

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, February 19, 2020, to meet with Verizon.

Mayor Byrd started the meeting at 8:02 p.m. The meeting was held in the Community Center, 15 Crescent Road, room 201.

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

Staff present were: Nicole Ard, City Manager; Beverly Palau, Public Information and Communications Coordinator; and Shaniya Lashley-Mullen, Administrative Assistant.

Also present were: Candice Austin, Director of State Government & Community Affairs Verizon; Genes Thomas, Verizon Wireless, Real Estate Manager; David Scot Gray, Senior Manager – OSP Network Engineering Verizon; Charlene Bobel, Senior Manager – OSP Network Engineering Verizon; Frank Gervasi, Jermaine Timmerman, Bill Orleans, and others.

Ms. Davis asked, on behalf of Mr. Jordan, what was Verizon's plan for implementation of 5G. Ms. Thomas stated that Verizon was working through the new Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance and design manual. Then Verizon would address municipal regulations. She noted there weren't any immediate plans to deploy in the City of Greenbelt.

Ms. Pope asked what was Verizon's plan for the upkeep of the current infrastructure in place. Ms. Pope noted that the green cable box that was recently placed behind her residence was not secured. She stated that at 8040 Lakecrest Drive, there was another unsecured cable box. Mr. Gray stated that Verizon should be notified immediately when an unsecured box is located.

There was discussion on Verizon's contact information. Ms. Pope stated Homeowner Associations (HOA's) contact Verizon, but Verizon doesn't follow up with HOA's. Ms. Palau noted that she had to contact the Escalation Team when alerted of unsecured boxes. She noted that the public and HOA's don't have the contact information she has. Ms. Palau and Council requested a number for the public to contact. Ms. Bobel stated she will follow-up with the repair department for a contact number for the public.

Ms. Pope inquired if the green boxes were inspected on a regular basis and did Verizon know the location of each box in the City of Greenbelt. Mr. Gray noted that he will follow-up to see if there was a proactive plan to inspect the boxes.

Ms. Timmerman, 6907 Lady Ann Court, stated that her HOA's property manager was told he was unable to communicate with Verizon since he didn't have an account.

Mr. Putens noted in 2015, he and the board members of his HOA identified and inspected all the boxes in Greenbrook Estate. He explained that there were 20 pages of damaged boxes that were submitted to Verizon and Verizon didn't respond. Ms. Bobel and Mr. Gray asked for the information to follow-up.

There was discussion regarding double pole issues. Ms. Thomas explained that Verizon has a double pole program. Ms. Davis noted a double pole at Beltway Plaza and along Greenbelt

Road and Mr. Jim Sterling, the Director of Public Works, had a list of other locations. Mr. Gray stated that there is a break-down in communications between the utility companies and it is being addressed. Ms. Davis inquired about the excess loops of wires that are left on the pole. Mr. Gray responded the excess loops of wires are used for emergency maintenance. Mr. Gray explained the sequence of utilities' contacts and actions, noting Verizon is typically the last to be notified. Verizon was not the cause of the delay.

There was discussion regarding copper wire. Ms. Davis advised she received a letter from Verizon regarding discontinuing her copper wire service. Ms. Palau noted that the letter that was sent out from Verizon is harsh to the citizens. Ms. Bobel noted that Verizon is transitioning customers from copper wire to FIOS. Ms. Pope suggested the letter could be changed; make it clearer to the citizens and include a phone number to call to have someone explain the changes.

There was a brief discussion regarding Greenbelt Homes Inc. (GHI) receiving FIOS.

Mayor Byrd stated that the discussion would not include PEG and HD channels. Ms. Davis and Mr. Gervasi asked about PEG. Ms. Palau noted that PEG and HD channels would be discussed during the franchise negotiations. She explained that the City would participate in Countywide, multi-government franchise negotiations.

Ms. Davis noted during the Roosevelt Center Merchants Association (RCMA) meeting, the merchants stated FIOS couldn't be installed at some of the businesses at Roosevelt Center. Ms. Bobel indicated Verizon would follow-up.

Ms. Timmerman requested the loops of wire that are left on the poles be removed. She also requested when the boxes are installed, there would be a quality control check, and that techs keep enough wire in their tracks to avoid leaving coils of wire on the poles. Mr. Gray had explained the reasons for the coils of fiber on poles. He said Verizon would check and tighten where needed.

Several informational items were discussed.

The meeting ended at 9:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shaniya Lashley-Mullen
Administrative Assistant