

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, March 14, 2018, with Friends of Greenbelt Theatre.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 8:02 p.m. The meeting was held in the Multipurpose Room of the Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Judith F. Davis, Leta M. Mach, Silke I. Pope, Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan. Councilmember Colin A. Byrd arrived at 8:15 p.m.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Nicole Ard, City Manager; Jeffrey Williams, City Treasurer; Greg Varda, Assistant Director of Recreation; and Cindy Murray, Acting City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Caitlin McGrath, Executive Director of Old Greenbelt Theatre; Cathy Jones, Tim Murray, Tom Mellies, Friends of Greenbelt Theatre Board Members; Melissa Sites, Greenbelt News Review; Molly Lester, Bill Orleans and others.

Dr. McGrath provided a PowerPoint presentation on Funding and Revenue Analysis for the Old Greenbelt Theatre. She noted that the Theatre contributes to the community by attracting patrons for free events, providing free rentals, employing local employees, supporting local vendors, payment of admission and amusement taxes, and assorted other spillover benefits. Dr. McGrath reviewed the Theatre's budget, fundraising and membership.

Dr. McGrath said 40,419 patrons attended the Theatre in 2017. This number includes 29,158 tickets sold, 9,800 patrons at free community events and 1,000 plus guests at private rentals. She advised the Theatre hosted 170 community events and 75 free events, had 32 guest speakers and ran 58 first-run films. Dr. McGrath reviewed the Theatre's partnerships with College Park Aviation Museum, Greenbelt Recreation Department, Support the Girls, Greenbelt Elementary School, DC Labor Fest, Prince George's County Memorial Library System, Prince George's Arts & Humanities Council, Heritage Film Festival, City of Greenbelt, Greenbelt Barracudas, Greenbelt National Park, Greenbelt News Review, Greenbelt Federal Credit Union and the University of Maryland. She noted they are always looking for new partnership opportunities.

After the presentation, Mayor Jordan asked about the overall condition of the building. Ms. McGrath said the HVAC is in need of replacement and Jim Sterling, Public Works Director, is working on plans for this replacement project. Ms. Ard said the HVAC replacement was included under Capital Projects in the budget. Ms. McGrath said roof leaks are being patched as necessary. She added that she is continuing to work with Tami Watkins, Pepco, over continuing issues with Pepco billing.

Dr. McGrath explained that she has encountered difficulties in securing grants for the Theatre from some organizations because of the current three year contract. She said many organizations prefer to see long term stability when awarding grants. Dr. McGrath requested a longer term contract be considered.

Mr. Byrd mentioned the Theatre's partnership with Greenbelt Elementary School and asked if partnerships with additional schools were being considered. Dr. McGrath said if the Theatre is successful with the County Transforming Neighborhood Initiatives, they will be able to branch out to other schools.

Ms. Davis asked if a better sound system and lighting for speakers is being considered. Dr. McGrath said the problem with the sound system is often user error on the part of the speakers.

There was discussion regarding basic services such as cleaning of the theater and pest control. It was noted that the City could provide these services more efficiently and less costly. After discussion, it was suggested these services, as well as utility services, be considered as part of the contract.

In response to a question from Ms. Davis, Ms. Jones said FOGT has three circles of volunteers for the theater: the outreach to schools circle; the concession circle; and a backup to office staff circle.

Informational Items

Ms. Davis said she had received information at the National League of Cities Conference and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Board of Directors Meeting on the 2020 Census. She said a question may be included on the Census asking whether a person is a citizen. Ms. Davis requested "Preparation for the 2020 Census" and "Letter to Commerce Secretary Ross" be included on the agenda of the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 10:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Cindy Murray
Acting City Clerk*