

PUBLIC HEARING OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Tuesday, April 3, 2018, for the purpose of meeting with representatives of Baltimore Washington Rapid Rail and concerned citizens.

Mayor Pro Tem Davis started the meeting at 7:00 p.m. It was held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Judith F. Davis, Colin A. Byrd, Leta M. Mach, Silke I. Pope, Edward V.J. Putens and Rodney M. Roberts. Mayor Jordan arrived later in the meeting returning from a business trip.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Nicole Ard, City Manager and Bonita Anderson, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: David Henley, Tabb Bishop, Connie Crawford, Furqan Siddiqi and Jeff Quido of Baltimore Washington Rapid Rail (BWRR).

Mr. Henley presented a PowerPoint summarizing the proposed Baltimore-Washington Superconducting Maglev (SCMAGLEV) Project. He indicated that 75% of the alignment was underground.

Delegate Washington expressed concern that this project is moving too fast and there is no citizen involvement. He reported on a meeting in November 2017 with his constituents to discuss the SCMAGLEV proposed project. He has inquired of Congressman Steny Hoyer regarding his position on the proposed project and has not received an answer.

Councilman Todd Turner referred the contact sheet for the proposed project. He stated there are two tracks that the citizens need to pay attention to; the Environmental Impact Statement (formal Federal process) and the Advocacy track (Federal Government who will make the decision). Mr. Turner stressed Governor Hogan is a part of this process as well as the Secretary of the Department of Transportation. He indicated there are zero State dollars involved in this process, but noted there is \$29 million dollars of Federal grant funding for the Environmental Impact Statement and the study for this proposed project.

Dennis Brady spoke about the lack of public information on the proposed project. He stated there have been about two dozen projects around the world, but only three have been built, two of them with heavy subsidy by their governments. Mr. Brady mentioned the proposed project is not economically viable due to failed attempts of the past trials of the SCMAGLEV. He indicated there are some discrepancies in the job years listed in the study.

Mr. Byrd asked the BWRR representatives about the status of Ms. Brown. Mr. Henley stated that Mr. Bishop is currently handling the Community Affairs.

Comments of the Citizens

Bill Orleans asked about Governor Hogan's endorsement of the proposed mapping variance. Mr. Henley clarified Councilman Turner remarks about the proposed project being initiated by

Governor Hogan. There have been changes to the proposed project when Gov. Hogan first rode the train; however, the hyper loop is just a conceptual idea/design. The NEPA process will move forward.

Ms. Tony Mathewson of 6972 Hunting Ridge stated concerns that the route on the west side of the BW Parkway will be under several of their buildings and the property is constructed on marine soil. She stated since 2012 there have been expenditures of \$750,000 for the maintenance, structural and plumbing issues. Ms. Mathewson requested a breakdown of the jobs provided by the project.

Mr. Robert Snyder of Hillside Road spoke in favor of the project. He cited his reason of the benefit of the SC Maglev Proposed Project. Mr. Snyder believes this project will improve the City's infrastructure and, with new technology, this proposed project will develop new jobs and will be much greener than other systems.

Mr. Brian Almquist of Greenbelt Advocates for Environmental and Social Justice expressed opposition to the project. He reported the group has collected over 250 letters opposing the proposed project. The letters have been mailed to all elected officials representing the City of Greenbelt. He requested that the Council meet in person with the key advisors and voice opposition to this proposed project.

Mrs. Donna Almquist of Greenbelt Advocates for Environmental and Social Justice opposed the proposed project. She expressed concern that the community is disappearing before their eyes and believe this proposed project will destroy wildlife and human habitat.

Ms. Elise Young of 9 Maplewood Court stated concerns about the impact this project will have on the children in the community.

Mr. Paul Downs of the Forest Preserve Advisory Board stated expressed concerns in reference to the impact on forest, foundation and community values. He suggested that people who are opposed should contact Congressman Hoyer's office.

Ms. Angeline Butler of Greenbriar expressed concerns that the pertinent facts are not included in the presentations the energy produced and possible pollution. Ms. Butler asked about the size and location of the vents and what kind of air will be forced out and back in. She wanted to know if there will be a geologic report done. Greenbriar and Roosevelt High are built on marine clay. She indicated there will be an impact on wildlife and there will be vibrations during construction and operation of the proposed project.

Ms. Joyce Wineland of Lakecrest Drive/Charlestown Village spoke in favor of this proposed project. Ms. Wineland would like to see growth and expansion, along with new technology to move forward. She stated proposed project will provide additional jobs. Ms. Wineland wants to see the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which should be completed in a year.

Mr. Owen Kelly of 15 Lakeside suggested to the Council that the forest is not safe if the portal is north of city property. He believes the last portion of the tunnel is too shallow and the forest will

need to be bulldozed. Mr. Kelly made the City Council aware that certain Council letters were not included in the official record of the January 2018 Final Preliminary Alternative Screening Report. He believes that today's electric cars may be more efficient in moving the same number of people than the SCMAGLEV.

Ms. Lisa Billingsly of 2 Court Gardenway stated concerns about the economic viability of the project. She indicated that her greatest concern is the cost to Greenbelt. Ms. Billingsly likes taking walks in the forest, which has no traffic noise. She was not in favor of the proposed project and how much it will damage the forest and the ecology. Ms. Billingsly noted it is not practical and the cost will be too high.

Tonya of Hedgewood Drive mentioned that 11 acres of land in Maryland is deforested every day. She stated some of the track that will be above ground will be in the forest area. Tonya stated the forest area is valuable and shouldn't be sacrificed for this proposed project. The lost forest impact on wildlife is not acknowledged enough.

Mr. Vijay Parishmore of 12 Crescent Road expressed concerns about education. He noted one of the final two alternates, which is Alternate J, is proposed east of the BW Parkway, which is where Eleanor Roosevelt High School (ERHS) is located. The short term of construction and long term effects of operation will affect the 3,000 students who attend ERHS.

Ms. Mary Ernsberger of 15 Laurel Road stated that there is one factor that plays strongly with the proposed project. By flying from DC to BWI, there is no reason to have this proposed project.

Bruce was tentatively for the project, but he would like to hear more about the environmental impact, along with the boring process without under-filling the cuts and openings.

Ms. Valerie Elliot, Forest Preserve Advisory Board, expressed concern about impact on wildlife along the entire corridor (Forest Preserve/NASA/BARC/Refuge). She believed there need, to be more green space and use of technology to live in harmony with nature

Ms. Susan Barnett stated there is little information available about the Maglev in Japan. She reported in China they have a commercially viable MAGLEV system, which operates at a huge deficit and is subsidized by the government. Ms. Barnett had environmental concerns about the tunneling process and the location for the dirt.

Mr. Leonard Bager of Montpelier Woods stated that the proposed layout is within 2,500 feet from his home. He has concerns in reference to the noise, rail yard and the sonic foot print. Mr. Bager believed there are unanswered technical questions.

Mr. John Frances of 11-E Ridge Road appreciated the Council's attention to this matter. He stated economic viability is a concern and the long term maintenance for the rail needs. Mr. Bob Snyder stated that the SCMAGLEV is not a surface train; it's an above ground and underground train with no impact on wildlife or fences. He also stated potential reasons to go to places via SCMAGLEV like spending the day in New York, or other places, versus multiple hours

traveling via other means (plane/regular train).

Mayor Jordan inquired about the maintenance yard placement criteria and what are the factors about where to put the maintenance yard.

Mr. Henley responded that the yard will be 100 acres on the ground and close to DC. He noted there are discussions with USDA-BARC. Mr. Henley indicated the yard will be a 24-hour a day operation for maintenance/storage of trains.

Mr. Putens asked about the alternate locations for the maintenance yard. Mr. Henley mentioned there is one (1) location north of Route 198 and four (4) other options within BARC.

Mr. Roberts asked BWRR representatives why the yard is at BARC and not at the places that will benefit from the SCMAGLEV train. Mr. Henley reported the reason is 150 acres of land is needed for a yard and there is no access from a tunnel.

Mr. Putens asked BWRR did they outreach to the communities. He asked about the impact on property value and property owner's insurance. Mr. Putens questioned the process for getting approval of property owners for permission to tunnel underneath. Mr. Henley stated an approval of the easement was needed.

Ms. Mach asked what the ridership cost would be. Mr. Henley stated that it will be competitive with Acela. He indicated a trip from Baltimore to DC will be \$40/\$45 one way.

Mr. Byrd stated he heard higher numbers in another hearing and he also wanted to know if the principals live near the route. Mr. Byrd asked what other permits and agencies have to review the proposed project.

Rohani Bacchus, the Chair of the GEAC, was opposed to the proposed project. She expressed concerns about property values, insurance concerns, vibrations and toxins. She noted that the Japanese system is above ground, not below ground like proposed in Maryland.

Mr. Henley stated that there are over 30 different agencies reviewing the project and he will send the slide.

Mr. Roberts stated concerns in reference to the efficiency of the train and noted that the use of concrete for the proposed project will have an impact on the economy.

Mayor Jordan asked about the timeline, next steps and final opportunity for City and community input.

Mr. Henley stated that they are in the alternative phase which will lead to Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) that determines the preferred alternative which will be in late fall. He noted Maryland Transit Authority (MTA) is running the process. Mr. Henley indicated there will be a series of public meetings along the corridor. He stated that the current schedule for record decision will be by December 2019.

Ms. Pope stated the MAGLEV train hasn't proven successful in two different countries. The project has been kept quiet and she has concerns about the nature of the project.

Council agreed that the City will gather questions and send them to BWRR. They indicated the questions and answers will be published on the City website.

The meeting ended at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Bonita Anderson
City Clerk*