

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, December 12, 2018, to discuss City-Wide Fiber Network and the City Manager Updates.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 7:35 p.m. The meeting was held in room 201 of the Greenbelt Community Center, 15 Crescent Road.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Colin A. Byrd, Judith F. Davis, Leta M. Mach, Edward V. J. Putens (7:51 pm), Rodney M. Roberts (7:51 pm) and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan. Councilmember Silke I. Pope was absent.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Nicole Ard, City Manager; David Moran, Assistant City Manager; Dale Worley, Director of Information Technology; Beverly Palau, Public Information and Communications Coordinator; and Shaniya Lashley-Mullen, Administrative Assistant.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Bill Orleans and others.

City-Wide Fiber Network

Mr. Worley explained that municipal broadband is a community fiber network that is community owned, that uses fiber-optic cables to connect all subscribers. Mr. Worley suggested that municipal broadband can give a lot more bandwidth and flexibility.

Ms. Palau stated that the community fiber network can be open to all competitors and bring more choices to all citizens. This would free the City from the contracts with big companies. The larger companies slow down their internet speed due to the overturn of Net Neutrality.

There was a brief discussion on the difference between municipal broadband and Wi-Fi and what other connections can be used with broadband.

Mr. Worley stated that FiOS wasn't getting installed in many of the new communities. Ms. Palau said there wasn't a copper team in the area, only a FiOS team.

Ms. Palau answered Mayor Jordan's question stating that if the infrastructure was in place, the small cell towers could be on the City fiber. Ms. Palau also stated that the fiber could be either placed on the pole or underground.

There was a brief discussion on Comcast versus Verizon pricing in reference to the internet. Ms. Palau stated that once a customer reached their allowed data usage, the company slowed down the speed.

Mr. Worley answered Mayor Jordan's question, stating that it is more expensive to put the fiber underground than putting it on poles. Mr. Worley also advised that Westminster did a combination when they installed their fiber. Westminster installed in sections and then divided the sections into smaller sections.

Mr. Worley answered Ms. Davis's question, stating that you do have to ask permission from the HOA's and apartment complexes.

Ms. Palau answered Ms. Mach's question, stating that the citizen would first subscribe to the

City broadband then subscribe to any provider for the fiber services. Ms. Palau also stated that once the citizen finished paying off the installation fee, it belongs to that resident.

Mayor Jordan asked how long it took Westminster to complete the installation. Mr. Worley advised three years and they are 90% finished.

Mayor Jordan asked what the next steps are. Ms. Palau said a feasibility study needs to be done.

City Manager's Update

Ms. Ard provided a PowerPoint presentation which gave an update of Council's Goals.

Ms. Ard indicated that the City interacted with neighbors at the National Night Out events, Fall Fest, Trunk or Treats, Halloween Costume Parade, HOAs, DARE, Bike Patrol, Business Coffee, Rotary Club, and Youth Forum. Ms. Mach asked if the DARE program was still in the schools, because there was a table at the Co-Op stating Bring Back DARE. Ms. Ard advised that the DARE program is at Greenbelt Elementary and Springhill Lake Elementary. Ms. Davis advised that table is for a DARE program in another jurisdiction.

Ms. Ard indicated that part of the accomplishments to date included updating an agreement with Friends of the Old Greenbelt Theater. Ms. Davis noted that Dr. McGrath advised her that if the contract ends on December 31, the insurance would be cancelled. Ms. Ard stated that the agreement would be done before the 31st of December.

Ms. Ard indicated that space was identified in the Community Center for the archival project for the Greenbelt News Review. Mayor Jordan asked if the archival space is a permanent fixture. Ms. Ard stated that it's a storage room and is space for use of equipment during the project.

Ms. Ard indicated that the new solar energy system at Springhill Lake Recreation Center is operating and staff will be trained on the new system. There was a brief discussion of what type of training staff needed.

Ms. Ard stated the continuation of research on potential locations for the Fire Station. Ms. Davis asked about the status of the Armory. Ms. Davis also suggested asking if the fence can be torn down. Mr. Roberts asked the City Attorney to look into the matter.

Ms. Ard noted the acquisition of Central Park at Greenbelt Station. Mr. Putens advised the Parks and Open Land list needs to be updated.

Ms. Ard stated that permitting is underway for the RFP "Welcome to Greenbelt" sign. Ms. Mach suggested the sign be placed on Southway on Greenbelt Day Weekend.

Ms. Ard noted that staff is pursuing additional electric charging stations. Ms. Ard stated that the City will be moving forward with implementing a fee and looking into getting additional grants. Ms. Ard advised that she has seen individuals using the power on the outlet poles in the parking lot to charge their vehicles.

There was a brief discussion about the bike share feasibility study.

Ms. Ard stated that staff continues to seek finalization of the Draft Sustainable Land Care Policy by Advisory Boards. Ms. Davis suggested that the boards provide what they have at a work session.

Mr. Putens left at 9:12 pm.

Mr. Orleans asked if residents can discuss the ULI Report at the work session with the other municipalities involved. Ms. Ard answered the work session is in the process of being scheduled.

There was a brief discussion about poles and wires. Ms. Watkins, Pepco, has been in contact with Public Works and has given them a list.

Ms. Ard stated that a Space Study will be conducted at the Municipal Building and Community Center. Ms. Mach asked if the Museum could be added to the Space Study. Mr. Roberts stated that the Community Center shouldn't be used for staff office space; it should be used for community activities.

There was a discussion on available office space for staff at various different city buildings.

Mayor Jordan asked how the search was going for the Director of Recreation. Ms. Ard stated 35 applications have been received so far for review.

Council Action Requests

Council reviewed the Council Action Requests (CAR).

Ms. Davis advised that “develop policy on when the city will issue proclamation – Mayor’s authority” can be removed.

Mayor Jordan requested “drafting an ordinance about mobile billboards” be added to the CAR.

Several other changes in the report were recommended to staff.

Information Items – several information items were discussed.

The meeting ended at 9:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Shaniya Lashley-Mullen
Administrative Assistant*