

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, July 31, 2019, to meet with the Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 7:32 p.m. The meeting was held in room 201 of the Greenbelt Community Center, 15 Crescent Road.

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

Staff present were: David Moran, Assistant City Manager; Charise Liggins, Economic Development Coordinator; and Shaniya Lashley-Mullen, Administrative Assistant.

Also present were: Delegate Alonzo Washington; Ebony Stocks, Executive Vice President for the Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation (EDC); David Lewis, Business Development Director, EDC; Heather Tinelli, Business Development Director, EDC; Konrad Herling; Bill Orleans and others.

Ms. Stocks provided an update of the EDC. She noted Mr. David Iannucci became the President and CEO and she is now the Executive Vice President.

In reference to a question asked by Mayor Jordan, Ms. Stocks stated the EDC is a 501(c) (3) organization and she doesn't believe any municipalities have served on the EDC Board of Directors.

Ms. Stocks presented a PowerPoint presentation.

Ms. Stocks stated the two main focus of the EDC is to grow jobs in the County for the County residents and to grow the County's commercial tax base. Ms. Stocks said the EDC conducts site tours with local businesses. She indicated one of the focused strategies of the EDC is to grow and support the technology startups.

Ms. Stocks stated during the Small Business Appreciation Week in May, 150 businesses were visited and awarded.

There was brief discussion on Opportunity Zones. Mayor Jordan stated that Greenbelt isn't an Opportunity Zone. Mr. Putens asked about the criteria to become an Opportunity Zone. Mr. Putens indicated each municipality has its own unique culture. Ms. Stocks stated she would forward Mr. Putens's information on the required criteria.

Ms. Stocks discussed the County Executive's priorities, stating she was bringing fresh food options to "food deserts" and the redevelopment of aging shopping centers. Ms. Mach stated "food deserts" are terrible and the County needs to get rid of them. Ms. Mach suggested establishing cooperative grocery stores. In reference to a question asked by Delegate Washington, Ms. Tinelli stated only 42 of the 241 shopping centers received a rating of "C" or worse during the 2017 Retail Market Study.

There was a discussion on the proposed Bureau of Engraving and Printing facility of the USDA Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC) site. Mr. Roberts stated that BARC was an

important property and it does important research. Ms. Stocks explained the Bureau of Engraving and Printing was not building on open space. Mayor Jordan stated they were building on the abandoned space and uses within the existing footprint of BARC.

Ms. Liggins provided an update since the budget work session. She indicated she has been doing business outreach with current commercial property leasing agents and tenant brokers. Ms. Liggins said she has been working with current and former economic developers from other municipalities, the EDC and the Maryland Chamber of Commerce. She noted she was working with other organizations to strengthen collaboration opportunities to promote the City of Greenbelt.

Ms. Stocks answered Mayor Jordan's question stating the EDC just hired a business manager who handles health care. Mayor Jordan stated that health care should be local.

Ms. Stocks indicated that she promotes the Greenbelt Metro as a mixed-use site to the General Services Administration (GSA) and other federal agencies. She stated a parking garage needs to be built. Mr. Lewis said that all the work is done when WMATA is onboard. Mr. Putens asked has the space been promoted as incubator offices, coops or as open starter business offices.

There was discussion about childcare. Ms. Tinelli stated many of the big box stores in retail are turned into childcare centers. Ms. Mach advised to look into cooperative childcare or preschools. She noted they are good for the community and parents.

Mr. Herling suggested a shuttle service that services 10 major points within the City. He indicated it would provide easy access transportation and it would give the community character. Mayor Jordan said the purple line would be complete in the next 4 or 5 years.

There was a brief discussion on the vacancy rate in Greenbelt office buildings. Ms. Stocks stated Greenbelt has a 23.1% vacancy rate. Mr. Lewis stated the area vacancy rate is 20%. Mr. Herling asked what kind of incentive or tax credits bring business to Greenbelt. Mr. Herling explained the Green Business Tax Credit. Mr. Lewis stated he doesn't think anyone used it and the businesses need to be certified as a green business.

Ms. Liggins stated she would like to find ways to collaborate and share resources more with the EDC.

Information Items were discussed.

The meeting ended at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Shaniya Lashley-Mullen
Administrative Assistant*