

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Monday, August 4, 2014, to meet with the Prince George's County School Board.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 8:00 p.m. The meeting was held in the Council Room of the Municipal Building.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Konrad E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Silke I. Pope, Edward V.J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan. Mayor Pro Tem Judith F. Davis was out of town.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: David Moran, Assistant City Manager, and Cindy Murray, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Kevin Maxwell, Chief Executive Officer of Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS); Peggy Higgins, Prince George's County School Board; Lupi Grady, Prince George's County Executive's Office; Susan Breon, Don Rich and David Whiteman, Greenbelt Advisory Committee on Education; Mary Moien, Greenbelt News Review; Kathleen Gallagher and Austin Henry.

Welcome and Introductions

Dr. Maxwell thanked Council for the opportunity to meet with them. He advised his first school year as the Chief Executive Officer had gone very well and he was looking forward to his second school year. Dr. Maxwell said he grew up in Prince George's County and graduated from Bladensburg High School.

Dr. Maxwell said he had visited classrooms in all 205 schools in the County last year and learned a great deal about the system. He said his transition team had thoroughly reviewed the entire school system and developed some strategic planning. In response to a question from Mayor Jordan, Dr. Maxwell explained one of the main goals is to improve literacy. He noted the importance of recruiting good teachers, providing the right supervision and good professional development. Dr. Maxwell reported that PGCPS in conjunction with Discovery Communications held a very successful professional development day on June 16th with over 9,000 participants.

Ms. Mach stressed the need for early childhood and preschool programs in the County. Dr. Maxwell agreed and said eight programs had opened during the past school year and more will be opening this school year.

Status of Renovations and French Immersion School

Dr. Maxwell said the French Immersion School is expected to open on time in the old Greenbelt Middle School building. He reported that the stage floor is finished, new equipment has been installed in the kitchen, physical education equipment and playground installation is complete and all demolition work should be done before the start of school. Ms. Mach asked if the brick from the demolition work will be recycled. Dr. Maxwell will check.

Athletic Fields

Dr. Maxwell said final arrangements are being made for the shared use of athletic fields between the French Immersion School and the Greenbelt Middle School. In response to a question from Mr. Roberts, Mr. Moran said Joe McNeal, Assistant Recreation Director, is working with the Greenbelt Middle School Principal on a memorandum of understanding regarding community use of the athletic fields.

Naming of Old Greenbelt Middle School

Dr. Maxwell said there is a policy that needs to be followed regarding the naming of schools. He explained that a committee will be convened to review names then it will submit three names to him for his review. Dr. Maxwell said he will then select one name and submit it to the School Board for approval.

Vijay Kowtha, 8009 Craddock Road, suggested the school be named after Edna Belle McNaughton, a County resident and professor at the University of Maryland from 1919 to 1957, who was a childhood education pioneer.

Status of Five Classrooms for Possible City Use

Mayor Jordan said Council had received a tour of the five rooms available for possible use by the City at old Greenbelt Middle School prior to this work session. Dr. Maxwell said Monica Goldson from PGCPSS would be willing to discuss possible lease arrangements with the City.

Update on Greenbelt Schools

Ms. Higgins reported that Mr. Covington is the new principal of Greenbelt Middle School and the former principal, Mr. Tweedy, is moving to the Human Relations Office with PGCPSS. She said the installation of a new HVAC system for Eleanor Roosevelt High School is scheduled to be complete by the end of the year. Dr. Maxwell said the biggest issues for the Greenbelt schools is overcrowding, specifically 25% overcrowding at Springhill Lake Elementary School along with a 40% mobility rate. However, he added that all the Greenbelt schools are strong schools.

Ms. Pope expressed concern about the overcrowding, poor building condition and utilization of temporary buildings at Springhill Lake Elementary School as well as overcrowding in the new Greenbelt Middle School. She commented on the new development at Greenbelt Station South Core and the City's efforts to have all students residing in Greenbelt attend Greenbelt Schools. Dr. Maxwell and Ms. Higgins said the County has a \$2.3 billion backlog for new school funding and is in need of a "big fix." In an effort to address this immediate need as well as future needs, Dr. Maxwell said County Executive Baker and the Executives of Montgomery and Baltimore Counties have approached the State about developing a new funding formula for their county school systems which are the three largest in the State.

Bus Lot Relocation

Dr. Maxwell said a potential site for relocation of the Greenbelt bus lot has been identified and is under review.

School Boundaries

Dr. Maxwell said no changes to school boundaries were proposed this year. However, he said programmatic as well as crowding issues will be evaluated again next year and some changes may be proposed at that time.

Common Core Standards

Dr. Maxwell said Maryland has been a leader in Common Core Standards. He explained that Common Core was driven by a group of Governors and educational leaders who identified the need to develop across the board educational standards throughout the United States in order to prepare students to be competitive with world-wide students.

Other Issues

Mr. Kowtha spoke about Central Maryland Regional Alliance Robotics Team Illusion which includes students from county high schools. He said more space is needed and the team would like to move to Owens Science Center. Dr. Maxwell noted his support of robotic teams and his attendance at State-wide robotic competitions. However, he explained there were logistical as well as legal issues between community groups (not only robotics but other interest groups) and school groups using County facilities.

In closing, Ms. Mach noted the Council's support of education. She mentioned the Advisory Committee on Education and its Grants to Schools Program as well as its Science and Reading Clubs.

The meeting ended at 10:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Cindy Murray
City Clerk*