

WORK SESSION #1 OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, September 17, 2014, to meet with Beltway Plaza.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held in the Room 201 of the Community Center.

COUNCIL PRESENT WERE: Judith F. Davis, Konrad E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Silke I. Pope, Edward V.J. Putens and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan. Councilmember Rodney M. Roberts was detained at work and arrived at 7:11 p.m.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Dale Worley, Acting City Manager, and Cindy Murray, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Kap Kapastin, Quantum Management; Brian Gibbons and Jeff Lemieux, Advisory Planning Board; Laura Kressler, Public Safety Advisory Committee; Angela Johnson and Crystal Cornish, Franklin Park; and Bill Orleans and others.

Update on Beltway Plaza

Mr. Kapastin reported that T.J. Maxx, AutoZone and a Music and Arts Center had opened this year in Beltway Plaza. He mentioned that Marshalls, Target and Burlington continue to do well but Atlanta Bread had closed. Mr. Kapastin said that Atlanta Bread still has approximately five to seven years left on its lease and he expects they will sublease the space.

Mr. Kapastin commented on the Wall of Fame induction ceremony which was held on September 11th honoring Dorothy Baily, Carolyn Mills-Matthews and David Harrington of the Harlem Remembrance Foundation. Mr. Kapastin said another ceremony will be held on November 10th honoring State Senator Victor Ramirez and County Councilmember Will Campos. Ms. Davis mentioned the poor attendance at the last Wall of Fame event. Mr. Kapastin said media releases had been issued and an email blast to approximately 5,300 people had been sent. Ms. Mach suggested Mr. Kapastin ask Greenbelt Access Television to film the events.

Mr. Kapastin reported on several other mall events including: National Night Out, Utopia Film Festival, Lions Club Toy Drive, Greenbelt Time-Line Exhibit, Greenbelt Blues Festival, Trick or Treat Event and Costume Contest and Shop with a Cop. He also mentioned Beltway Plaza's participation in the Labor Day parade and its purchase of a one page advertisement in the Rexford review. Mayor Jordan suggested Beltway Plaza consider working with Community Clinic, Inc. (CCI) and offering health care programs in the mall.

There was discussion regarding a recent loud music incident at Beltway Plaza. Mr. Kapastin explained that AutoZone had worked with marketing and security representatives from Beltway Plaza to schedule a car show last weekend. He said the event had a much larger crowd than expected, went well beyond the scheduled ending time of 8:00 p.m., and had a DJ who would not comply with multiple requests from mall security personnel to turn the volume down. Mr. Kapastin said a letter is being sent to the manager of AutoZone regarding the incident. He added that if another event of this type is scheduled in the future, Beltway Plaza will be better prepared to handle any problems that may occur.

Mr. Herling asked about the demographics of Beltway Plaza patrons. Mr. Kapastin said 65 to 70 percent of patrons are from the Greenbelt area, 3-5 percent are visitors from out of state, and the remainder are from the areas of Hyattsville, Takoma Park, College Park, the District of Columbia, etc.

In response to a question from Mayor Jordan, Mr. Kapastin said Beltway Plaza had no concerns in regards to City services, such as Police, Code Enforcement, etc.

Ms. Mach commented on the colors of the facades, parking lots, etc. and questioned whether there was an overall design plan. Mr. Kapastin said no, many color choices are tenant driven. Ms. Mach also asked about work being done on the rear parking lot. Mr. Kapastin said he would check on this.

Mr. Kapastin mentioned the successful National Night Out event held at Beltway Plaza. Ms. Pope, Ms. Mach and Mr. Putens mentioned the music had been very loud at the event. Mr. Kapastin agreed the volume had been high at the beginning but was later turned down. Ms. Pope also mentioned the type of music wasn't appropriate for young children.

Update on Carnival

Mr. Kapastin said he had notified the City in March of this year that Beltway Plaza had agreed to host a carnival on August 19-24th to benefit the Lions Club. He reported that the carnival operator had hoped to earn \$60,000 in receipts but had received less than \$40,000 which may have been due to inclement weather. Mr. Kapastin said Beltway Plaza didn't make any or much money on the permit fees but the Lions Club did receive \$5,000. He said the Lions Club is considering holding another carnival again in the spring.

Ms. Davis reported that some individuals expressed concern that Beltway Plaza was trying to take away business from the City's Labor Day Festival by hosting the carnival. She said she didn't necessarily agree with these concerns as residents of Greenbelt West, who were the main patrons of the Beltway Plaza Carnival, don't normally frequent the Labor Day Festival. Mr. Kapastin assured Council of his support of the Labor Day Festival and said the carnival was scheduled to fit with the Lions Club and the carnival operator's availability.

Future of Beltway Plaza

Mayor Jordan asked what Mr. Kapastin sees in the future for Beltway Plaza. Mr. Kapastin said he wants to feel positive about the future of Beltway Plaza but expressed some concerns. He noted the diminishing pool of retailers that will come to a 50 year old shopping center located next to an aging apartment complex in Prince George's County. Mr. Kapastin said he was hopeful the new Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) headquarters with 11,000 employees would come to Greenbelt. He noted the positive impacts of the FBI on the entire area. Mr. Herling mentioned the positive impacts of having stable federal agencies in an area and specifically noted the revitalization of L'Enfant Plaza.

Economic Development

Mr. Kapastin said he had attended a focus group session with Sage Consulting. He said he was very impressed with Mr. Basu and requested that Council review the completed study carefully and trust in the proposed recommendations.

Mr. Kapastin said retail is a very tough business but assured Council that Beltway Plaza is doing everything it can to attract retailers and patrons. He noted his attendance at national and regional shopping center conventions. Mr. Kapastin commented that John Henry King, Economic Development Director for the City of Bowie, markets Bowie at the local shopping center convention in National Harbor.

Other Items

Brian Gibbons, Chair of the Advisory Planning Board, and Angela Johnson and Crystal Cornish, Franklin Park, commented that both Beltway Plaza and Franklin Park want many of the same things for Greenbelt West. Mr. Putens and Ms. Davis encouraged Beltway Plaza and Franklin Park to partner and work together.

Ms. Davis reported that large trucks and dumpsters in the area to the rear of CVS and the Atlanta Bread buildings create an eyesore for patrons of area establishments. Mr. Kapastin said he will check.

Mayor Jordan requested pavement be installed on the pathway next to Siri's Chef Secret where bike riders cut through from Cherrywood Lane. Jeff Lemieux, 92 Ridge Road, agreed that pavement was needed in this area. Mr. Kapastin said he believes this area is part of Berwyn Heights but will meet with Mr. Lemieux to discuss.

Mr. Kapastin announced that on Columbus Day this year, he will be celebrating his 25th anniversary with Beltway Plaza.

Mr. Orleans asked and was provided answers to several questions.

The meeting ended at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Cindy Murray
City Clerk*