

September 2015

Mark Pierzchala's Rockville City Council Accomplishments: 2009-13

Mark Pierzchala served as Rockville City Councilmember from 2009 to 2013. When he was elected in 2009, the nation was still in the middle of the Great Recession. There wasn't much room for grand ideas, but Mark managed to do a lot.

He chaired the Finance and Budget Task Force that reviewed the City's Budget Book, budget-making process, and financial management policies. City officials adopted many of its numerous recommendations. Several months later, He reconvened task-force members to update the City's debt-limit policies, recommendations that were fully enacted by Mayor and Council. This work helps **maintain Rockville's triple-A bond ratings**.

Mark voted to moderate City salary and benefits costs and to **refinance city debt to save money**. On the city's Retirement Board he worked to **restore the retirement fund** that was devastated by the Great Recession. As the council member on Rockville Economic Development Incorporated (REDI), he worked to enhance the City's tax base. He also protected REDI from elimination by some of his elected colleagues.

Mark wrote the resolution to lease the RedGate Golf Course to Billy Casper Golf. This **privatization of management set RedGate on a fiscally sustainable path** while ending a tax subsidy of hundreds of thousands of dollars per year. Rockville's taxpayers had subsidized golf over the years by over \$3 million.

Mark provided the deciding vote for a modest incentive to bring Choice Hotels International's headquarters to Rockville Town Center. **"Bringing Choice to Rockville provided a badly needed and immediate economic boost to our center and our tax base,"** he says. Without the Choice attraction, the Town Center Cambria Suites Hotel would not be here today. Choice Hotels in Town Center also led to great reductions in Rockville taxpayers' parking-garage subsidy.

Mark **championed construction of the new office/retail building just north of Town Square**. This is the first step in eliminating the blight north of Beall Avenue. "These are examples of working with the private sector to protect and enhance our Town Center investments," he says.

Mark voted for Rockville Housing Enterprises' purchase of the Fireside Park Apartments, a move that preserved existing affordable housing. It also **preserved the homes of 236 families** with modest incomes in the heart of Rockville. The complex continues to thrive and to meet all its income and improvement targets.

Mark provided the crucial vote to **approve the National Lutheran Home conduit bonds**, enabling this long-standing nonprofit to upgrade its facilities. "There was no cost and no risk to Rockville," he says, "It showed that we value our nonprofits that do so much for us." He also supported Victory Housing, a senior affordable community near Rockville Metro run by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese.

Mark voted to annex a parcel of land to make way for the **Silverwood apartments a block away from Shady Grove Metro**. According to Mark, “The vote prevented a shopping plaza from going in. A successful shopping plaza at that location would have produced far more cars than an apartment building, and it would have competed with King Farm’s struggling Village Center. Also, it is environmentally less costly for people to live in apartments next to mass transit (Metrorail and bus).” He also made sure that the few children who will live in this building will attend schools outside of Rockville.

Mark **provided the crucial vote to fund our new police station, our Senior Center expansion, and our Gude Drive maintenance facility**. “These were high-value, badly needed projects,” he says. “These projects were years in the making and will serve our needs for decades to come.” The timing of these projects was perfect for Rockville. Interest rates were at rock bottom due to the Great Recession, and contract bids were coming in very low because the construction companies needed the work. **The land for the police station was given to us by the federal government. The Senior Center expansion was partially paid for by the state.** The former Gude Drive maintenance facility was old, decrepit, and unsafe. It couldn’t put some trucks on the lifts and some vehicles were repaired outside. This facility keeps our trucks on the road during blizzards.

Mark helped persuade the Board of Education to approve a new elementary school in the Richard Montgomery cluster and to expand Julius West Middle School to relieve overcrowding.

Mark cosponsored the **Rockville Summit**, which brought together residents, businesses, nonprofits, education, and government to discuss the city’s future and how to handle growth. He also **sought taxpayer input on the budget and on Town Center development**. “Citizens bring key insights, and when you listen carefully, you can fashion a compromise that satisfies nearly everyone,” according to Mark.

During his two terms, Mark persisted in **finding a solution to the preservation of the King Farm farmstead**. These buildings have been deteriorating for years. His work resulted in a consultant’s study on the condition of the farmstead buildings and a compilation of all farmstead facts, history, and documents that listed all challenges. (In the 2013-15 term, Mayor and Council funded a stabilization of some of the buildings, a first step.) He proposed a King Farm task force to consider viable uses of the farmstead buildings. This idea was *not* adopted in the current term. “The King Farm neighborhood and City residents should have a say in the eventual uses of this treasured historic resource. I’ll pursue the King Farm Task Force once I’m back on the City Council,” he says.

Mark fully **supported a strict ethics law for Rockville** and was the one who moved and forced a vote on its adoption despite efforts to water it down.

Mark represented Rockville at a Sister Cities summit in Jiaxing, China.

Being a good steward of Rockville’s money and quality of life is important, Mark says, adding that “maintaining our quality of life depends on coping with challenges such as growth and a changing economy.”

Friends of Mark Pierzchala, Paul O’Brien, Treasurer

Mark never accepts money from developers or from others doing business with the City.