

Work Session of the Greenbelt City Council held Wednesday, January 10, 2018, to meet with the Roosevelt Center Merchants.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 8:04 p.m. The meeting was held in the Room 201 in the Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Leta M. Mach, Colin A. Byrd, Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan. Ms. Davis was on travel & Ms. Pope was unable to attend.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: David Moran, Assistant City Manager and Bonita Anderson, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Dr. Caitlin McGrath, Greenbelt Theater and President of Roosevelt Center Merchants Association; Joe Timer, Greenbelt Consumers Cooperative and Greenbelt Federal Credit Union; Joe Gareri and Barbara Ford, Greenbelt Consumers Cooperative; Cindy Comproni, Greenbelt Federal Credit Union; Michael Hartman and Rich Greystone, New Deal Café; David Whaples, WMCRP/Architects and Gretchen Schock, Bee Yoga Fusion, LLC.

Update from Merchants

Dr. McGrath mentioned the recent snow day event that was held at the Theatre for the children. Mr. Timer stated that the COOP was open during the ice storm. Dr. McGrath discussed the development of a website and other marketing initiatives. She stated there is a need for signage improvement to attract customer to patronize the Roosevelt Center. There was discussion about obtaining an electric sign with paid advertisement. The active businesses who participate in the meetings pay \$100 in dues.

There was discussion about the homeless issue and the safety of the people. Ms. Comproni expressed her concern about the homeless individuals hanging out during business hours. She had to reach out to parking enforcement about overnight vehicles parked in the short term parking and families sleeping in their vehicle overnight. Dr. Caitlin mentioned the people hanging out, smoking behind the movie theater and yelling at each other.

Mayor Jordan stated that the Center is about 90% occupied, business wise. Dr. Caitlin mentioned that the future of the center depends on what type of businesses the landlord is seeking. Mr. Roberts inquired about the landlord not receiving rent from a business owner.

Ms. Comproni stated that the signage outside of the Credit Union had been replaced, and the security system had been updated. She also stated that they are experiencing issues with their phone lines. The Credit Union had recently added an online banking app and mobility service to their website. She also mentioned that the Credit Union changed the format of their quarterly newsletter and that they are educating their members on the Equifax breach and their credit. Ms. Comproni mentioned the upcoming annual community events they were hosting.

Ms. Natoli spoke on behalf of Generous Joe's. She stated that they recently painted the inside of the shop. They have concerns of police cameras not functioning properly outside of the store.

Ms. Comproni mentioned that she had informed the merchants about the recommendations on the security and cameras at Roosevelt Center that Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) presented to the City Council.

Mr. Whaples of WMCRP Architects mentioned that his firm is under new management. He also mentioned that most of their workload comes from Montgomery County, Baltimore, Virginia and Washington, DC. Mr. Whaples stated that his firm specializes in architectural designs for educational institutions and religious organizations.

Ms. Schock mentioned that her business Bee Yoga Fusion, LLC has been located at the Center for two years and that all her classes are sold out. She has hired two instructors and she is in the process of hiring a third. Ms. Schock stated that her customers have concerns as to where they can park their bicycles. She inquired on behalf of her customers if a bicycle rack can be installed at the Center.

New Deal representative stated the bar was doing well, but they are experiencing issues with the pipes and wiring in their establishment. It was mentioned that the building needs some attention. Dr. McGrath mentioned grant funding for Roosevelt Center façade improvements and that the windows are unified with historical pictures of the City.

Mr. Timer stated that the Public Works Department did a great job decorating Roosevelt Center during the holidays. He also stated that they are in the process of replacing the roof in phases. Mr. Timer mentioned that WSSC had to turn off the sprinkler system in order to pinpoint the leak at Roosevelt Center, which is a major issue. The City will be having a stakeholders meeting with WSSC in January and will discuss the issue.

Dr. McGrath gave an update to the Council about the status of the Theatre. She stated that the box office is not doing well. They are still receiving grant funding from the Community Foundation Grant which has to be spent by the end of June 2018. Dr. McGrath mentioned that the door hangers are still very successful; they have issued approximately 2,500. She also mentioned that the seats in the Theatre need to be replaced and the cost is approximately \$90K. The Theatre has \$30K in the bank, and they were able to raise \$3,600 through Facebook. The anniversary of the Theatre will be celebrated in May 2018. She is working on marketing strategies for the Theatre.

Council Discussion

Mr. Putens inquired about the merchant lease if it states the merchant will incur the repair cost of the space occupied by the merchant. He also inquired if the owner is within standards of the code.

Mr. Roberts mentioned the need for the business center along with changes and attractions. Mr. Byrd asked the determination of how they pick a film to show. Dr. McGrath replied that they have a weekly Monday meeting to discuss what film to show.

Adjournment 10:12 pm

Respectfully submitted,

*Bonita Anderson, CMC
City Clerk*