

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, October 21, 2020, to discuss the Greenbelt Road Task Force.

Mayor Byrd started the meeting at 8:05 p.m. The meeting was held virtually via Zoom.

Present were: Councilmembers, Judith F. Davis, Emmett V. Jordan, Leta M. Mach, Silke I. Pope, Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Colin A. Byrd.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Nicole Ard, City Manager; Terri Hruby, Director of Planning and Community Development; Molly Porter, Community Planner; and Shaniya Lashley-Mullen, Assistant to the City Clerk.

Also present were: Mayor Patrick Wojahn, City of College Park; Mayor Amanda Dewey, Mayor Pro Tem Jodie Kupla-Eddy, Councilmember Ethan Sweep, Town of Berwyn Heights; Kap Kapastin, Quantum; Nat Ballard, Bill Orleans; and others.

Ms. Hruby explained the Town of Berwyn Heights staff reached out to the City of Greenbelt City Manager and staff regarding moving the I-193 Improvement Project forward as a result of the Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel (ULI TAP) Project. She indicated that the work session was for the elected officials of the City of Greenbelt, the Town of Berwyn Heights, and the City of College Park to discuss strategies and next steps.

Mr. Jordan stated that Greenbelt Road connects the three communities, the City of Greenbelt, the Town of Berwyn Heights, and the City of College Park. He provided a brief history of the Neighborhood Conservation Project, the Greenbelt Metro Area and MD-193 Corridor Sector Plan and Sectional Map, and the ULI Study. Mr. Jordan advised the three jurisdictions need to work together to develop a shared vision, so that Greenbelt Road would become a Walkable/Bikeable Corridor.

In response to a question asked by Ms. Davis, Ms. Hruby answered the ULI Study was a joint effort between the municipalities and has been shared with the County. She stated the study is listed on the County's Joint Capital Transportation Improvement Program Letter that is before the County Council for approval. The Study, Phase 1- US Route 1 to Hanover Parkway, is listed as number 2 on the County's Priority List. Ms. Hruby noted that the State of Maryland is a major stakeholder and State Highway Administration (SHA) needs to be a part of the planning and designing process.

Mayor Dewey stated that the three connecting municipalities working together to present the project to the County could move the project along with a little more ease. She agreed to have a regular joint forum with the three municipalities.

Susan Walker, a Greenbelt resident, stated at a previous in-person Council Meeting that Delegate Washington advised he was in contact with the legislative committee leader regarding obtaining funding for this project. She inquired if the Council followed-up with Delegate Washington. Mayor Byrd stated that Delegate Washington attached an amendment to an

Appropriation Bill that went through the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee. He explained the amendment was to require a department to conduct a study and provide a report.

Ms. Davis stated she agreed with Mr. Jordan. She stated that all three Cities need to review the charts and maps of the ULI Plan and come to an agreement.

In response to a question asked by Ms. Davis, Mr. Kapastin provided an overview of the suggested improvements to Greenbelt Road regarding the Beltway Plaza Redevelopment project, which includes having a complete sidewalk along Greenbelt Road, improvement to the frontage of Beltway Plaza, and the safe entry access to Beltway Plaza.

Mr. Ballard provided a presentation of the Greenbelt Road Conceptual Beltway Plaza Frontage Improvements. Based on a question asked by Ms. Davis, Mr. Ballard answered that there aren't any utility poles in the middle of the sidewalks. He stated that there are several poles that are close to the sidewalk with guide wires. Ms. Davis suggested that Quantum needs to work with Pepco or the owner of the utility poles.

Ms. Davis inquired if the ULI Plan had included bike lanes along Greenbelt Road. Ms. Hruby stated that the ULI Plan envisioned bicycle facilities and provided two alternatives - along the edge line and a multiuse concept down the median - that could be addressed in the corridor.

Ms. Davis suggested to Mr. Kapastin when he makes improvements in front of Beltway Plaza, it would be nice to make the same improvements to the properties he owns on the other side of Greenbelt Road in the Town of Berwyn Heights. Mr. Kapastin stated he would research her request, but noted that would be expensive.

Mr. Jordan noted that the ULI Plan discussed removing the two pork chops and the slip lanes from in front of Beltway Plaza to make room for a protected bike lane.

Mr. Roberts advised that there would be a lot of changes on Greenbelt Road, including Beltway Plaza, the Royal Farms proposal, and the proposed development at 7010 Greenbelt Road.

Mayor Wojahn stated that the focus should be on the recommendations that were proposed in the ULI Plan. He noted to also focus on Greenbelt Road where University Blvd. separates and beyond into College Park. Mr. Jordan noted the connection should be seamless all the way up to Soil Conservation Road.

Mr. Sweep explained Greenbelt Road has a lot of disconnect for pedestrians and cyclists. He noted crossing over the railroad tracks from the City of Greenbelt into the Town of Berwyn Heights into the City of College Park. Mr. Sweep agreed with Mr. Roberts on redesigning Greenbelt Road to be more walkable/bikeable. He also agreed with Ms. Davis that all three municipalities need to agree on a plan and present the same plan to their County Councilmembers and State representative.

There was a discussion on the next steps the Greenbelt Road Task Force was going to take. Mayor Dewey suggested a framework on how the task force will work together and be more

productive. Ms. Kupla-Eddy suggested establishing a subcommittee to review and combine the existing plans for the task force. Ms. Hruby noted the plans are outdated and the ULI plan provided two concepts on innovative ways to provide for pedestrian and bicycle facilities within the corridor. She suggested that all three municipalities, SHA, the County, and Economic Development come together and develop plans for the corridor. Mayor Wojahn suggested the municipalities could jointly apply for several different grants to get the funding to design the plans.

There was a discussion regarding the County Council priority letter. Ms. Hruby suggested that all three municipalities email their County Council representatives and request that the Priority Letter be amended to include the Greenbelt Road Project to be listed on the cover letter. Mayor Wojahn noted that he has been in contact with his County representative. Mr. Jordan suggested including County Council At-Large representatives Calvin Hawkins and Mel Franklin.

Mr. Orleans, a Greenbelt resident, suggested for the short-term goal concentrate on the section of Greenbelt Road between Baltimore Avenue and Hanover Parkway. He noted that the Greenbelt Road Task Force should be comprised of the residents of the three municipalities with staff assistance and then the elected officials. Mr. Orleans agreed that the Task Force's first priority is to come up with a plan. One of the first principles of the Task Force should include preserving any forested areas that already exist on Greenbelt Road. He suggested a second overpass from Beltway Plaza over Greenbelt Road to connect both the City of Greenbelt and the Town of Berwyn Heights.

Mr. Sweep inquired if the Task Force was going to use the existing plans as a literature review since the plans are outdated. He noted that he would like for the Task Force to have a goal and deadline moving forward on plans and funding sources. Mr. Jordan suggested having the Task Force meetings either quarterly or every six months.

Based on a question asked by Mr. Jordan, Ms. Hruby advised the connecting trail between the Greenbelt Metro Station and the Greenbelt Station Community is in the permitting, design, and engineering phase. There were significant delays in the County permitting process and with Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) permits. She stated that design and permitting should be completed by Summer 2021 and construction by Fall or Winter 2022.

Ms. Davis suggested having a follow-up meeting in three months with the Task Force with concepts and ideas on what each of the municipalities would like to see in the Greenbelt Road Corridor.

Informational Items:

Ms. Davis inquired if Mr. Sterling, Ms. Robles, and Mr. Lippert would attend the next Council Regular Meeting to receive accolades for the City receiving Sustainable Maryland Certified 2020 Sustainability Champion. Ms. Ard noted she will follow-up with the City Clerk.

Ms. Davis reported on attending the Higher Achievement Webinar and the Sustainability Maryland Executive Committee Meeting.

The meeting ended at 9:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Shaniya Lashley-Mullen
Assistant to the City Clerk*