

May 24, 2019

Mark's Council Accomplishments

Mark Pierzchala was a Rockville City Councilmember from 2009 to 2013 and since 2015. He provides the **thought leadership** the City needs. He studies the issues thoroughly, speaks to all residents and stakeholders, and looks at local and regional trends before making his decisions. **Mark makes it work.** He is all about finding solutions. He also knows when to **throw a hissy fit** on behalf of the neighborhoods — witness his leadership to stop two school bus depots and to oppose the widening of I-270.

Stewardship

Being a good steward of Rockville's money and quality of life is important. **Mark** makes **best-value investments** that benefit all residents, whether this is paving the streets, funding the new police station, or attracting quality development to Rockville. Mark works to **increase the City's tax base**, opposing any effort to raise tax rates.

Mark always votes to **refinance city debt to save money.** On the City's Retirement Board, he continues to work to **restore the retirement fund** that was devastated by the Great Recession.

He is a champion of naturally affordable housing near transit centers. He believes that Rockville should stay **vibrant and vital** with **smart growth** policies. Smart growth means focusing development near transit, encouraging people to get out of their cars, and providing a critical mass of density to make our shopping areas work. Mark believes we should embrace today's Rockville, which is a great place to live, work, and play. We can't stand still. We must allow smart-growth development to protect our neighborhoods.

He continues to **right-size the City's Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance and Standards.** In previous versions, the APFO and APFS worked against the very goals they were trying to achieve. They were reducing resources for school construction and getting in the way of other worthwhile City goals.

2015 to Present

Works to revitalize Town Center revitalization – Mark identified several obstacles to success for our Town Center. These include an outdated Master Plan, illogical zoning restrictions, unneeded parking requirements, development moratoria, parking costs, and a higher property tax rate for our Town Square (more than double of the rest of the City!). He voted for the Dawson's Market operational subsidy but sees that only as a stopgap while the City works on other Town Center issues. "We have spent tens of millions on the Town Square and there are still many empty storefronts. With Twinbrook Quarter on the way, we have to liberate Town Center from regulatory overreach so that it can thrive."

Enabled Chestnut Lodge Park – Mark wrote the airtight resolution that stopped the proposed Chestnut Lodge townhouse development. This gave time for the applicant and the City to come to an alternate arrangement that is today's Chestnut Lodge Park.

Fostering Community Trust Ordinance – This ensures that the City police and City staff concern themselves with local municipal issues. It also defines when it is appropriate for the City to draw on County, State, and Federal law enforcement help.

Developed Champion Projects Concept – For South Rockville Pike near Twinbrook Metro Mark's creative initiative allows the City and a developer to come together on enhanced benefits for both parties and the residents of the City. Champion Projects encourage a more holistic renewal of our strip malls and yield much better mixed-use neighborhoods.

Led fight against bus depots – Mark was the first Rockville elected official to learn of and recognize the awful effects of these two proposed depots on our neighborhoods. He greatly assisted the community groups to oppose this misguided County action.

Led fight against I-270 widening – Mark and Virginia Onley were the first Rockville elected officials to attend the State Highway Administration presentations and realized the enormous potential negative effect a widening could have. Mark led the 2018 awareness campaign that drew more than 100 people to the Senior Center and put together over 5,000 pieces of mail to residents in affected neighborhoods.

Enabled Twinbrook Quarter Project – This is the first instance of a Rockville Champion Project. It was Mark who led the way for eventual approval, including proposing a school-test exemption for this kind of project. Twinbrook Quarter will provide more school capacity (half an elementary school) than schoolchildren. There is a host of other benefits such as affordable **homes, jobs, stormwater management, trees, connectivity, housing near transit, shops and offices**, and an **increased tax base**.

Promoted vote-by-mail – Mark was an early and ardent supporter of this election innovation that should increase voter turnout.

Right-sized the APFO-APFS – Proposed the South Pike exemption that stopped the APFO-APFS from becoming counterproductive.

Proposed the Boards and Commissions Task Force – It was Mark's idea to commission this task force to take a deep look at which advisory and regulatory bodies we need, how they should operate, how to appoint members, and how to best use the expertise of Rockville's residents. This body's work continues.

Supported Innovative King Farm Farmstead Task Force and Solutions – This Task Force was commissioned after Mark returned to Council in 2015 and after the idea was voted down in 2013. Mark is the one who has kept the farmstead in front of Mayor and Council as a historic obligation that cannot be denied.

Voted for the New Maintenance Building – Mark voted for the acquisition of the new maintenance building for our Department of Public Works and Recreation and Parks Department.

Championed the FAST initiative – Only when Mark came back to the Council in 2015 was this effort revived. This is the initiative that will make it far easier and more sensible to obtain approvals and permits for home improvements and development that fits Rockville's Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance as opposed to unnecessary and expensive delays.

Accomplishments – Vote Pierzchala, Lesley Cross, Treasurer

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

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2009 – 2013

Advocated for the new Bayard Rustin Elementary School – 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.**

Chaired the Finance and Budget Task Force – Their work on Rockville's debt guidelines helps **maintain Rockville's triple-A bond ratings**, which lowers the City's interest rate and provides relief to taxpayers.

Ended a tax subsidy of hundreds of thousands of dollars per year to the RedGate Golf Course – Rockville's taxpayers had subsidized golf over the years by over \$3 million. He protected Rockville Economic Development Inc (REDI) from elimination by two of his elected colleagues. They wanted to use this money to subsidize the golf course.

Brought Choice Hotels International to Rockville's Town Center – He provided the deciding vote for a modest incentive to bring Choice Hotels International's headquarters to Rockville. **"Bringing Choice to Rockville provided a badly needed and immediate economic boost to our Town Center,"** he says. Without Choice, the Town Center **Upton building** and its **Cambria Suites Hotel** would not be here today (3-1-1 vote).

Approved the Town Square Garages Lease – Mark voted to lease the Town Square parking garages to Federal Realty. This greatly reduced Rockville's taxpayers' parking-garage subsidy (4-1 vote).

Saved Fireside Park Apartments as Historically Affordable Housing – Mark also voted for Rockville Housing Enterprises' purchase of the Fireside Park Apartments, a move that **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 (3-2 vote).

Approved the National Lutheran Homes Conduit Bonds – Mark provided the crucial vote to **approve the National Lutheran Home conduit bonds**, enabling this longstanding nonprofit to upgrade its facilities (3-2 vote).

Mark **provided the crucial vote to fund our new police station, our Senior Center expansion, and our Gude Drive maintenance facility.** This resolution also included a refinancing of part of Rockville's debt to save the City money. **The land for the police station was given to us for \$1 by the federal government. The Senior Center expansion was partially paid for by a state bond bill.** The former Gude Drive maintenance facility was old, decrepit, and unsafe (3-2 vote).

Mark persisted in **finding a solution to the preservation of the King Farm Farmstead.** His proposal to create a King Farm Farmstead Task Force was defeated in 2013 by a 3-2 vote. However, his advocacy resulted in much work by City staff to define the scope of the challenge (it's daunting) and led to stabilization of the dairy barns.

Mark fully **supported a strict ethics law for Rockville.**

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

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