**CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION AGENDA**
**Pepco/Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission**

**COUNCIL WORK SESSIONS WILL BE ONLINE ONLY**

**Due to the COVID-19 precautions, the Council Meeting will be held online and is planned to be cablecast on Verizon 21, Comcast 71 and 996 and streamed to www.greenbeltmd.gov/municipaltv.**

**Resident participation:**

**Join Zoom Webinar**
**https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81263051715?pwd=ZGRuRVFtM1UzZGxyMmpaamJHT2VLdz09**
**Webinar ID: 812 6305 1715**
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**In advance, the hearing impaired is advised to use Video Relay Services (VRS) at 711 to submit your questions/comments or contact the City Clerk at (301) 474-8000 or email banderson@greenbeltmd.gov.**

**Wednesday, February 16, 2022**
**8:00 PM**

**Work Session Packet**

Pepco/Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission
Suggested Action:
Reference:

Work Session Minutes - August 29, 2016
Work Session Minutes - January 18, 2017

Agenda

• Introductions

• Council Discussion

• Questions and Answers

• Other Items

Work Session Minutes - Aug. 29, 2016.pdf

Work Session Minutes - Jan. 18, 2017.pdf

Agenda Item No:

# City Council Work Session Agenda Item Report

Meeting Date: February 16, 2022
Submitted by: Shaniya Lashley-Mullen
Submitting Department: Administration
Item Type: Work Session Item
Agenda Section: Work Session Packet

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**Subject:**
Pepco/Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission

**Suggested Action:**
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Work Session Minutes - August 29, 2016
Work Session Minutes - January 18, 2017

Agenda
• Introductions
• Council Discussion
• Questions and Answers
• Other Items

**Attachments:**
Work Session Minutes - Aug. 29, 2016.pdf
Work Session Minutes - Jan. 18, 2017.pdf

*WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Monday, August 29, 2016, to meet with Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission.*

*Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 8:02 p.m. The meeting was held in the Council Room of the Municipal Building.*

*PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Judith F. Davis, Konrad E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan. Councilmember Silke I. Pope was unable to attend due to a family matter.*

*STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael McLaughlin, City Manager; Terri Hruby, Assistant Director of Planning; and Cindy Murray, City Clerk.*

*ALSO PRESENT WERE: Eugene Williams, Keith Tyson, Melanie Deggins, Brian Morrison, Samuel Bajomo, Jason Flores and John Mitchell, Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission; Eldon Ralph and Steve Skolnik, Greenbelt Homes, Inc.; Bill Orleans and others.*

*Mr. Williams reported the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) had gone through some changes over the past year, including a new General Manager/CEO, new Deputy General Managers and new Prince George's and Montgomery County Commissioners. He invited Council to attend a WSSC commission meeting.*

*Eldon Ralph, General Manager of Greenbelt Homes, Inc.(GHI), and Steve Skolnik, President of GHI Board of Directors, spoke about WSSC's decision in 2012 to suspend the water line replacement project in GHI. They noted that GHI would not agree to the proposed work plan which held GHI responsible for the water lines from the meter to the homes. Mr. Skolnik mentioned the 1958 agreement between WSSC and GHI which held WSSC responsible for the water lines to the homes. He said WSSC responds to emergency repairs only and added that the number of broken pipes is increasing and a permanent solution needs to be found.*

*Mr. Bajomo said it would set a precedent for other communities if WSSC absorbed all the costs of replacement of GHI's waterlines. Mr. Roberts noted historic properties should be handled differently than other properties. After further discussion, Mr. Morrison said everyone needs to find a way to reconvene discussion and find a way to move forward. Ms. Davis stressed that Council would like to have this matter resolved.*

*There was discussion of the Lakeside neighborhood water line replacement. Mr. Williams said this work was part of the entire water line replacement plan for the City which has been delayed due to the GHI water line replacement suspension.*

*Mr. Putens mentioned that WSSC had promptly responded last week for a water line leak on Brett Place. He said during the repair, it was noted that the water line was a four inch line and it should have been a six inch line. Mr. Putens asked who initiates replacement of that water line which, apparently, was mistakenly installed during construction. Mr. Bajomo said he would check and respond to the City.*

*Mr. Tyson provided an update on the water tower work. He said WSSC has been unable to come to an agreement with either the City or the property owners on proposed water main replacement design plans. He said they are developing alternative plans and will get back with the City.*

*Mr. Flores said WSSC is ready to proceed with the Stream Channel Restoration project as soon as the City permit is received. Mr. McLaughlin said Planning staff had issued the permit late last week so WSSC should receive it soon.*

*In response to a question from Ms. Davis, Mr. Flores and Mr. Mitchell said planting work associated with the Stream Channel Restoration project will include a one year warranty with the landscaper. Ms. Davis mentioned that sometimes trees have problems after the one year period and suggested a two or three year warranty be considered. Ms. Williams said they would take the suggestion back to WSSC for review.*

*Mr. Williams said WSSC recently entered into a partnership with HomeServe, an insurance company that provides water line protection for homeowners for water/sewer line and plumbing issues on their private property. He said information on the program was sent to all WSSC customers. Mr. Williams added that interested homeowners can insure with HomeServe or any other company of their choice. He noted that WSSC went with HomeServe because they (HomeServe) agreed to cover the cost for homeowners who can't afford the insurance. Mr. Putens asked if GHI could go with HomeServe. Mr. Williams suggested GHI contact the company.*

*Mr. McLaughlin reported that the City had recently experienced instances where WSSC repaired water leaks in roadways and the temporary restoration work was very poor quality (not tapped down). He added that WSSC normally informs the City when repair work is done but, in these instances, the City had not been notified. Mr. Williams asked that his office be notified immediately when these problems occur and he will attempt to resolve them as quickly as possible.*

*Ms. Deggins, WSSC Project Outreach Manager, said a tool, "In Your Neighborhood," is available on the WSSC website that will provide status updates of all WSSC projects.*

*In response to a question from Mayor Jordan, Mr. Williams said WSSC had no planned projects on Greenbelt Road or Kenilworth Avenue in the immediate future.*

*Mr. Williams said WSSC will hold a forum with municipal representatives to discuss municipal concerns in October.*

*Mr. Ralph said WSSC needs to improve communications with GHI. He stressed that GHI needs to be informed of all WSSC work being done on its property. Mr. Williams said the concern will be relayed to appropriate WSSC personnel.*

*Informational Items*

*Several informational items were discussed.*

*Council Reports*

*Ms. Davis reported on the 21st Century School Facilities Commission Meeting.*

*The meeting ended at 9:55p.m.*

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Cindy Murray*
*City Clerk*

*WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, January 18, 2017, with Friends of the Greenbelt Theatre and Pepco.*

*Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 7:33 p.m. The meeting was held in Room 201 of the Greenbelt Community Center.*

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

*STAFF PRESENT WERE: Nicole Ard, City Manager; Michael McLaughlin, Former City Manager; and Cindy Murray, City Clerk.*

*ALSO PRESENT WERE: Jerry Pasternak and Tami Watkins, Pepco; Gwen Vaccaro and Carol MacAdam, Greenbelt Theatre; Jim Giese, Greenbelt News Review; John Mason and Bill Orleans.*

*Mayor Jordan explained the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the significant increase in electric bills at the Greenbelt Theatre. He said the City has owned the Greenbelt Theatre since 2002 and contracted with the Friends of the Greenbelt Theatre (FOGT) to operate the theater in early 2015. At the city's request, FOGT transferred the Pepco account from the city's name to FOGT. It was noted that for FOGT's first year of operation, its Pepco bills ranged from $120 to $270 per month and this was based on electric usage at a rate code of MGT LV II.*

*In June of 2016, Pepco notified FOGT that the rate code was being changed to the GS code. The result of this change has caused FOGT's monthly electric bill to increase by five times or more. When FOGT questioned Pepco about the change, no explanation was provided other than the wrong rate code was initially used. Additionally, Pepco is seeking corrected payment for the first twelve months of operation of the theater at the higher (GS) rate code at a cost amounting to approximately $12,000.*

*FOGT appealed this change to the Public Service Commission (PSC) but the PSC found that Pepco was within its scope to rebill FOGT.*

*Mr. Pasternak explained that Pepco bills for electric usage are based on the rate class (grouping by amount of electricity used) and a multiplier (determined by type of equipment required for service). He noted that Pepco rates are determined by the PSC and are designed to recover revenue to cover its cost of running the business and provide an opportunity for a reasonable return on investment.*

*Mr. Pasternak said Pepco received an application in 2015 from the City for a heavy up service which was recommended as part of the theater renovation project. He said an application for heavy up service indicates that an increase in demand/consumption is anticipated. Therefore, about a year after any heavy up, Pepco conducts a review of the account to determine if the account is in the correct rate class and being charged correctly. He said it's often found that the account has been overbilled or under billed and an adjustment is required. In the case of the theater, Pepco's review found the MGT LV II rate was clearly the wrong category for the theater. The correct category was determined to be GS.*

*Ms. Mach noted there had never been change in usage type of the theater building since 1937. She asked for a history of electric usage before and after the heavy up.*

*Ms. Davis, Mr. Herling and Ms. Pope expressed frustration that FOGT had not received any advance notice of the rate change and then they were unable to receive an explanation from Pepco when it occurred. They noted this was very poor customer service.*

*Mr. Pasternak recognized that Pepco could have done a better job of informing FOGT of the service changes. However, he said that it is now more than a year later and an arrangement must be worked out for payment of the past due amount of $17,000 owed to Pepco to avoid service disruption. Mr. Pasternak noted that FOGT had not paid its monthly bills while it was appealing to the PSC and this had added to the amount due on the account.*

*Ms. Watkins said that Pepco requires a 50% payment before they are willing to consider a payment arrangement with any customer in significant arrears. She said in this case, Pepco is willing to waive that payment and will set up a payment plan for the past due amount which will work out to approximately $400 a month. Ms. Watkins said this would be in addition to the FOGT monthly service bill.*

*Mr. Putens asked how often customers rate class changes. Mr. Pasternak explained that Pepco has ongoing regular programs to review accounts to determine if the class category is correct.*

*Ms. Davis asked if there would be any change to the rate code if the City took over the bill for the theater. Mr. Pasternak said no. Mr. Putens said the large range of City facilities owned by the City should affect its bulk rate charges for Pepco service. Mr. Pasternak noted that changing the name of the customer billed (FOGT vs. City) will not change the rate class of service. He noted that the rate class is determined by nature of usage, not by who owns the building or pays the bill.*

*Mayor Jordan asked if the electric meter for the theater had been checked for accuracy. Mr. Pasternak said he wasn't aware that it has been requested but will arrange for it to be done.*

*In response to a question from Mr. Roberts, Mr. McLaughlin said there hadn't been a Pepco rate change in any other City building. However, he added there hadn't been any need for heavy up service for any of these buildings.*

*Mayor Jordan asked whether Pepco had energy efficiency grants available for commercial establishments. Mr. Pasternak said yes and explained the procedure. Mr. Putens requested Pepco take a look at the theater and make recommendations to FOGT on ways to lower electric consumption.*

*In response to a question from Ms. Davis, Ms. MacAdam said the last monthly bill (usage only) from Pepco in November was for $683 and added that she expects the next bill will be approximately $1,000 (usage only). She said FOGT cannot afford to pay this amount for electric service on a monthly basis. Ms. MacAdam added that these bills do not include any back payment amounts. Ms. Vaccaro said any help the City could provide would be deeply appreciated.*

*Ms. Pope asked staff to determine if any of the other businesses in the Center had experienced an increase in their electric bills similar to the theater.*

*Council noted the importance of the theater to the City and said further discussion is necessary to determine how the City will deal with the situation.*

*Ms. Mach asked if Pepco had a foundation to assist those in need with paying their bills. Mr. Pasternak said yes, noting that Pepco provides $85,000 a year to three partnering organizations (one in Prince George's County, another in Montgomery County and the third in the District of Columbia) to assist Pepco customers in need of assistance.*

*Mayor Jordan suggested putting the matter on hold for 60 to 90 days. Mr. Pasternak noted Pepco believes the matter has been on hold too long already and was only willing to hold off another 45 days.*

*Mr. Roberts said if the City assumes the Pepco bill for the theater, it may need to review the operating agreement with FOGT. He also suggested a legal review of the situation.*

*After further discussion, Council suggested a work session be scheduled with FOGT to review the bills and discuss next steps. It was requested that Pepco provide the past five years billing history.*

*Mr. Pasternak thanked the City and FOGT for the meeting and the commitment from everyone to move forward on a resolution.*

*Mr. Orleans asked and was provided answers to several questions.*

*Informational Items*

*Ms. Davis reported on the Maryland Municipal League Utility Subcommittee meeting.*

*The meeting ended at 9:55 p.m.*

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Cindy Murray*
*City Clerk*