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2000 Marbury Drive

District Heights, Maryland 20747

# Work Session Meeting Minutes

# Tuesday, October 10, 2023, 7pm

# In-Person & YouTube Livestream

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

The Work Session City Meeting of the City of District Heights was held on Tuesday, October 10, 2023, in person and via YouTube Livestream. Vice Mayor Harcourt called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Vice Mayor Harcourt requested the calling of the roll for the Work Session:

Mayor Miller Absent

Vice Mayor Harcourt Present

Commissioner Janifer Present

Commissioner Gomez Present

Commissioner Tilghman Present

**QUORUM**

In attendance: Vice Mayor Harcourt, Commissioner Janifer, Commissioner Gomez and Commissioner Tilghman. Staff in attendance: David Street- City Manager, Chief Tarpley – Chief of Police Starr Jefferson -City Clerk, Michelle Watkins – Supervisor Code Enforcement

**AGENDA ACCEPTANCE**

Commissioner Gomez moved to accept the agenda for the City Work Session of Tuesday, October 10, 2023.

Commissioner Tilghman seconded the motion which carried a 4-0 vote (MM absent).

**CONSENT AGENDA ACCEPTANCE**

Commissioner Tilghman moved to approve the consent agenda for October 10, 2023.

Commissioner Janifer seconded the motion which carried a 4-0 vote (MM absent).

The following 2 items were passed in the motion to approve the consent agenda:

1. Approval of Minutes of September 9, 2023, Meeting Minutes
2. Single-Source Contract Award: Holiday Decorations Contract to Christmas Décor by Watermark, LLC

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None submitted

**ACTION ITEMS**

**Item 3 – Fencing Regulations**

Historically, District Heights used Building Officials and Code Administrators International (BOCA) standards. Recently, the state changed their reference from BOCA to IBC and as such the City must be updated to International Building Code (IBC) standards as a part of the recodification process. It is important to understand the difference between the historical District Heights standard and the standard found in the IBC.

*District Heights’* current City Code of Ordinance states that “Any fence erected within the City shall be so constructed that at least fifty percent (50%) of the available light and air can pass through”. Total Privacy fencing is a violation of current code.

Commissioner Janifer expressed support for the Commission to maintain authority over fence installations in the city.

David Street explained that the Commission could create separate permits regarding standard fence applications and special exceptions.

Commissioner Gomez expressed the desire to incorporate IBC standards but would like to provide more autonomy for residents landscaping and fencing their yards.

Commissioner Janifer requested clarification regarding the need for a permit and a special exception.

The Commission found consensus around solution #2 provided in the presentation where IBC standards are adopted with safety caveats carved out for certain permit requirements for fences and relaxes some requirements with less legislative requirements. Maintaining permitting requirements and guidelines that are currently in place although not necessarily in the form it exists in, with potential tweaking of some standards.

Commissioner Tilghman move that the Alternative 2 as provided to add additional standards with the current permit requirements.

Commissioner Janifer seconded the motion which carried 3-0 vote.

**Item 4 – Appointments and Confirmations: Ethics Committee**

City Clerk, Starr Jefferson presented to the Mayor and Commission details on the status of the city’s Ethics Commission established in the charter article 7. Ms. Jefferson highlighted the composition of the Commission and the details of their work in conjunction with the City Attorney to develop, receive and maintain all related documents, to investigate and to process and to decide regarding conduct or violations of the code of ethics. Additionally, they will conduct advisory opinions to persons subject to the code of ethics to adopt regulations.

The Commission confirmed current members and requested a solicitation be made to fill the vacant positions.

Mr. Street added by establishing membership, terms, and scope of this committee to help facilitate the work that they do. Commissioner Tilghman confirmed the commission would be confirming five regular members and one alternative member for the ethics commission.

Commissioner Janifer moved to confirm Catherine Williamson, Susan Clark, Diana Matthews to the City of District Heights Ethics committee. The terms will commence the day of confirmation and expiration on October 9th 2026.

Commissioner Gomez Second the motion which carried 4-0 vote.

Commissioner Gomez moved to confirm the quarterly meeting schedule for the Ethics Committee beginning November 22,2023 and continuing the first Thursday of each schedule month.

Commissioner Tilghman seconded the motion which carried a vote of 4-0

**ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Janifer moved to adjourn the Work Session meeting and seconded by Commissioner Tilghman which carried a 4-0 vote.

The Work Session adjourned at 7:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Starr Jefferson

City Clerk