

Village of Martin's Additions
Public Hearing to Take comments on the draft FY 2011 budget under development
7013 B Brookville Road, Chevy Chase, MD 20815
Minutes of Meeting
April 8, 2010

PRESENT: Council Members: Richard Krajeck, Noell Sottile, Chris Mueller, Mike Zielinski, and Larry Wasson. **Village Manager:** Jean Sperling

Residents in Attendance: Bill Catherwood, Peggy Eastman, Anita Difanis, Dan Gardner, Sharon Hadary, Frank Correl, Deb Schmal, John MacDonald, Steve Schmal, Henry and Deborah Metzger, Gordon Thompson, Kirsten Gardner, Ted Stoddard, Tiffany Cissna, Susan Post, Jill Filipczyk, John Sharrow, Stewart Binstock.

Residents Offering Comment: Peggy Eastman 3409 Bradley Lane; Bill Catherwood 3517 Shepherd Street; John MacDonald 7206 Summit Ave; Frank Correl 3505 Turner Lane; Steve Schmal 7317 Summit Ave; Sharon Hadary Coyle 7308 Summit Ave.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTORY REMARKS: Council Chairman Richard Krajeck thanked residents for coming. He noted that the Village is recording the meeting. Council member Wasson indicated the he too was recording the meeting.

Mr. Krajeck presented background information on the budget development for FY 2011.

In February the Village was alerted by the State Department of Finance and Assessment of significantly reduced income tax revenue projections for the current budget year. These lower revenues present a real challenge for the Village--we have had to draw down on reserves for the current fiscal year operating budget. We anticipate reduced levels of income for next year.

Krajeck urged residents to look at the narrative explanation of the budget development and pointed out the service and program reductions that the Council is proposing, including:

- Reduced community activities to 2 per year
- Reduced legal representation by restructuring the Council meeting agenda
- Reduced street cleanings and maintenance
- Elimination of the snow shoveling program for seniors and disabled residents except for the sidewalks along Brookville Road.
- Reduced leaf bags, reduced tree planting and slightly reduced tree care budget.
- Delay in Capital improvements

Changes on the revenue side of the budget (in addition to reduction in income tax revenues) will include:

- Reduction of about \$30,000 in Highway User Revenues
- Retention of the fees from the Cable companies rather than depositing them with Montgomery Cable as we have in the past
- Increase in the real property tax rate from 8/10th of a cent to 4¢ per \$100 of assessed value. This would increase the taxes on a million dollar home from \$80 per year to \$400 per year.
- Police services will be discontinued at the initiation of the Chevy Chase Village police. While the Council considered the possibility of adding County patrols, the fear was that it would reduce the services we already get from the County.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS MADE BY RESIDENTS:

Property Tax Rate Increase: The majority of speakers supported a property tax rate increase. One resident who did not support the tax rate change was concerned about the burden on families who have lost their jobs as well as those who have retired. Another resident expressed his complete support remarking that it is the one source of revenue over which we have some control and that over time it is a stable source of revenue. The operating budget should not show a deficit, but concern was expressed that no money was budgeted for contingencies. Consider spreading the tax increase over two years. Past reductions in the property tax were taken because the Village was "awash" with cash at that time. The thought was that rate could always be raised, should the need arise.

Other Revenue Changes Proposed: Support was offered for the elimination of the payment to Cable TV Montgomery and the retention of the fees from cable.

Changes in Community Events: The comments generally supported the recommended changes in community events. One resident suggested that Block Parties be encouraged throughout the Village. Another resident would like to see the July 4th Picnic continued.

Reduction in Street Cleaning, leaf bags and other maintenance funding. The majority supported these proposed reductions; many families now have lawn services that don't use the bags. Encourage people to clean up the street gutters. Ask residents to come and pick up the leaf bags rather than have them delivered.

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Suggestions:

Once a week trash collection.

Eliminate backyard trash pick up--Go to curb side pick up of trash.

Consider a user fee for special trash pick ups.

Reduce the number of heavy trash pick ups

Reduce the recycling bin costs

Reduce building inspection costs

Renegotiate contracts

Track salaries and benefits category closely

Consider charging the tipping fee through the property tax bill and pull that cost out of the contract price.

Reduce the size and frequency of the newsletter. Use soft copy delivery methods to reduce costs.

Encourage more recycling

Concerns and other comments:

What are other jurisdictions doing about police services? Should we consider other options?

Do we really need so much austerity? Would the Council consider pulling \$50,000 out of reserves? Would like to see more of a buffer—this budget is very tight.

Consider finding other sources for police services

Proceed with the street lighting.

Pursue sidewalk repairs aggressively—don't create bigger problems in the long run by eliminating maintenance now.

Commendations to the Council : Numerous speakers expressed their appreciation for the work of the Council in developing this budget; it was well put together; the Village has gotten good value for our money; congratulations to the Council for making hard choices and for giving residents a chance to comment.