

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, October 27, 2021, to receive the City Manager's Update.

Mayor Byrd started the meeting at 8:00 p.m. The meeting was held virtually via Zoom.

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

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Nicole Ard, City Manager; Tim George, Assistant City Manager; Todd Pounds, City Solicitor; Dawane Martinez, Director of Human Resources; Bertha Gaymon, City Treasurer; Chief Rick Bowers, Greenbelt Police Department; Terri Hruby, Director of Planning and Community Development; Jim Sterling, Director of Public Works; Dale Worley, Director of Information Technology; Anne Oudemans, Assistant Director of Recreation; Chondria Andrews, Public Information and Communications Coordinator; and Shaniya Lashley-Mullen, Assistant to the City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Matthew Inzeo, Kristen Weaver, Bill Orleans, and others.

Based on a question asked by Ms. Davis, Mr. Sterling answered that one tree by Greenbelt Elementary was lost due to the wind storm.

Ms. Ard provided a PowerPoint presentation, which updated the Council's goals, accomplishments, and projects.

Ms. Gaymon provided an update on the Financial Report as of September, 2021. She indicated that this was the quarterly report and that there were no significant changes in the revenue stream or the departmental plan expenditures; therefore, the City's financial status is stable and sound. Ms. Gaymon stated she would be submitting a monthly and quarterly report as an economic forecast to Council.

Based on a question asked by Ms. Davis, Ms. Gaymon answered that the City has \$1million set aside for abatements.

Mr. Jordan stated that quarterly updates are significant and asked if trends are in line with previous years. Ms. Gaymon answered that the trends are steady, and she would provide Council with an analysis with pre-pandemic figures to understand if the City is in line.

Based on a question asked by Mr. Jordan, Ms. Gaymon answered that the interest rates are meager and would have to review the Greenbelt Station Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and follow-up with Council. She added that she would add the TIF information to future reports.

Based on a question asked by Mr. Byrd, Ms. Gaymon provided Council with an update on the City's efforts on obtaining a new financial system, including the deadline of the Request for Proposal (RFP), next steps regarding the selection process, and demonstrations requested from the vendors. She noted that she would like to have that financial system in place by the end of this fiscal year.

In response to a question asked by Ms. Davis, Ms. Gaymon answered that once the audit is complete, she would provide Council with a yearly report which incorporates the new policies that Council adopted.

Ms. Ard noted that staff is making progress towards the Greenbelt Station Trail and the Greenbelt Corridor Plan, which included staff who has applied for the grant.

Bus Stop Accessibility Study- Ms. Davis inquired if staff researched solar light options at each bus stop shelter. Ms. Hraby answered that Ms. Simmons, Community Planner, has been assigned this project, and it includes piloting one or two changes at different shelters. Mr. Jordan noted that the bus shelter on Hanover Parkway at Hunting Ridge needs a little bit more work, but it looks great. He mentioned that Prince George's County Bus #11 is back in service. Based on a question asked by Ms. Pope, Ms. Hraby answered that the City typically funds two bus shelters a year, but this year bus shelters will be privately funded. She added that the City would need to obtain new ridership information. Ms. Davis suggested surveying and assessing the current bus shelters because some need repair or replacement.

Dog Park Upgrade- Mr. Sterling and Ms. Hraby stated that they would have to defer to the Police Department regarding the locks at the dog park. Mr. Sterling added that getting water to the dog park has been a long-standing issue. He has met with contractors and WSSC to try to resolve the issue. Ms. Pope asked for patrol at the dog park since there are dogs in the dog park in the evening, but they don't have handlers.

Playground Improvements- Ms. Davis asked whether there was a list of ideas for Greenbelt Station that had been discussed. Mr. Sterling answered it was proposed to be a fitness area similar to Schrom Hills Park, but there had been concerns with the Greenbelt Station Homeowners Association (HOA) on location and what amenities the HOA needed for the community. Ms. Hraby added that the HOA had been actively reaching out and pursuing an opportunity with the Neighborhood Design Center to obtain a master plan on recreation facilities and looking for the City's support in this endeavor. Ms. Pope stated that she liked the idea of outdoor fitness at the park and suggested having the outdoor fitness amenity be added to Buddy Attick Park. Based on a question asked by Mr. Jordan, Mr. Sterling answered there was money in the budget to replace the rubberized surfaces in the City playgrounds. He is waiting to hear back from Windsor Green on how they would like to proceed. Mr. Sterling explained that Public Works staff submitted a grant application with Community Parks and Playgrounds (CPP) about making Buddy Attick Park an inclusive playground.

Cleaning/Repairs to the Mother and Child Statue- Ms. Davis commented that the night lighting suggested by the Arts Advisory Board is awe-inspiring. She inquired whether there were any updates regarding the lights controlled by the owner of Roosevelt Center. Ms. Hraby answered that the City is awaiting a court date and will have to follow up with Council with any further updates. Based on a question asked by Mr. Jordan, Ms. Hraby answered that the base of the Mother and Child Statue wasn't a part of the project's scope. She noted that the conservator did clean the base and is in the process of finalizing his report. Mr. Roberts suggested cleaning the base of the Mother and Child Statue and painting the concrete.

Mr. Jordan stated he received a complaint regarding the storm drains on Cherrywood Lane being clogged up and requested Public Works staff to fix the issue.

Based on a question asked by Mr. Jordan about the Buddy Attick Parking Lot, Ms. Hruby answered that the City was able to extend the grant for the project and just received an additional \$400,000 grant through the Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund. Ms. Hruby stated that the project would start after winter, and it is projected to be a two month long project.

Transportation Land-Use Connections (TLC) Greenbelt Road Corridor Plan-Mr. Jordan thanked Ms. Hruby for her work on the TLC Grant and requested staff update the Task Force. Ms. Hruby noted that the contract was awarded last week and she has been in contact with the City of College Park and the Town of Berwyn Heights.

Based on a question asked by Ms. Mach, Mr. Sterling explained that the outdoor pool sand filter is the filtration system for the outdoor pool.

There was a discussion regarding the three historic cemeteries. Ms. Davis stated there are grants through the State to improve the Hamilton Cemetery, the Turner Cemetery, and the Indian Springs Cemetery. She also suggested having signage at each of the cemeteries. Ms. Hruby stated that staff has been engaged with the Parks and Planning Commission Historic Preservation staff and looking at opportunities to move the project along.

Mr. Jordan stated that GHI installed a bicycle repair kiosk near their building and would like the City to install one at Schrom Hills Park and Buddy Attick Park. Mr. Sterling stated that staff could contact GHI and provide Council with a follow-up report. Ms. Davis suggested installing a kiosk at the Indian Creek Trail.

About the discussion regarding Playground Improvements, Kristen Weaver, a Greenbelt resident, stated that she attended the HOA meeting. Some of the ideas were to have a community garden, fitness center, and community center installed.

Council reviewed the Management Objectives by sections.

Administration

Based on a question asked by Ms. Davis, Mr. George stated that an engagement strategy would be finalized in the next three to four weeks before being presented to Council.

There was a discussion regarding the upcoming Legislative Agenda and Dinner.

Economic Development

Ms. Davis commended Ms. Liggins on the outreach she has done and hopes she gets an intern soon. She asked whether Ms. Liggins had an idea on how to restructure the Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund. Ms. Ard answered that there were some ideas on how to address the loan and expand the revolving loan to other parts of the City.

There was a discussion on the Council Retreat.

Human Resources

Ms. Davis requested a report from Human Resources on the number of retirees, resignations, and transfers, to include the reason if an exit interview was performed.

Mr. Martinez provided Council with a PowerPoint presentation, which included information on the implementation of the Laserfiche Employee Document Management/Filing & Electronic Onboarding, the RFP for the Compensation Study, and the Benefits Brochure/Online Benefits Enrollment.

Based on a question asked by Ms. Pope, Ms. Oudemans explained that the Recreation Department has seasonal staff who have submitted their vaccination cards, and a lot of the seasonal staff don't return the following summer.

Based on a question asked by Mr. Jordan, Mr. Martinez answered that there is a 6% turnover rate for the City of Greenbelt. He will provide the report Ms. Davis requested and compare the information with a nearby municipality.

Information Technology

Based on a question asked by Ms. Davis, Mr. Worley answered that the City hadn't started negotiations with Verizon on the Franchise Agreement. However, he anticipates that it will begin in the coming months. Regarding the negotiations with Comcast, Mr. Worley stated that the City is close to an agreement. He noted that the County and all 27 municipalities are participating in the negotiations with Comcast, but each city would have its own Franchise Agreement with Comcast.

Mr. Worley provided Council with an update in regards to I-Net.

Mr. Jordan asked about a security audit. Mr. Worley explained that he has contacted Homeland Security to perform an audit at no charge, but they have not responded. He stated he is waiting to send out an RFP and advised that he would like the audit completed in the next couple of months to fix any vulnerabilities within the City.

Public Information

Ms. Davis stated that there needed to be a discussion with the new Council and, depending on the technology, start having in-person meetings. Mr. Jordan expressed his concerns regarding in-person/hybrid arrangements. Ms. Ard stated that an upgrade to the equipment is underway.

Ms. Ard introduced Ms. Chondria Andrews, the new Public Information and Communications Coordinator.

Mayor Byrd stated that the system would need closed captioning and a sign language interpreter during the meetings.

Community Development

Ms. Davis suggested adding Short Term Rentals to the priorities to discuss with the County during the legislative dinner. Ms. Hruby stated that staff would reach out to Councilmember

Turner's office regarding the County implementing their Short Term License Program in municipalities.

Police

Ms. Davis commended the Police Department on completing all State mandated training, including the Bias and De-escalation Training.

Animal Control

Based on a question asked by Ms. Davis, Chief Bowers answered that he would follow up with Council regarding the status of the installation of the windows at the Animal Shelter.

Ms. Pope thanked Chief Bowers for changing the voicemail message for Animal Control.

Public Works Administration

Based on a question asked by Ms. Davis, Mr. Sterling answered that the solar farm is located at Claggett Farms in Prince George's County. He stated the project had been pushed back to early 2023.

Multi-Purpose Equipment

There was a discussion regarding gas-powered equipment. Mr. Jordan inquired about the percentage of gas-powered equipment. Mr. Sterling explained that small electric equipment had been purchased the last two fiscal years; however there is gas-powered equipment that staff use because of the technology of electric equipment.

Roosevelt Center

Based on a question asked by Mr. Jordan, Mr. Sterling answered that Public Works staff continue to provide cleaning service to the Old Greenbelt Theatre.

Greenbelt Connection

There was a discussion regarding the ridership on the Greenbelt Connection.

Assistance in Living

Ms. Davis asked if the mental health services are being utilized. Ms. Ard answered that she would follow up with Dr. Park, the Director of CARES, and provide Council with an update.

Recreation Administration

Based on a question asked by Ms. Davis, Ms. Oudemans answered that the committee could provide a report to the Council on the conclusion of their review of diversity, equity, and inclusion about the recreation programs and facilities.

Ms. Davis inquired if the Park Ranger's pay had been increased due to the change in their responsibilities. Ms. Oudemans answered that their hourly salary has been increased.

Recreation Center

Based on a question asked by Ms. Davis, Ms. Oudemans answered that there is a new program on Friday nights at the Youth Center, Teen Takeover. There are also new programs, Futsal and Anime Club, at the Springhill Lake Recreation Center.

Mr. Jordan inquired about the recreation programs and the facilities' utilization. Ms. Oudemans explained there was a capacity limit due to the pandemic, and the programs and facilities were only being offered to Greenbelt residents. Now that the capacity limit has increased, programs have been expanded to include non-Greenbelt residents, and the attendance is bouncing back.

Community Center

There was a discussion regarding digital display signage.

Aquatic & Fitness Center

Based on a question asked by Ms. Pope, Mr. Sterling answered that staff is working with Mr. Parks to install flooring that provides traction. In addition, he noted that during the pandemic, the tiles in both of the bathrooms were replaced.

Mr. Jordan inquired if the lockers and whirlpool would be open to the public before the end of the year. Ms. Oudemans stated that she would follow up with Mr. Parks and provide Council with a response tomorrow.

Special Events

Ms. Davis asked for an update on the Food Truck Event. Ms. Oudemans answered that the Recreation Department is working with Ms. Liggins and the Labor Day Festival Committee. The event is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, March 26, 2022, at Schrom Hills Park.

Bill Orleans, Greenbelt resident, stated that there would be over 100 evictions at Franklin Park and asked Council to direct Ms. Ard to direct Dr. Park to contact Franklin Park to not to proceed with the evictions for Thursday and Friday. Ms. Davis explained that the Council had received notification that it was misinformation regarding the evictions. Ms. Ard summarized the email she received, stating Dr. Park and the County housing staff have been in communication. She suggested that Mr. Orleans make direct contact with Franklin Park to obtain corrected information.

Mr. Jordan moved that Council go into Closed Session in accordance with Section 3-305(b)(1)(7) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of the Public General Laws of Maryland; 1) to discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, that affects one or more specific individual; 2) to consult with legal counsel regarding outstanding legal matters.

Ms. Davis seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL:

<i>Mr. Jordan</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Ms. Davis</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Ms. Mach</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>(left the meeting at 11:06 p.m., came back and voted</i> <i>yes)</i>
<i>Ms. Pope</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Putens</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>Absent</i>
<i>Mr. Roberts</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mayor Byrd</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>No</i>

The motion passed 5-1 (Mayor Byrd voted no).

Mr. Jordan announced that Council would not return to open session at the conclusion of the closed session.

The meeting ended at 11:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Shaniya Lashley-Mullen
Assistant to the City Clerk*