



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION AGENDA
Work Session - Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC)

This meeting will be held virtual.

Virtual Participation

Zoom Webinar Attendees:

Please submit your request in writing via email to questions@greenbeltmd.gov

**[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88034010729?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88034010729?pwd=RHUvbDFiZDVaY1FBNWkvSWtKditOUT09)
[pwd=RHUvbDFiZDVaY1FBNWkvSWtKditOUT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88034010729?pwd=RHUvbDFiZDVaY1FBNWkvSWtKditOUT09)**

Dial-in: 301 715 8592

Webinar ID: 880 3401 0729

Passcode: 926914

Wednesday, November 22, 2023

7:30 PM

Work Session Packet

Work Session - Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC)

Suggested Action:
Agenda

- Introductions
- Council Discussion
 - What is the current status of an updated BARC Master Plan, especially as related to development projects such as related to development projects such as the BEP?
 - How does the building size of the proposed BEP compare to the existing non-utilized buildings it will replace?
 - Is BARC working with the BEP to ensure that the proposed buildings fit in to the

architecture and building materials of existing buildings to fit in with the agricultural research campus?

- Does any planning BARC is doing in the long-term incorporate multi-modal transport (public transit, pedestrians, cyclists) as well as planning for electric vehicles (charging stations)
- A discussion of impervious surfaces and stormwater management as related to the BEP project, as well as light pollution issues during the construction as well as after completion of the project.
- Questions and Answers
- Other Items

[WS221109.pdf](#)

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, November 9, 2022, to meet with Beltsville Agricultural Research Center representatives.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 7:30 pm. The meeting was held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building, 25 Crescent Road, and virtually via Zoom.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Colin A. Byrd (7:32 pm), Judith F. Davis, Ric Gordon, Silke I. Pope, Rodney M. Roberts, Kristen L. K. Weaver, and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Tim George, Interim City Manager; Terri Hruby, Director of Planning and Community Development; and Shaniya Lashley-Mullen, Assistant to the City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Dr. Howard Zhang, Director of Beltsville Agricultural Research Center; Chizo Irechukwu, Beltsville Agricultural Research Center Property Manager; and others.

Mr. Roberts expressed his concerns regarding the Log Lodge at the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC), which included a broken water pipe, the building door being left unsecured, and mulch piled up against the structure. Dr. Zhang stated that a historic event occurred at the Log Lodge, where a United States President and a Russian President conducted a meeting at that location. He advised that BARC receives \$100,000 in funding to maintain the Log Lodge.

Mr. Roberts left the meeting at 7:42 pm.

There was additional discussion regarding the Log Lodge. Dr. Zhang explained that BARC was formed at the current location in 1910 and that the majority of BARC's buildings was constructed in the 1930s. He noted that one of the issues of maintaining old buildings is the maintenance cost due to more things starting to fail. Renovations are complete to Building #307, and there will be a ribbon cutting ceremony on December 5. Council is invited.

There was discussion regarding BARC's Master Plan. Dr. Zhang stated that the most recently published Master Plan included the proposal of several buildings, which included the Biotechnology Building (Building 230), two Nutrition Buildings (306B and 306C), and Buildings 10A and 10B that were constructed in the late 1990s. He explained the internal 2018 BARC Master Plan and discussed the consolidation of the BARC campus. Dr. Zhang stated that the campus merger would result in a 41% reduction of BARC's building footprint. A Demolish Plan was proposed, including 118 buildings, and the information was submitted to the Maryland Historical Trust. The new Master Plan will be awarded to a consulting company to be developed.

Based on a question asked by Ms. Davis, Dr. Zhang explained that the new Master Plan would be a four-year process and explained the steps, including building assessments and defining BARCs research needs.

Based on a question by Mayor Jordan, Dr. Zhang explained that BARC had no plans to reduce the land mass, and there are 180 senior scientists. He stated that 40 positions were filled within the last two years and there is active recruitment for open vacancies. Dr. Zhang noted before the

pandemic that 900 employees worked on the campus each day, with 300 of the employees being contractors or collaborators.

Lore Rosenthal, 2 Ct Gardenway, asked if BARC was more cutting edge using traditional or organic farming methods. Dr. Zhang explained that BARCs research in the last 50 years is in tune with large-scale farming operation. The main focus is to improve the yield. In addition, he noted that BARC has been researching the diversity of crops due to climate change.

There was additional discussion regarding the Master Plan. Dr. Zhang explained getting support for implementing the Master Plan. He noted that the Master Plan had been developed with stakeholders and agency leadership input.

Mayor Jordan inquired how BARC fared with funding requests from Congress. Dr. Zhang answered that BARC had received a healthy increase over the last several years, which included a cost increase for employees and a \$2 million in research/programming increase. Based on a question asked by Ms. Davis, Dr. Zhang explained that the Research Appropriation Funds fund the operation or maintenance of the Center. The researchers are charged an indirect cost for the process of maintenance. He noted that significant facility renovation comes from the Congressional Appropriation Fund and the Agricultural Research Service. Dr. Zhang pointed out a third source of funding for the cleanup projects received from the US Department of Agricultural.

Based on a question by Mayor Jordan, Dr. Zhang answered that 50-60% of the Super Fund Sites on the BARC campus are mediated. He explained several processes to mediate the area, including removing the soil and isolating the ground.

Mayor Jordan inquired how BARC evaluates environmental impact projects now and in the future. Dr. Zhang stated that the current research laws should be acceptable. BARC has a rigorous disposal process.

There was discussion regarding wastewater treatment. Dr. Zhang explained that BARC has two wastewater plants on campus and has been regularly meeting the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) regulations without a violation in the last few months.

There was discussion regarding relocating the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) to the BARC campus and the environmental impacts it may cause. Dr. Zhang shared that the BEP project has taken into consideration cutting down trees, reduced parking, and solar roofs. The water process is strictly controlled.

Based on a question by Mayor Jordan, Dr. Zhang explained that Congress must approve any usage of BARC land for nonagricultural use. He stated that BARC had provided 74 or 75 comments to the Maryland Department of Transportation. Ms. Davis asked whether the City could receive a copy of BARC's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) comments. Dr. Zhang replied that the City would have to contact the Maryland Department of Transportation, and he would relay the request to the agency as well.

There was additional discussion regarding the BEP project. Based on a question asked by Ms. Davis, Dr. Zhang explained that the BEP and BARC agreement included the demolition of 29 buildings and will fund the replacement of two functioning buildings.

Based on a question asked by Ms. Davis, Dr. Zhang explained that the State Highway Administration (SHA) asked permission from BARC to expand Kenilworth Avenue/Edmonston Road due to congestion, and the renovation would possibly fund BEP. Ms. Davis stated that the City is opposed to widening the road.

Mayor Jordan asked whether there were any significant upgrades to Powder Mill Road. Dr. Zhang stated that BEP would improve the Baltimore Washington Parkway and Powder Mill Road intersection. Ms. Davis inquired if the truck traffic would impact BARC's research. Dr. Zhang answered that the rumble strips have the most significant impact on BARC's study. He noted that BARC has been discussing possibly removing the rumble strips.

Mayor Jordan expressed his opinion that Beaver Dam Creek Road should be a limited access road for BARC, cyclists, and hikers. Dr. Zhang acknowledged Mayor Jordan's concern regarding safety due to speeding vehicles. The United States Park Police was asked to make traffic stops and issue speeding citations. Last year, the United States Park Police issued over 200 speeding citations on the BARC campus.

Bill Orleans, a Greenbelt resident, inquired where the other Agricultural Research Centers were located. Dr. Zhang answered that the Agricultural Research Services has over 90 locations, and BARC is the largest. Mr. Orleans asked what was the annual appropriation to BARC. Dr. Zhang stated that the current budget is \$98 million.

Based on a question asked by Robert Goldberg-Strassler, 114 Lastner Lane, Dr. Zhang explained that the BEP project assisted with BARC's Master Plan by reducing the square footage of building space by 1.1 million square feet.

Vijay Parameshwaran, 9 Ridge Road, inquired about the broader mission in research development that BARC foresees in the coming years regarding climate change and food supply change. Dr. Zhang stated that BARC and BEP are transferring the wastewater treatment to the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC). He noted that BARC conducts two lines of research, coping with the impact of the climate and reducing its effects.

Meeting Discussion:

Council reviewed the upcoming Meeting and Work Session list.

Due to the holidays, Ms. Davis suggested not scheduling any work sessions on December 21st, 26th, and 28th.

There was a discussion regarding the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) projects listed on the upcoming Regular Meeting agenda.

There was a discussion regarding scheduling a Reparations Commission work session. Council agreed to schedule the Reparations Commission Work Session on Tuesday, November 22, 2022.

Mayor Jordan requested placing the following month's Meeting and Work Session in Council packets.

The meeting ended at 10:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Shaniya Lashley-Mullen
Assistant to the City Clerk*