

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, January 16, 2019, to meet with Council Member At-Large Calvin Hawkins and Mel Franklin.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 7:37 p.m. The meeting was held in room 201 of the Greenbelt Community Center, 15 Crescent Road.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Colin A. Byrd, Judith F. Davis, Leta M. Mach, Silke I. Pope, Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts (7:55 pm), and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Nicole Ard, City Manager; David Moran, Assistant City Manager, and Shaniya Lashley-Mullen, Administrative Assistant.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Reverend Ray Raysor; Cathie Meetre, and Mary Lou Williamson, Greenbelt News Review; Steve Skolnik, President of Greenbelt Home Incorporated (GHI); Bill Orleans and others.

Mayor Jordan provided Council Members At-Large Hawkins and Franklin history about Greenbelt. He also noted that the City was the first to provide a public pool in the County.

Mr. Franklin indicated that he was Chair of the Prince George's County Council for two years. He stated the purpose for an At-Large Councilmember is to represent the County as a whole, bring County government closer to the people, and strengthen the City of Greenbelt and Prince George's County's relationship. Mr. Franklin also stated that the Prince George's County Council wants the economy to grow to build a generational wealth by spending Prince George's County dollars in Prince George's County and the City of Greenbelt's dollars in the City of Greenbelt.

Mr. Hawkins indicated that he was looking for an opportunity to assist his other Prince George's County Councilmembers to move the County forward. He stated that his position for running for County Council was to assist seniors and individuals with disabilities. Mr. Hawkins shared that he had worked with the 27 municipalities and wanted to bring some of their ideas to move the County forward. He also indicated that he was appointed the Municipal Liaison.

Mayor Jordan invited both Councilmembers Franklin and Hawkins to the next Four Cities Meeting at College Park Municipal Building. He explained that the City Council meets on a quarterly basis with the Town of Berwyn Heights, the City of College Park, and the City of New Carrollton.

Mayor Jordan stated that the State Legislators, Delegate Gaines, Delegate Healey, County Councilmember Turner, and Senator Pinsky, attended the Legislative Dinner. He explained each of the City of Greenbelt's Legislative Top Priorities, which are: Oppose Transfer and Potential Privatization of The Baltimore /Washington Parkway, Oppose Beltway Widening, Block the Maglev Train Routes through Greenbelt and Prince George's County, Greenbelt Road Streetscape Improvements and Greenbelt Metro Station Improvements.

Mayor Jordan noted that if the transfer would take place, trucks would be allowed on the Parkway. The proposed widening would change the character of the Parkway into a super highway. He also stated that with widening, the Beltway will be encroaching on some properties in Greenbelt and residents would lose their homes. Mayor Jordan stated the Maglev train

doesn't make a lot of sense and would cost \$50-\$100 to travel to Baltimore. That money could be used to enhance the MARC Train.

Ms. Mach stated that a study was done on the proposed widening of the Baltimore Washington Parkway in 2011. The study stated that it would be extremely expensive because you would have to tear down all the bridges and rebuild them. She also noted that the widening wouldn't improve traffic on the Parkway. Mayor Jordan stated the bridges weren't built to have 18 wheeler trucks on them.

Ms. Davis stated that the previous County Council went on record to oppose the transfer of the Baltimore Washington Parkway. She stated she hopes that the current County Council will be in opposition to transferring the Baltimore Washington Parkway and the Maglev proposed project.

There was a discussion on the authority the Governor has to make decisions without the State legislators and local jurisdictions being involved. Mr. Franklin added the Governor was focused on transportation. Ms. Pope stated if the Governor focused on the infrastructure at the Metro, than the State wouldn't need the Maglev. Mr. Franklin advised Baltimore City is the only jurisdiction that has the authority to approve or disapprove a railroad franchise and the Maglev is a railroad franchise.

Mayor Jordan noted that he has been working and meeting with the Mayors of Laurel, New Carrollton, College Park, Bladensburg, Riverdale Park, and Cheverly and they advise that the Maglev doesn't make any sense. He added that they wanted to find a sustainable way to use the money to benefit Prince George's County instead of building the Maglev. Mayor Jordan also said the City is getting all the impact and the entire burden but not any of the benefits. Mr. Putens stated that the Maglev has two routes coming through Greenbelt, one which would travel through the Forest Preserve and the other one traveling under Eleanor Roosevelt High School and Hunting Ridge.

Mr. Roberts suggested that the Green Line get extended to BWI Airport which would benefit thousands of citizens. Mayor Jordan recommended extending the light rail from Baltimore to Prince George's County and extend the Green Line.

Mayor Jordan said the Greenbelt Road Streetscape hasn't changed in 20 years. The City has a plan of what Greenbelt Road should look like with the Town of Berwyn Heights and the City of College Park. He indicated making Greenbelt Road a walkable/bikable place so people would stop in the City instead of going through the City. Mayor Jordan stated that Greenbelt is a gateway community and it needs to be number one on the priority project list. Mr. Franklin stated that the FBI was considering relocating in Greenbelt, which was number one or two on the priority project list. Ms. Davis indicated that the interchange was on the priority project list.

Mayor Jordan noted that the City has a plan for Cherrywood Lane that would connect the Greenbelt Metro Station to Greenbelt Road to make it a complete green street. Mayor Jordan also stated that the City received a large grant from the National Fish and Wild Life program to redesign it to a walkable/bikable street. The Greenbelt Station Community is almost completed, with wonderful townhomes and apartments.

Mr. Franklin stated that the County Council is in the process of completing their Joint Transportation priority letter to the State, and the City Council should submit a letter

emphasizing the City's concerns. Ms. Davis stated a letter has already been submitted and can be forwarded to Mr. Franklin.

Mr. Hawkins requested a copy of the Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel Report (ULI-TAP). Mayor Jordan stated a copy will be forwarded and invited both County Councilmembers At-Large to attend the upcoming ULI-TAP work session. Mr. Moran stated that the State Highway Administration did a conceptual plan in 2002-2003.

Mr. Franklin stated that this is a common challenge. There are large state roads that go through our communities and there weren't any planning concepts for walkable or pedestrian safety. He stated that other jurisdictions are building communities around Metro and now the County is also.

There was a brief discussion on HB-10 that is being proposed by Delegate Carr. The policy that is in place now is that State Highway puts the sidewalks in and the municipalities would have to maintain them. Mayor Jordan stated the City doesn't have the resources to maintain County and State properties.

Mayor Jordan stated that the City of Greenbelt has one of the largest Metro parking lots in Prince George's County and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) hasn't made any investments at the Greenbelt Metro Station in about 10-15 years. There was a great proposal for the FBI to come to Greenbelt and nothing happened. He also stated that the residents at Greenbelt Station don't have a connection to the Metro, which is too far to walk. Mayor Jordan said that Prince George's County added a \$2.75 parking surcharge that has been in place for about 2 1/2 years and the money hasn't been distributed back into the City. That money could be used to build the connecting trail. The developers have put up money to help build the connecting trail, but WMATA keeps on changing the plans and driving up the price.

Ms. Davis indicated that the WMATA hearing in Greenbelt was scheduled for January 30th in the library. She also noted that Council had sent a letter for extending the hours and to extend the Yellow Line to Greenbelt. Mr. Franklin stated that the Council is in a good position to demand more from WMATA, such as a new station plan for Greenbelt. Mr. Franklin indicated that he would look into the \$2.75 parking surcharge.

There was brief discussion on the trail leading from Greenbelt Station to the Greenbelt Metro. Mr. Hawkins suggested that Greenbelt, College Park and Berwyn Heights write a joint letter to WMATA to express each municipality's concerns. Mr. Franklin noted it would be an advocacy letter with all the municipalities and the County Council.

Mayor Jordan noted that along with the priorities that were already discussed, he provided the following additional priorities: increase M-NCPPC Funding for City Recreation Programs, Children living in Greenbelt Station should attend Greenbelt Schools, replace sidewalks on State Roads and Ban Plastic Straws.

Mayor Jordan stated that M-NCPPC funding for the City Recreation Programs hasn't increased since FY2013 and the City receives \$234,000 annually.

There was a discussion on Children living in Greenbelt Station should attend Greenbelt Schools. Ms. Mach stated that all the Prince George's County Schools are overcrowded and if the

students are being bused to a crowded school, it should be a crowded school in Greenbelt. Ms. Mach said that the City works with the Greenbelt schools, the Advisory Committee of Education (ACE) provides grants to the Greenbelt Schools. ACE also has annual ceremonies for the teachers and students at Greenbelt Schools. Mr. Byrd stated that Springhill Lake Elementary is massively overcrowded, as is the case of Eleanor Roosevelt High School. He also stated that Springhill Lake Elementary has many maintenance issues.

There was brief discussion on the School Resource Officer Program.

There was discussion to replace sidewalks on State roads. Mayor Jordan indicated that the sidewalk on Greenbelt Road near the Beltway is in need of repairs.

There was discussion about the ban on plastic straws. Ms. Davis stated that some disabled citizens need a plastic straw. DC Restaurants have them but will only give them out on request. Ms. Pope noted that there are compostable straws. Ms. Davis also stated that citizens could buy their own steel straws.

Mayor Jordan stated that Greenbelt is a mixed income community and wants to preserve affordable housing. He also stated that even though Greenbelt doesn't have zoning and planning authority, Greenbelt still takes an active role with the Advisory Planning Board (APB) who works with builders and developers so Council can have input on site conception plans.

Mr. Franklin replied to Mayor Jordan's question, stating that the Zoning Rewrite Ordinance doesn't go into effect until the maps are done. He also stated that he understands that Greenbelt has unique neighborhood conservation overlay zoning issues. Mayor Jordan stated the intention is not to rezone everything, maybe change the names around and not change the character of Greenbelt. He also stated that Greenbelt is passionate about protecting Old Greenbelt.

Mr. Skolnik explained that Greenbelt Homes Incorporated (GHI) is a cooperative and provides affordable housing to the members. He also noted that GHI is a naturally occurring retirement community. Mr. Skolnik stated that GHI is a cooperative that works well with the City of Greenbelt, Prince George's County and the State of Maryland and enjoys a lot of self-governance. He stated that GHI is extremely concerned and very active in the process of the zoning rewrite project because GHI's self-governance will be decreased. Mr. Skolnik stated if a conservation overlay zone is not established to protect Historic Greenbelt, then the nature of the community will change forever. Mr. Skolnik noted that GHI and the City of Greenbelt Council need Prince George's County Council's support to make sure that doesn't happen. GHI has a housing density of 6.2 and the zoning rewrite will change it to 11, and that's not acceptable.

Mr. Skolnik replied to Mr. Franklin's question, stating that they removed the overlay zone and is working on a new NCO. Mr. Franklin stated that the Prince George's County Planning Board Staff wants to get rid of the overlay zones because they feel that there shouldn't be tailor-made zones. The Prince George's County Council can reverse it and reinstate the overlay zones for GHI.

There was discussion on permits and Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement. Mr. Franklin stated that if Mr. Skolnik can provide Mr. Hawkins and himself more detail in all the difficulties in writing, he would appreciate it. Ms. Davis stated when there is legislation that deals with housing, can they please add in cooperatives.

Mr. Franklin stated that his understanding of the overlay zone was that a new overlay zone was initiated and it was designed to address Mr. Skolnik's concerns. It would go to Prince George's County Planning and then to the Prince George's County Council to preserve Greenbelt.

Ms. Meetre gave a brief history of the Greenbelt News Review. She noted that Ms. Williamson is President of the Greenbelt News Review Archive Project. Ms. Meetre stated that they still have all the original copies of the News Review dating back to 1937 and they are brittle to the touch. Ms. Meetre said they had a short window to rescan the papers with today's technology and get them in a state where they can be searched using optimal character recognition and then submit them to a national archive. Ms. Meetre stated that the project is to scan all the non-digital papers, which are from 1937-2002, and get them into the Library of Congress through 1963 because that is the last date the Library of Congress would accept them. Also papers would be sent to the Internet Archive which would bring the Greenbelt News Review to present day.

Ms. Meetre stated that the project received a small amount of funding from Mr. Turner's Departmental grants last fall and also received a grant from the Community Foundation. She also stated they received \$13,000 from the community. Ms. Meetre also stated that the University of Maryland Digital Library Science group would digitalize the News Review and put them in the Library of Congress. Ms. Williamson stated that the City already provides a room in the Community Center to do the project.

Ms. Meetre answered Mr. Franklin's question, stating that the amount they are asking for is \$25,000 and they are expecting to raise another \$6,000. She indicated that they would ultimately have to raise 60% for the project. That doesn't include the volunteer labor. Ms. Williamson stated that the volunteers set up the paper to be scanned.

Mr. Hawkins stated that he and Mr. Franklin have agreed to cover the remaining balance of the project.

There was a brief discussion about the Greenbelt Library and the Tugwell Room.

Ms. Davis stated she is a Commissioner of the Central Maryland Transportation and Mobility Commission which includes Howard County, Anne Arundel County, Laurel and Prince George's County. She explained the Commission has budget issues that include the bus system which connects College Park and Greenbelt to Laurel. Ms. Davis said that Prince George's County didn't fulfill their part of the budget this year. There were a few cuts.

Information Items –

Ms. Davis gave a report on the Maryland Municipal League Legislative Committee meeting.

Additional informational items were discussed.

The meeting ended at 10:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Shaniya Lashley-Mullen
Administrative Assistant*