



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION AGENDA

Work Session - Recreation/Museum Merger

This meeting will be held in-person and virtual.

**25 Crescent Road
Greenbelt, MD 20770**

OR

**Virtual Participation
Zoom Webinar Attendees:**

**During "Petitions and Requests," please submit your request in writing via email to
questions@greenbeltmd.gov**

**[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83049180516?
pwd=WWdoVIR0OU5WK0NDYjJzcHFnbXpsdz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83049180516?pwd=WWdoVIR0OU5WK0NDYjJzcHFnbXpsdz09)**

Dial-in: 301 715 8592

Webinar ID: 830 4918 0516

Passcode: 007241

**Wednesday, January 25, 2023
7:30 PM**

Work Session - Recreation/Museum Merger

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Suggested Action:

Agenda

- Introductions
- Council Discussion
- Questions and Answers

- Other Items

[Rec Museum Merger Reports - PRAB AAB and SCAC.pdf](#)

[1.19.23 FOGM Memo to Council re Rec Merger.pdf](#)

[1.19.23 Rec Merger memo FINAL.pdf](#)

City Council Work Session Agenda Item Report

Meeting Date: January 25, 2023

Submitted by: Shaniya Lashley-Mullen

Submitting Department: Administration

Item Type: Work Session Item

Agenda Section: Work Session - Recreation/Museum Merger

Subject:

Work Session - Recreation/Museum Merger

Suggested Action:

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Attachments:

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PARK AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

Subject: City Council Referral on Museum and Recreation Department Merger

The Park and Recreation Advisory Board received a referral from City Council pertaining to the proposal to merge the Greenbelt Museum and the Recreation Department. At its February 16 Regular Meeting, PRAB discussed the proposal with Megan Searing Young, Museum Director and Greg Varda, Recreation Director.

PRAB's primary concerns were adequately addressed during the discussion, and included:

- Staffing and volunteer impacts: recruiting, training and supervising staff and volunteers who may or may not cross-train to support both Recreation Department and Museum operations.
- Programmatic impacts: how existing and new Museum programs may fit into the Recreation Department's program offerings, consistency in pricing structure, and increasing programming to underserved areas in the City.
- Financial impacts: any additional costs for the Recreation Department and any impacts on the Museum's revenue generation or Friends of the Greenbelt Museum support.
- Internal operations impacts: changes in functional area supervision, staff supervision and authority, and overall organizational structure.

PRAB recommends approval of the proposed merger, corroborating the benefits described in the City Council Referral from January 26, 2022.

Respectfully submitted by:
Jake Chesnutt, PRAB Chair
Lance Beasely, PRAB Vice-Chair

Greenbelt Arts Advisory Board Report 22-2

To: Greenbelt City Council
 Date: February 4, 2022
 Subject: Greenbelt Recreation/Greenbelt Museum Merger

At their February 1, 2022 meeting, the Greenbelt Arts Advisory Board discussed Council's referral of January 24 concerning the proposed merger of the Greenbelt Museum and the Greenbelt Recreation Department. Greenbelt Museum Director Megan Searing Young introduced the proposal. Council Member J Davis offered historical context, and staff liaison Nicole DeWald added additional perspective on behalf of Greenbelt Recreation. In the course of discussion, it was noted that:

- The City of Greenbelt already owns the perpetual use of the physical structures and also owns the collections and archives of the Greenbelt Museum.
- The City of Greenbelt already employs the Museum Director and Education and Volunteer Coordinator.
- The proposed merger would not involve the transfer of assets or affect the independent, 501C3 status of the Friends of the Greenbelt Museum, with which the Department will continue to work.
- The primary new costs of the merger would pertain to part-time staffing of Museum tours and events. Added staffing will be critical in helping the Museum to meet the public demand for expanded cultural programming reflected in Greenbelt's election surveys. Staff anticipate that the Museum's needs can be met through cross-training of part-time Recreation staff, aiding in retention of those valuable personnel and enabling them to serve as more deeply informed ambassadors for the City of Greenbelt in all their employment capacities.

Greenbelt Recreation and the Greenbelt Museum have demonstrated a long history of productive collaboration, and a mutual interest in operational integration. From the perspective of AAB, the proposed merger offers "all positives". AAB members present voted unanimously to endorse the proposal.

Respectfully Submitted,
 Kristin Stenson, Chair, Arts Advisory Board

Greg Varda

From: Rebekah Sutfin
Sent: Thursday, February 24, 2022 2:59 PM
To: Greg Varda
Cc: Megan Young
Subject: SCAC thoughts on merger

Greg,

Per your request, at our Senior Citizens Advisory Committee meeting this past Tuesday, 2/22/22, the agenda included the Greenbelt Museum & Greenbelt Recreation merger. I provided the committee the memo and asked that they come to the meeting with their thoughts and questions.

The merger was well received by the 7 committee members present.

Thoughts (in no particular order):

- Great plan moving forward
- Museum is understaffed and definitely needs help/resources
- Positive thoughts for both departments to merge
- Excellent idea!
- Love both the museum and recreation- this is great!

Questions (in no particular order): I did not provide answers to their questions, I told them I would submit them to you.

- What would happen to the Friends of the Greenbelt Museum?
 - o Would that continue to raise funds and request donations?
 - o How does that work for tax purposes?
- Would Greenbelt Recreation then have 2 directors?

Thank you,
 Becky

Rebekah Sutfin, CPRP
Therapeutic Recreation Supervisor
(Senior & Inclusion Programs)

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www.greenbeltmd.gov/recreation



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Friends of the Greenbelt Museum, Inc.

To: City Council
From: Friends of the Greenbelt Museum Board of Directors
Date: January 19, 2023
Subject: Museum Merger with the Recreation Department

The Board of Directors of the Friends of the Greenbelt Museum (FOGM) supports the Museum moving to the Recreation Department beginning with Fiscal Year 2024.

The Board has discussed the proposal at several Board meetings and recognizes that this move will benefit the Museum in a variety of ways. It will allow the Museum and its programs to be more fully integrated into the City's existing arts and cultural programming. It will result in Museum staff potentially having the assistance of part-time staff in running several already existing large programs such as Retro Town Fair and the winter holiday open house. It will also help to raise awareness about the Museum and Greenbelt's history as staff in the Recreation department will be cross-trained and familiarized with Greenbelt's history. Another benefit will be the Museum's increased ability to share Greenbelt's history across all areas of Greenbelt through easier access to and use of recreation facilities and increased marketing.

Potential concerns on the part of the Board are mission creep, in which the Museum Director is pulled away from the Museum's mission to meet other needs in the Recreation Department to the detriment of the Museum's functioning, and the vulnerability of the Museum house if it is potentially used in ways that could put the Museum collection at risk. These concerns were discussed during a Board meeting and the Museum Director reassured the Board that while these concerns were valid, she did not anticipate them being an issue based on her conversations with the Director of the Recreation Department.

FOGM is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and as per its mission statement (see below), the Board wishes to clarify that money raised by FOGM, and forwarded to the Museum, will be for the sole use of the Museum and not for general use by the Recreation Department.

FOGM Mission Statement:

The mission of the Friends of the Greenbelt Museum (FOGM), a 501(c)(3) organization, is to support, advise, and advocate for the Greenbelt Museum and its programs. FOGM helps support the Museum financially with focused fundraising initiatives and takes an active role in the stewardship of the Museum's buildings, grounds, and collections by providing expert advice and informed advocacy.

FOGM
PO Box 1025
Greenbelt, MD 20770
info@greenbeltmuseum

Memorandum

To: Tim George, Interim City Manager

From: Greg Varda, Recreation Director
Megan Searing Young, Museum Director

Date: January 19, 2023

Re: Recreation Department Proposed Merger with the Greenbelt Museum

Proposed Merger with the Greenbelt Museum

As Greenbelt Recreation's arts and cultural programming have expanded, the Department has enjoyed many opportunities for both administrative and programmatic collaboration with the Greenbelt Museum. These have included stand-alone events such as Greenbelt's 75th Anniversary celebration, as well as annual programs such as Black History Month, Greenbelt Day, Juneteenth, Celebration of Spring, and the Fall Festival. The Museum has contributed educational content to Creative Kids Camp (CKC), made the Museum house available for CKC movie musical filming, and lent artifacts for use in theatrical productions. The Museum has carried reproductions of a Greenbelt-themed art installation in their gift shop, and raised funds through the Art and Craft Fair. Museum, Arts and Community Planning staff have collaborated in the development of interpretive materials for Greenbelt's public art holdings. Greenbelt Recreation has provided ongoing promotional support for Greenbelt Museum programs through quarterly activity guides, the arts website, arts email blasts, alignment and cross-promotion of Artful Afternoons with Sunday Museum hours, and ongoing verbal recommendations.

The Recreation Director and the Museum Director agreed to explore the possibility of merging the Greenbelt Museum with the Recreation Department, following several conversations in late 2021. A City Council Work Session was held January 24, 2022 at which the proposed move of the Museum to the Recreation Department was discussed. Following discussion, Council referred the topic to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, the Arts Advisory Board, the Senior Citizens Advisory Committee, and the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Greenbelt Museum. All of the groups were in favor of the change. Reports detailing this support are attached to this memo. On January 17, 2023, the Recreation Director and the Museum Director met with the Interim City Manager to discuss any additional concerns.

The proposed merger will make our collaborations easier and more seamless as well as making additional new collaborations easier in the future. This transition would bring value to both the Recreation Department and the Museum at minimal cost to either department. The Museum's current position within the City's Administration Department is not a natural fit as that department is not an outward facing entity, nor is it involved in programming.

The remainder of this memo outlines many of the benefits that such a move would bring about. For the reasons outlined below, the Recreation Director and Museum Director recommend that the Greenbelt Museum should move from Administration to the Recreation Department.

Benefits of Rearrangement

Expansion of Both Departments' Reach

In the past, the Museum has participated in some of the annual events that the Recreation Department sponsors at Springhill Lake Recreation Center and Schrom Hills Park, but needs to do much more to be sure that residents of all areas of Greenbelt are learning about the community's significant history. The combining of resources will increase the amount of outreach that both departments can achieve as well as expanding the content of that outreach. Greenbelt Recreation can offer the Museum the benefits of our powerful RecTrac database, while the Museum can offer Recreation reciprocal exposure through its highly successful blog, walking tours, and the future Visitor and Education Center. Museum staff will be trained to use RecTrac which will streamline handling of Museum admission and gift shop income.

Staffing Advantages

The Recreation Department employs many part-time non-classified staff. The Museum, with just one full time employee, the Director, and one 15-hour per week part time staffer, the Education and Volunteer Coordinator, struggles at times to fully staff events and programs. Museum volunteers and Friends of the Greenbelt Museum Board members have helped frequently in the past, but the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the limitations of relying too heavily on volunteer help. After training, Recreation Department staff could help fill the gaps that the Museum experiences. Staffing needs will become more acute for the Museum once it doubles in size when the Education and Visitor Center comes online. Non-classified staff could be trained to be front-line staff at the Education and Visitor Center. The cross training will also be applied to other areas in the department since many non-classified staff have multiple job duties. Providing training and knowledge of Greenbelt history can only improve service to the public.

Incorporation of 10A Crescent as a City Facility

Following successful fundraising and the completion of the new Education and Visitor Center, that project will need to be incorporated as a fully functioning city facility. Recreation Department staff already manage a variety of city facilities, and they have the necessary skills and knowledge to incorporate 10A and 10B Crescent more fully into city protocols regarding facilities. When issues unique to museum environments arise, the Museum Director can offer specialized guidance in line with best practices for such spaces.

Improved Services to Residents, Patrons, and Visitors

Moving the Museum to the Recreation Department will have the effect of improving services to residents, patrons, and visitors. Adding Museum content to the Recreation Department's current offerings addresses Greenbelters (and others) expressed desire for cultural diversity and equitable programming. With additional staffing help, the Museum may be able to offer more regular programmatic contributions to existing Recreation offerings, such as Spring and Summer camps, Springhill Lake Recreation Center programs, content for seniors, crafts at Artful Afternoons, access to research materials for artistic projects, and potential classes which could be advertised in the Recreation Activity Guide.

Institutional Knowledge

Finally, moving the Museum to the Recreation Department has the benefit of providing a base of institutional knowledge about Greenbelt history. Greenbelt prides itself on embodying the Living Legacy of the New Deal, and the proposed merger will help us to move forward creatively and collaboratively with an even deeper sense of mission.