

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL
Held on Wednesday, December 8, 2021

Discussion: Meeting with Stakeholders at Franklin Park, Greenbelt Station

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 7:30 p.m., held virtually via Zoom.

In attendance were Council members Colin A. Byrd, Judith F. Davis, Ric Gordon, Silke I. Pope, Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts, Kristen L.K. Weaver, and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan.

City Staff were: Tim George, Assistant City Manager; Richard Bowers, Chief of Police; Tim White, Captain; Terri Hruby, Director of Planning and Community Development; Dale Worley, Information Technology Director; and Bonita Anderson, City Clerk.

Also present were: Franklin Park Representatives Lori Bonner, VP of Operations for the Southern Maryland Portfolio; Leah Garcia, Regional Asset Manager; Brad Horton, VP of Facilities and Procurement; Denise Knight, General Manager; Ashley Robinson, Accounting Manager; and Jocelyn Gutierrez, Resident Services Manager.

Ms. Knight provided an update on the developments in Franklin Park, emphasizing the positive outcomes that emerged from the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. She highlighted that maintaining a high occupancy level throughout the pandemic was largely due to partnerships they established and nurtured with community members and local and state entities. These collaborations allowed them to navigate the challenges effectively and keep residents engaged and supported. She informed Council that most renovation projects had been completed, with about 20% remaining. While some properties are yet to be updated, a significant portion of the renovations have already been accomplished. Ms. Knight also stated that they are not using a phased-in approach for the renovation process, opting for a more direct method of updating the units.

Mr. Roberts raised concerns about plumbing and mold issues in the buildings, asking if a program exist to replace old plumbing systems. He also inquired about the timeline for completing the entire renovation process. Ms. Knight acknowledged that plumbing issues are inevitable with over 246 buildings, including townhomes. She also noted that significant progress has been made in addressing these issues, particularly by replacing pipes during unit vacancies. This practice allows them to assess and address plumbing problems more efficiently.

Mr. Horton added that in the past, plumbing issues were often resolved with temporary fixes. However, they have now stopped using patch-up methods and are taking more permanent approaches to repairs. Despite this improvement, there still needs to be a comprehensive plan to restore the entire building's plumbing system, and they are working towards devising a strategy for this.

Ms. Davis asked about the current occupancy percentage, progress on window replacements, and the status of pest control efforts. These questions further addressed ongoing maintenance and improvement concerns in Franklin Park, highlighting the Council's interest in ensuring the quality of living conditions for residents. Ms. Knight responded to Ms. Davis by confirming that Franklin Park's occupancy rate was 94% by the end of November, which is consistent with their typical standard.

Mr. Horton shared that a set of double-pane windows for one building as a trial was ordered. The owners to review different styles and colors before making a final decision. The goal is to complete the

installation for one building by mid-January 2022. Upon a successful trial, all the windows in the complex would be replaced. At this time, they are in the process of measuring all windows and seeking bids from three (3) manufacturers. Mr. Horton also shared they are currently transitioning to a new system whereby three (3) different companies are managing separate sections of Franklin Park Pest Control. Each company will oversee 900 residents, and their performance monitored closely to determine most effective.

Ms. Pope inquired whether the planned replacement of 500 windows in 2021 were completed. Ms. Knight explained that while 200 windows had been replaced in 2021, they were not in the preferred style, and the remaining buildings that still need to be renovated have received some updates, but not to the same extent as the fully renovated ones.

Mayor Jordan inquired about the status of the laundry facilities. Ms. Knight highlighted the installations of new washers and dryers. Additionally, residents can now use the new feature "Well Be" fitness app which provides an alert when their laundry cycle is completed.

Ms. Knight also updated the Council on new amenities and recycling initiatives. A new dog park had been completed, and gym and yoga room were renovated, freshly painted and updated equipment. She also shared that management is considering adding more outdoor recreational spaces and those improvements would be forthcoming in 2022.

Mr. Gordon was concerned about the rental payment's status specifically partial payments. Ms. Knight shared that there were options instituted during COVID-19. They are as follows (1) Residents have the ability to make partial payments through third party company.
(2) Residents have methods for weekly payments. All residents on the delinquency list will be notified.

Mayor Jordan asked about evictions and delinquencies. Ms. Knight reported that there were currently nine persons on the eviction list. In 2021 Franklin Park had 56 evictions, significantly lower than in previous years. Ms. Knight added they are working closely with various agencies to assist residents in avoiding evictions.

Mayor Jordan asked about public safety. Chief Bowers noted that while regional crimes had increased, particularly due to car jackings, crime in Franklin Park had decreased, except for vehicle theft. He mentioned that the police department works closely with Franklin Park's management, and Ms. Knight added that additional lighting and cameras had been installed to enhance security across the property.

Informational items were discussed.

The meeting ended at 9:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonita Anderson

Bonita Anderson
City Clerk