



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION AGENDA

Work Session - Pepco

This meeting will be held in-person and virtual.

**25 Crescent Road
Greenbelt, MD 20770**

OR

**Virtual Participation
Zoom Webinar Attendees:**

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

**[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87684554491?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87684554491?pwd=WGxkRWFaYThnMXhTTUpOZXZXS1hXZz09)
[pwd=WGxkRWFaYThnMXhTTUpOZXZXS1hXZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87684554491?pwd=WGxkRWFaYThnMXhTTUpOZXZXS1hXZz09)**

Dial-in: 301 715 8592

Webinar ID: 876 8455 4491

Passcode: 375575

Wednesday, September 27, 2023

7:30 PM

Work Session Packet

Work Session - Pepco

Suggested Action:

Agenda

- Introductions
- Council Discussion
 - Explanation for higher rates. What programs are available for low-income families or those finding it difficult to pay their electric bill?
 - Status of street tree pruning in Greenbelt

- There are still double electric poles throughout Greenbelt. What can the City do to partner with Pepco to remove these poles?
- Some Greenbelt neighborhoods have complained that streetlights are not bright enough or are focused downward. What can be done about this?
- Pepco Multi-Year Reliability Plan
- Municipal Streetlight negotiations
- Pole Rental/Lease Agreements with WIFI/5g antenna owners
- Other planned work
- Questions and Answers
- Other Items

[WS220216.pdf](#)

City Council Work Session Agenda Item Report

Meeting Date: September 27, 2023

Submitted by: Shaniya Lashley-Mullen

Submitting Department: Administration

Item Type: Work Session Item

Agenda Section: Work Session Packet

Subject:

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Attachments:

[WS220216.pdf](#)

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, February 16, 2022, to meet Pepco and Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC).

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

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Colin A. Byrd, Judith F. Davis, Silke I. Pope, Rodney M. Roberts (8:50 p.m.), Kristen L. K. Weaver, and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan. Councilmember Ric Gordon was absent due to an illness.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Tim George, Acting City Manager; Brian Townsend, Acting Director of Public Works; and Shaniya Lashley-Mullen, Assistant to the City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Monica Marquina, Government Relations Manager; Jason Flory, Construction Manager; and David Wilkins, Customer Advocate, Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission; Tony Ruffin, Governmental & External Affairs Manager; and Cody Heseltine, Lead Vegetational Management – Prince George’s County, Pepco; and others.

Mayor Jordan asked for a status update from Pepco and WSSC regarding residents dealing with arrears due to Covid. Mr. Ruffin answered that he would follow up with Council once briefed by the Pepco Customer Operations Team. He noted that Pepco has programs to assist customers who may be in arrears and energy efficiency programs to help customers reduce the energy consumption. Ms. Marquina explained that WSSC faces more than \$16 million in arrears. She advised that WSSC had created a Heat Map for the City of Greenbelt, and it includes 500 customers, residential and business, in arrears. Ms. Marquina noted that WSSC has financial assistance programs to assist customers in arrears and will forward that information to Council. Mayor Jordan explained that the City had allocated City resources and Federal resources to help residents with rent, mortgages, and utilities.

Mr. Jordan asked Ms. Marquina whether WSSC had any programs in Prince George's County to identify the infection rates or outbreaks of Covid. Ms. Marquina answered that WSSC is in the process of working with the State in providing samples. In addition, she explained that Montgomery County submitted an inquiry to expand its program to use wastewater to identify Covid hotspots.

Mr. Ruffin provided an update on current projects for Pepco, which include the Electric Vehicle Public Charging Program. In addition, he asked Council if there were other opportunities within the City's footprint to install additional charging stations within the public space.

There was additional discussion regarding installing electric vehicle chargers. Mr. Ruffin explained that installing the electric vehicle charging stations in residential and commercial sites would be in Pepco's next phase. Based on a question asked by Mayor Pro Tem Weaver, Mr. Ruffin answered that there is a unified map and will forward Council a copy. Pepco was approved to install 250 electric vehicle charging stations across Pepco's footprint in Maryland, including Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, and slightly less than half have been installed in Prince George's County.

Based on a question asked by Mayor Jordan, Mr. Ruffin answered that Pepco merged with Epsilon in March 2016, and customers have seen increased improvement in terms of service

reliability in Prince George's County. He explained that Pepco had benefited from all the resources with the merger.

There was a discussion about solar panel farms. Mr. Ruffin stated that he understood that customers are researching alternative options to augment their electricity consumption. He suggested attending another work session to further discuss the pros and cons of solar panels.

Mr. Flory provided an update on current projects for WSSC, which includes a transition 24-inch water main down Greenbelt Road. The project has been delayed due to supply chain issues. He stated that the restoration, which includes milling and overlay, should be completed by Spring/Summer. Mr. Flory advised that sewer pipes were rehabilitated in the middle of the wooded area at the Greenbelt National Park. He explained that WSSC is currently halfway to completing sewer task order #9 at Greenbelt Homes Inc. (GHI). WSSC has been working directly with GHI and coordinating with the residents regarding the project.

Mayor Jordan stated that the City and GHI have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to replace waterlines. He advised that GHI has been actively negotiating, and the City would like to see that negotiations move forward.

Ms. Davis inquired if the entrance to the Greenbelt National Park on Greenbelt Road would be resolved due to the water main break. Mr. Flory stated that WSSC doesn't pave during the cold months and will forward that information. Ms. Davis noted water main breaks on Southway at the ramp to Greenbelt Road and Southway and Crescent Road. Mr. Wilkins advised to contact him directly regarding water main breaks and repairs. He stated that he makes sure all temporary patches are correctly done and will inform Council on any permanent repairs. Mayor Jordan noted that the patches on Greenbelt Road wear out pretty quickly.

There was a discussion regarding the State of WSSC infrastructure. Ms. Marquina stated that WSSC is under a budget constraint and is working quickly as possible to replace the pipes. She will forward Council information on how lines are being replaced each year. Mr. Wilkins explained that all the restorations and roadway are completed for the Water Tower Project.

There was a discussion with WSSC regarding projects outside of Greenbelt. Mr. Flory explained that the Purple Line had a significant effect on WSSC and many of the mains had to be relocated due to the Glen Ridge Station.

Mayor Jordan inquired about the status of the Reliability Improvement Project regarding tree trimming. Mr. Ruffin explained that Pepco notified the City Manager and the Public Works Department regarding when the process would occur. Mr. Heseltine explained the process of contacting Public Works, providing a map of the area, and reviewing the planned vegetation management. Mr. Townsend provided Council with the updated vegetation management proposal, including pre-construction meetings, the Advisory Committee on Trees (ACT) referral, and notification to Council and the residents. Mayor Jordan asked about the sustainability of the trees from Pepco. Mr. Townsend advised that the trees' survival rate is high.

Mr. Roberts inquired why Pepco wasn't undergrounding the wires. He stated that trees are more important than powerlines and poles.

There was a discussion regarding double poles. Mr. Ruffin explained that Pepco is very proactive about removing double poles and requested a list of any double poles in Greenbelt be sent to him so that the operations team can identify and remove the poles.

In response to Mr. Roberts's question, Mr. Ruffin stated that Pepco is a regulated utility company and receives a lot of its directives from the Public Service Commission. He said that Pepco tries to underground a lot of the wires where it is feasible, but undergrounding wires has a higher financial impact on residential and commercial customers.

About the discussion regarding double poles, Ms. Davis noted that many of the double poles aren't on City property. Some of the double poles are on GHI property. She asked whether Pepco could remove other utility wires from the double poles. Mr. Ruffin explained that Pepco does not have the authority to remove other utility infrastructure.

Based on a question asked by Mayor Jordan, Ms. Marquina answered that WSSC has more than 100 years of zero water issues and the water is safe to drink. Regarding Springhill Lake Elementary, Ms. Marquina stated that there isn't any lead in their system or pipes. She advised WSSC conducts a lot of water testing and campaigns regarding salt and salt applications. Unfortunately, there has been an increase in chloride, which is highly troubling because there's an impact on vegetation and the WSSC pipes.

Ms. Pope asked for a status update regarding the power lines down on Westway due to the recent storm. Mr. Townsend answered that Pepco had responded and repaired all the major power lines. The secondary lines, cable, and phone lines have been restored.

Mr. Townsend asked about the water testing request the City submitted for Buddy Attick Park at Lakecrest Drive and Prince James Way. Ms. Marquina stated she would follow up with Council with the project's status.

There was a discussion regarding staffing issues. Both Ms. Marquina and Mr. Ruffin stated that WSSC/Pepco are trying to retain existing employees and recruit at job fairs and reach out to local schools. Ms. Marquina advised that the most challenging job for WSSC is to recruit meter readers and to keep employees engaged.

There was a discussion regarding smart meters. Mr. Ruffin explained that Pepco customers receive an energy audit report, including energy data and current energy consumption. The information is generated from the smart meters. Ms. Marquina stated that WSSC advance meters infrastructure had been placed on hold. The main goal was to have customers have real-time water usage data and move to a monthly bill from a quarterly statement.

Based on a question asked by Mayor Jordan, Ms. Marquina recommended that the Roosevelt Center Merchants Association get in touch with her and have staff meet with the association to discuss separating meters. She explained that there is a tremendous cost for installing individual meters. Ms. Marquina suggested having a third party install the individual meters, but there is still a fee associated with the service.

Based on a question asked by Ms. Pope, Ms. Marquina answered that every situation is unique. Some of the bills could be estimated, there had been a rate increase, and if there is a problem

with the water bill, contact WSSC customer service. Mr. Ruffin stated that Pepco did not have a rate increase.

Based on a question asked by Bill Orleans, a Greenbelt resident, Ms. Marquina answered that WSSC monitors the levels of PFAS, and the information is published. In addition, she provided contact information to receive a copy of the quality report.

Information Items:

Ms. Davis provided a report on the Elderly Services Group of the Prince George's County Commission for Women from its Legislative Briefing and the Maryland Municipal League Legislative Committee meetings.

Based on a question asked by Mayor Jordan, Mr. George answered that the Covid test distribution went well the last two days, and there is another Covid test distribution scheduled for the next day.

Mayor Pro Tem Weaver inquired about the dates for the public engagement meetings regarding the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding. Mr. George will follow up with Council with the public engagement meetings dates.

The meeting ended at 9:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shaniya Lashley-Mullen
Assistant to the City Clerk