislation because of the interest in this program.

The Council will continue to review comments on the solar facility legislation at the next work session.

Council Manager Report

Council Manager Massey stated that EPA has offered a tour of two superfund project on October 19 to the Council and other interested officials. More details will follow.

Council Member Items

Councilman Coutz attended the 9/11 memorial service at Chesapeake City and thanked the organizers for their outstanding job.

Vice President Gregory encouraged the public to attend the Elkton Fallfest this weekend. She attended the Maryland National Guard 9/11 service in Reisterstown in honor of the thirteen members of the National Guard who were killed by terrorists.

Councilman Patchell will be attending the Perryville Fire Company Annual Gun Bash Raffle on September 18, which is co-sponsored by the Sons of the American Legion.

Councilman Miller attended a fundraiser for Delegate Arentz. He met with organizers of the Fair Hill Five Star event, which is scheduled on October 14-17, to discuss logistics at the fairground. He attended the 9/11 memorial service at Harts Chapel that included the Upper Chesapeake Band performing. He attended the Local Management Board meeting and commended them for their outstanding service provided for the addiction community.

Council President Meffley participated in the 9/11 memorial services in Chesapeake City, which include a performance by the Chesapeake City Ecumenical Choir. He praised Frank Vari for his efforts in organizing the event. He participated in Bainbridge Day at the Bainbridge Library and presented them with several historic items.


Adjournment

Vice President Gregory made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councilman Coutz. Council President Meffley adjourned the session at 5:29 p.m.

The next Council work session will be held on Tuesday, September 21, 2021 at 4:30 pm in the Elk Room of the County Administration Building. The session will be livestreamed on the County Council's webpage at www.ccgov.org/council. Members of the public who do not have broadband access should contact the Council Office for instructions to be connected via telephone.


James Massey
Council Manager

Approved:


Robert Meffley, Council President