



Approved February 2, 2026

**TOWN OF UNIVERSITY PARK  
MAYOR AND COMMON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
VIA VIDEO AND AUDIO CONFERENCE  
January 20, 2026, 7:30 P.M.**

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Ralph Dubayah	Council member, Ward 1
Mary Gathercole	Council member, Ward 2
Casey Kelby	Council member, Ward 3
Cynthia Mowery	Council member, Ward 4
David McGaughey	Council member, Ward 5
Grant Godfrey	Council member, Ward 6
William Sweet	Council member, Ward 7

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Debi Sandlin	Town Administrator
Suellen Ferguson	Town Attorney
TC Hegeman	Town Clerk
Carrina Bucknor	Town Treasurer
Chief Coleman	Police Chief

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Morrissey called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**Motion:** To approve the agenda. *Motion was made by CM Sweet and seconded by CM Godfrey.*

**Motion was carried unanimously.**

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion:** To approve the minutes of the January 5, 2026 meeting. *Motion was made by CM Sweet and seconded by CM Mowery.* CM Kelby and CM McGaughey abstained due to absence.

**Motion was carried 5-0.**

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

A resident emailed their comments about the Special Exception fence request. The comments were forwarded to Mayor and Council prior to the meeting.

A resident wanted to speak about the Special Exception fence request and was informed that she would have the opportunity to speak during that specific agenda item.

## **5. MAYOR, COUNCIL, AND COMMITTEE COMMENTS AND REPORTS**

### **a. Sustainability Committee – *CM Dubayah***

The committee met last week and announced residents can now enjoy a walking path on the far side of the meadow. The Sustainable Maryland certification will be up for renewal this summer. The committee will learn more about the process in February and start working on the application in the spring.

The Stream Cleanup is scheduled for April 25th, hosted by the Anacostia Watershed Society. Details for registration will be forthcoming. The committee also plans to discuss lighting that promotes resident safety and is friendly to wildlife. Council will get a preview of this messaging in the second February Council meeting.

CM Dubayah recognized all volunteers who have worked on trees, sustainability, and environmental initiatives on behalf of the town. A celebration of these volunteers was hosted over the weekend.

### **b. Public Facilities Committee – *CM Sweet***

The committee will meet this Thursday at 7:30 p.m.

### **c. Development Overview Committee – *CM McGaughey***

The committee met on January 8th and continued discussion of HB891 regarding Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).

CM Mowery attended the task force meeting and learned that the task force has assigned two or three working committees. The committee identified three main concerns to communicate to the task force: (1) maintaining current stormwater standards without relaxation due to ADUs; (2) maintaining front yard parking standards to prevent multiple driveways and paving of front yards; and (3) obtaining clear information about size restrictions for ADUs. The committee plans to reach out to neighboring municipalities including Greenbelt, College Park, and others to coordinate positions. The County Council is expected to receive a written ordinance by summer 2026 and must adopt it by fall 2026 to comply with state law.

Attorney Ferguson reported that three pre-filed bills from the governor's office were submitted when the state legislature session began. One bill is concerning as it would remove all setbacks and reduce minimum lot sizes from 6,500 square feet to 5,000 square feet. Another bill could be interpreted as an attempt to remove single-family house zoning and replace it with duplexes and triplexes statewide.

### **d. Police, Traffic & Public Safety Committee – *CM Gathercole***

The committee will meet on February 4th.

### **e. Trees, Parks and Environment Committee – *CM Godfrey***

The committee will have its 2026 planning meeting on Saturday at 1:00 p.m. at former Mayor Carey's house.

### **f. Policy, Rules and Municipal Structure Committee – *CM Godfrey***

The committee will meet on Monday.

## **6. NEW BUSINESS**

### **a. Recognition of Former Newsletter Editors Bridget Warren and Todd Stewart**

Mayor Morrissey reported that Bridget Warren was unable to attend but sent her apologies and expressed appreciation for the recognition. Each Council member read a section of the resolution.

**Motion:** To approve Resolution 26-R-01 recognizing University Park Newsletter editors for their service to the town. *Motion was made by CM Godfrey and seconded by CM McGaughey.*

**Motion was carried unanimously.**

### **b. Reappointment of Supervisor of Elections Chair and Supervisor**

**Motion:** To authorize the reappointment of Stephanie Herold and Michelle Wedge as Supervisors of Elections for a two-year term beginning March 1st, 2026, and appoint Ms. Herold as chair per Section 502 of the Town Charter. *Motion was made by CM Sweet and seconded by CM Gathercole.*

**Motion was carried unanimously.**

### **c. Selection of Date for 2026 Town Election**

**Motion:** To set the date for general elections for town offices as May 12th, 2026. *Motion was made by CM Sweet and seconded by CM Gathercole.*

**Motion was carried unanimously.**

### **d. Special Exception to Install a 3-Foot High Fence in the Front and Side Yard (6601 44th Avenue)**

Attorney Ferguson informed Council of the specifics of the application to install a three-foot fence in the front yard and along the side yard. She also cited the code generally prohibits front yard fences in town. In this case, any side yard fence would have to be set back at least 25 feet from the property line on Underwood Street.

Mr. Tarvin explained the fence is needed to provide a visible and effective barrier between their dog and pedestrians on the sidewalk. The property is a corner lot with a unique configuration - the house is tucked back into the corner, leaving no backyard and very negligible side yards. He stated that if they were to abide by the 25-foot setback line, there would be no place to build a fence that would provide any effective space for them to utilize and create an awkward-looking structure that would detract from the character of the house and neighborhood.

A neighbor across the street expressed concern about the precedent of having a fence in the front yard.

A written statement from a resident in opposition to the application was entered into the record.

Council engaged in extensive discussion about the special exception criteria, the uniqueness of the lot configuration, the hardship presented, and potential compromises.

**Motion:** To approve a special exception for the side yard fence, relieving the 25-foot setback requirement and allowing the side yard fence to extend to the property line, but denying the special exception for the front yard fence extending past the front of the house.

*Motion was made by CM Godfrey and seconded by CM McGaughey.*

**Motion was carried 6-1.**

**Motion:** To amend the motion to include the front yard.

*Motion was made by CM Sweet seconded by CM Mowery.*

**Motion fails 1-6.**

#### **e. Proposed Budget Worksessions**

Administrator Sandlin presented proposed dates for budget worksessions. Council decided a poll to determine the best dates would be a good idea. Administrator Sandlin will coordinate with Council to identify workable dates in February and March for the budget review sessions.

#### **f. Consideration of Approval of a Contract with Obvio, Inc. for Installation of a Stop Sign Camera System**

Attorney Ferguson explained the contract with Obvio, Inc. for installation of stop sign cameras. Council discussed various aspects of the contract.

Council requested that before installation, they receive:

- Obvio's list of proposed camera sites for Council approval
- Specifications for the cameras including the size of solar panels
- Council approval of pole colors (green or brown)
- Opportunity to see an example unit if possible

**Motion:** To approve the attached agreement with Obvio, Inc., conditional upon receipt and Council approval of the proposed site list, camera specifications including solar panel dimensions, and agreement on pole colors.

*Motion was made by CM Gathercole and seconded by CM Godfrey.*

**Motion was carried unanimously.**

### **7. DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

#### **a. Town Administrator – Debi Sandlin**

The written report was included in the meeting packet.

#### **b. Town Clerk – TC Hegeman**

The written report was included in the meeting packet.

#### **c. Town Treasurer – Carrina Bucknor**

She reported that through November and December 2025, the town has completed the first half of fiscal year 2026. Revenue and expenditures are on track as expected. Overall, the town's financial condition is supported by strong cash flow.

#### **d. Police Chief – Chief Coleman**

The Chief reported on the noise camera installed on Adelphi Road. The camera exists under a State of Maryland pilot program. The camera is owned by Genoptic, and the county is

running it. He is working to obtain access to the violation data, which will provide intelligence on when violations occur and help determine how to address the noise issue.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

Adjourned by consent at 9:34 p.m.