

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL

Held Monday July 1, 2024

Discussion: Council Planning Framework

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 7:30 pm., held in Council Chambers and virtually via Zoom.

In attendance were: Councilmembers Amy E. Knesel, Danielle P. McKinney, Jenni A. Pompei, Silke I. Pope, Rodney M. Roberts, Kristen L.K. Weaver and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan.

City Staff: Josué Salmerón, City Manager and Shaniya Lashley-Mullen, Deputy City Clerk.

Others present: Bill Orleans, Michael Hartman, and others.

Greenbelt City Council Addresses Reassignment of Firefighters

Council voted to seek an injunction to stop the County from removing career firefighters from Greenbelt, Berwyn Heights and College Park due to safety concerns. The removal of 30 firefighters occurred without notice or a timeline. The County plans to reevaluate staffing in October, Mayor Jordan highlighted the absence of metrics. Further discussions will take place at regular meeting on Monday.

Council Framework Development and Implementation

Council reviewed a framework for addressing public needs. Ms. McKinney highlighted its role in guiding decisions and Mayor Jordan emphasized regular meetings with City Manager. The discussion wrapped up with questions to enhance communication and transparency with the community.

Renewing Community Visioning Process and Resources

Council discussed launching a renewed Community Visioning process to guide their work. They suggested using the existing Activities Report to improve tracking and communication. They acknowledged that additional financial resources and personnel would be needed. Council agreed to evaluate feasible initiatives with Ms. Weaver proposing to distribute responsibilities among members. They also highlighted the importance of formalizing current initiatives and identifying new ones while considering budget implications.

Council Planning Framework and Liaisons

Council acknowledged the need for a more structured approach to its work. Mayor Jordan highlighted the importance of an annual update to a two-year planning framework for continuity. Ms. Weaver called for a more precise definition of liaison roles for Advisory Boards and Committees, while Mr. Roberts noted that liaisons should provide information, not guidance. Finally, Mayor Jordan revisited the use of Management by Objectives (MBO's) for evaluating the City Manager's performance a beneficial practice that had lapsed.

Improving Council Clarity Follow-Up and Prioritization

Council emphasized need for more transparent decision-making processes and improved documentation of roles for Council Liaisons, and staff to aid new members. Mr. Salmerón called for better tracking and prioritization of tasks from Advisory Boards such as the Public Safety Advisory Committee. Ms. Weaver noted that Recreation Department will present updates on the Buddy Attic Master Plan and Parks to Council this fall.

City Website Improvements and Public Safety

Council discussed improving City website and suggested using "Go Vocal" platform for better community engagement. Ms. McKinney stressed need for clear communication on project progress before budgeting. Resident Bill Orleans raised concerns about fire personnel shortages. Michael Hartman proposed revived Citizens Police Academy and new tourism section on website. Mayor Jordan acknowledged issues with site outdated design and emphasized the importance of community feedback for budget priorities.

Improving Communication and Engagement Strategies

Council emphasized need for better communication with the community. They recommended more objective-based reporting and regular reviews in the planning framework. Mayor Jordan suggested holding meetings at familiar locations like Greenway Center and Beltway Plaza to boost attendance as well as work sessions at community centers like Springhill Lake Recreation Center. Ms. Weaver shared that the weekly report should focus on advancing Council priorities.

Council Priorities, Tools and Updates

Council discussed updating the Standing Rules to align with its new priorities. Mr. Salmerón highlighted six key pillars guiding the Administration:

- Exceptional service
- Diversity
- Equity
- Collaboration
- Preparedness
- Resiliency
- Sustainability
- Innovative economic development.

He also provided updates on opening of Royal Farms and Toaping Castle restoration plan. He then announced a ribbon-cutting ceremony for Lafayette Credit Union's Greenway Shopping Center scheduled July 10, 2024.

Improving Framework, Engaging Stakeholders and Serving Residents

Council discussed the need to improve the framework to complement the Standing Rules. Council proposed enhancing the documentation of their activities clarifying expectations and procedures, and creating efficiencies. However, they were also cautious about not overburdening themselves with too much documentation. Council also discussed the importance of engaging with public and stakeholders and confirming their meetings and work sessions are inclusive and accessible. They emphasized that Council ultimate purpose is to serve the residents of Greenbelt.

Formalizing Stakeholder Engagement and Support

Council discussed need to formalize stakeholder engagement and incorporate an assessment process. Also aligning their work with the framework and quarterly planning and communicating this through their Council activities document. Council also discussed roles of Advisory Boards and Committees emphasizing the need for clear objectives and better support. They proposed preparing questions for Advisory Committee chairs in advance to streamline meetings and suggested a template for community groups to fill out. Council agreed to review its stakeholder list and consider requesting more information to guide the budget planning process.

Improving Community Input and Request Management

Council discussed improving the tracking and management of community input and requests. They explored the idea of implementing a system that allows residents to report issues through an app or a web platform which would then be directed to the appropriate department. Council also stressed the importance of demonstrating the effectiveness of these sessions to encourage more participation and discussed the potential use of a feedback form to gather input. They acknowledged the need to streamline the process and make it more efficient particularly regarding allocation and follow-up.

Improving Engagement Fourth of July Plans and Cooperation

Council discussed strategies for improving resident engagement. They emphasized the importance of meeting people where they are and using a variety of channels to reach them. Additionally, Council outlined plans for the upcoming Fourth of July celebrations. They detailed changes to improve safety and transportation and noted that the event would be catered to a limited capacity. Council acknowledged the close cooperation with neighboring jurisdictions in fire department matters and expressed gratitude for their efforts.

The meeting ended at 9:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Shaniya Lashley-Mullen

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Deputy City Clerk