

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, November 29, 2017, to meet with Franklin Park.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 8:03 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, Silke I. Pope, Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan. Councilmember Leta M. Mach was out of town.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Nicole Ard, City Manager; Acting Chief Thomas Kemp, Police Department; Mary Johnson, Human Resources Director, and Shaniya Lashley-Mullen, Administrative Assistant.

FRANKLIN PARK REPRESENTATIVES: Gail Comfort, Lea Garcia, Denise Knight, Aaron Martin, Brian Burg, Phil Baron, Mark Pauley and Shaheer Williams.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Diane Oberg, Greenbelt News Review; Rick Gordon, Park and Recreation Advisory Board; Reverend Ray Raysor, Community Relations Advisory Board; Ann Wallace, Bill Orleans and others.

Ms. Knight provided an update on Franklin Park. She reported that the retention rate is at 68%, the turnover rate has gone down and 92- 93% of the units are occupied. Mr. Martin stated the annual inspections haven't gone as expected, with the external changes within both departments. They are half way through the entire process.

Mayor Jordan asked how the installation of window guards is preceding since Council passed the ordinance last year. Mr. Martin advised they have been installing them on all the windows. Ms. Davis asked if they are being automatically installed regardless of whether the unit has children or not. Ms. Davis made a suggestion to place language in the lease, and possibly an email blast to residents, that removal of window guards is not permitted. Ms. Pope asked how many window guards were ordered and installed. Mr. Martin reported they have ordered 200 window guards and they are being applied to the lower windows; not all the windows are required to have them.

Ms. Pope stated that 3,200 email addresses are not enough to have on file for 2,877 apartments. Ms. Knight stated it fluctuates between 3,100-3,400 emails which equal 80% of households that have an email on file. Ms. Pope asked if Franklin Park is still distributing their newsletters via emails. Ms. Knight reported that sending the email newsletters helps to keep track of more data, and tailor the website based on the open polls.

Mayor Jordan asked about the demographic population of Franklin Park; Ms. Knight stated it is very diverse, more transitive, government employees, students, and military. She stated it's more family based households than single based. Mr. Williams reported the average ages of the renters are more 30-40 year olds and the residents are moving into the community because of the schools.

Ms. Knight answered Mr. Putens question stating that the turnover rate is 38% annually, which is lower than the average rate of 45-50%. She also stated that she noticed a trend starting last

year that the military demographics have not been fulfilling the full term of their lease agreement. Mr. Putens ask that all members of council and Ms. Ard receive a link to Franklin Park's communication newsletter.

Ms. Davis asked how many units have been renovated so far. Mr. Martin stated 2,262 units have been renovated, 200 units more than last year. He advised most residents do not want to relocate in order to have their unit renovated. Ms. Davis also asked how often email notifications are being sent out.

Mayor Jordan asked how the laundry rooms in each building are being taken care of since Franklin Park built the laundry facility. Mr. Martin stated they have been sealed up and pad-locked. There aren't any plans to do anything else with them at this time because of how they are spread out among the property. He also advised they are dealing with squatter and breaking and entering issues. Mayor Jordan asked were there any more capital improvement projects. Mr. Martin advised they spent 4.5 million dollars, replaced two boilers this year and will replace two more next year.

Mayor Jordan asked if they are planning to upgrade the recreation amenities. Mr. Martin said they are looking to upgrade the area near pool 2. They are going to ask the residents for feedback on that area. By removing the basketball and tennis courts, a new area can be built that can be utilized by the whole community.

Mr. Roberts suggested a community garden. Mr. Martin stated they are going to put in a dog park, but they have some small areas to consider for a community garden.

Mr. Martin answered Ms. Pope's question advising it was a squirrel that caused the blackout at the apartment complex and at Springhill Lake Elementary. Mr. Martin also advised they didn't contact the City.

Regarding building a dog park in Franklin Park, Ms. Davis referred Mr. Martin to the Dog Park Association and to Planning and Community Development. Ms. Pope invited Franklin Park to the upcoming Dog Park Work Session. Mr. Putens suggested public/private partnerships with Franklin Park and the City of Greenbelt on the dog park for Greenbelt West. Mr. Putens also suggested contacting the Planning Department to help locate a space that is accessible to everyone.

Mayor Jordan asked how Franklin Park is managing storm water run off. Mr. Martin answered they have been working on more of the infrastructure because there were a lot of dirty collapsed malfunctioning drains. Mr. Martin stated that Franklin Park just spent \$100,000 on repairing them. Mayor Jordan stated that Prince George's County has programs that help large developments.

In response to Mayor Jordan's question, Mr. Martin stated they tried educating residents about recycling. Franklin Park has to pay for the mixed trash that is placed in the recycling bins. Franklin Park would like to have a better program and is open to suggestions. Ms. Davis suggested that Franklin Park contact Luisa Robles, Public Works, to come out and discuss recycling. Ms. Davis also suggested a once a month email blast on recycling.

Mayor Jordan asked how Franklin Park shares information with its residents other than

electronic form of communication. He also asked if bulletin boards would be placed in the buildings. Ms. Comfort advised everything is online because all the advertisements were just thrown on the floor or recycled. Ms. Comfort also stated that starting next year Franklin Park will also do text blasts to get to even more people. Ms. Comfort advised Franklin Park doesn't have the man power to deliver the newspapers and then pick them up and throw them away. Ms. Davis asked how the News Review is being sent out. Ms. Comfort stated that they are sending a link through the email blast. Ms. Knight added they have been sending the email link of the News Review in a PDF format for the past three weeks and 35-37% residents have opened the emails. Ms. Pope and Mayor Jordan ask if a copy of the News Review is being delivered to buildings or offices. Ms. Knight stated yes, but not in every building. Ms. Knight said Franklin Park incurs a cost for distributing the News Review to 400 buildings every week, and then while delivering the next set, the first set is still there. Mayor Jordan stated he read that the News Review would pay for delivery. Ms. Knight stated that's where the problem lies. Franklin Park decided to do the email blast which is beneficial for both parties involved. Ms. Comfort stated they are keeping some in the office. Mayor Jordan suggested the City of Greenbelt has a page and that can also be sent as an email blast. Mr. Putens asked if other organizations within the City sent you a flyer about their organization, would you send that out as an email blast. Ms. Knight stated yes.

Acting Chief Kemp provided an update on public safety. He reported that crime in the last ten years is at an all-time low. It is creeping up a little bit, which is a regional trend, but no spikes in Franklin Park. Acting Chief Kemp stated community policing is about face time and building a trust between the community and the police department. Mr. Byrd asked if the lack of lighting is contributing to the problems. Acting Chief Kemp stated that could be a factor as well as low foot traffic in the area. Acting Chief Kemp commented that Officer Torres partners with Franklin Park to do community surveys. In response to a question from Mr. Byrd, Mr. Pauley advised a survey was done two months ago. Some lights have been replaced with LED lights. There is a light check every month and it's documented and is replaced. Currently there are 16 lights out and the light bulbs are on back order. Acting Chief Kemp answered Mr. Byrd's question stating that the crime hasn't climbed quickly enough to identify a pattern.

Mayor Jordan asked what the timeframe is for responding to complaints and maintenance requests. Mr. Pauley advised it depends on the location and what needs to be done. All work orders are completed within seven days and all emergencies are taken care of within two days. Mr. Baron added that the overall goal is less than 24 hours for emergencies and the trend is 36-48 hours if parts need to be ordered and contractors are needed. Ms. Pope asked how many workers are in the maintenance department. Mr. Baron stated currently 52 employees.

Rev. Ray Raysor asked if Franklin Park would be willing to work with Prince George's County People for Change Coalition to install individual pooper scooper poles within the community and educate the community as well.

Ms. Lambright-Davis asked to make recycling more user friendly, and if Franklin Park has a recycling committee she would like to be on it. The Earth Squad is making a compost garden at one of the Three Sisters Gardens. She identified a spot for a community garden in Franklin Park. She also advised she would like hard copies of the News Review because she doesn't get the inserts anymore once it became electronic. She stated various locations around Franklin Park where copies of the News Review could be delivered.

Mr. Gordon asked why the work session was not in Franklin Park. Council advised the last three

work sessions were in Franklin Park. Mr. Gordon suggested that the “Coffee with the Chief” should be held at a different time frame to accommodate the citizens who work during the day hours.

Ms. Wallace suggested a more proactive usage of the email blast; it could solve a lot of the problems that were discussed tonight. She advised she only received a couple of emails during the year.

Mayor Jordan stated that citizens have a hard time finding parking spaces at the Springhill Lake Recreation Center (SHLRC), due to Franklin Park residents parking commercial vehicles over night at the Center. Ms. Pope stated the issues came up during the summer. Ms. Davis asked if the City posted “no overnight parking” signs. Ms. Ard answered it’s a yearlong problem not just during the summer and that contact was made to the resident vehicles that were left overnight in the parking lot. Ms. Knight advised once the signs are posted, they would send an email blast stating residents are not to park at the SHLRC or their vehicles could be towed. Mr. Roberts suggested a “no parking sign” and a gate so no vehicles would be towed.

Mr. Putens advised the News Review is already in commercialized locations, so Franklin Park doesn’t have to distribute them there. He stated that a homeowner association in Greenbelt East prohibits any distribution of the News Review because they will have to clean them up. Mr. Putens asked for examples of priority maintenance response issues verses secondary. Mr. Martin provided various examples of both.

Mayor Jordan asked if there are security cameras on the property, and if not, if Franklin Park would be looking to putting some around the property. Ms. Comfort stated Franklin Park doesn’t have any cameras on the property and has discussed the issue with the management company.

Mr. Williams answered Ms. Davis’s question stating the rent range is from \$1,199 - \$2,249 a month. Ms. Davis asked if Franklin Park is going to expand their community events. Ms. Knight said Franklin Park is starting to plan next year’s events and is going to focus on engaging the youth between the ages of 10 and 15 years old. She also stated that Franklin Park wants to involve the whole City of Greenbelt. Ms. Davis suggested that Franklin Park partner with the Recreation Department.

Ms. Garcia asked Council if there are any plans for the empty buildings on Edmonston at Springhill Drive. Mayor Jordan stated it was a Hub Zone and the City has no plans for that location. Ms. Garcia stated that would be a fantastic location for a daycare.

Mr. Byrd asked how Franklin Park addresses pest control, water damages and foundational cracks and mold. Mr. Martin stated that there is a pest control team on site. Ms. Davis asked if they treat the whole building. Mr. Martin answered yes. Mr. Martin advised Franklin Park handles water damages and mold issues immediately. He also stated that foundational cracks are very rare.

Mr. Gordon asked if Franklin Park would open a common area for the residents. Mr. Gordon also stated that he is starting a Law Learning Program. He stated youth are tutored by uniform police officers and they are learning to get to know officers in a different light.

Mr. Putens asked why Franklin Park partners with Beltway Plaza with National Night Out. Ms.

Knight stated the last two years the amount of Franklin Park residents has doubled; it wasn't just patrons of Beltway Plaza. Ms. Knight stated the amount of activities that National Night Out has noting that Franklin Park doesn't have the space on their property.

In response to a question by Mayor Jordan, Ms. Knight stated Franklin Park is continuing to grow and make it unified with the City as a whole. Ms. Knight also stated a focus on the youth.

Ms. Pope stated that a group of teachers at Springhill Lake Elementary will start washing the students' uniforms. Ms. Knight advised they could bring the uniforms to Franklin Park to use the laundry center. Ms. Pope also asked if Franklin Park would be willing to enter a public/private partnership and also continue the conversation about donating tablets to the school.

Ms. Pope asked if there is new signage on the horizon for Franklin Park. Ms. Garcia stated no, and advised at the last meeting Mr. Kazarnovsky wanted the City to allow additional signage for Franklin Park. Ms. Davis stated that Council referred Franklin Park to Kap Kapinstan at Beltway Plaza to see if Franklin Park signage could be placed on Beltway Plaza property. Council would like to see the design prior to placement.

Information Items – several information items were discussed.

The meeting ended at 9:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Shaniya Lashley-Mullen
Administrative Assistant*