WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL
Held Monday, August 5, 2024

Meeting: Greenbelt Access Television Inc. (GATe)

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

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

City Staff: Josué Salmerón, City Manager; Chondria Andrews, Public Information Officer; and Shaniya Lashley-Mullen, Deputy City Clerk.

Others present: Frank Gervais, President of GATe Board of Directors; John Campanile, Treasurer of GATe; Konrad Herling, Mike McMullin, and Jennifer Dudley, GATe Board Members; Sheila Tilert, Executive Director of GATe; and others.

Greenbelt Access Television Work Session

Mr. Gervais discussed GATe a nonprofit founded in 1985, emphasizing its role in public access and education. He noted decreased funding from reduced cable revenue and efforts to find new income sources. Ms. Tilert highlighted the organization's filmmaking classes and plans for a weekly editing workshop.

Mayor Jordan and Mr. Gervais discussed the importance of public access in promoting creativity and self-expression in the community. Ms. Dudley highlighted the value of the City's partnership with GATe, a nonprofit that produces public service announcements (PSAs). Mayor Jordan noted the recent renewal of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with GATe, which remains essentially unchanged from the original 2019 version. Mr. McMullin emphasized the need for continued support to maintain this vital service.

Mr. Gervais discussed GATe's partnership with the City, which involves producing events and content. Although GATe has provided these services for years, a change in the City manager's office five years ago led to a new agreement requiring payment. He emphasized the need for better resource utilization through closer collaboration and formal contracts. Additionally, he highlighted GATe's unique animation program the only one in the County.

Mayor Jordan inquired about collaborations beyond Greenbelt. Ms. Dudley mentioned GATe's partnership with Humboldt County's Public Access Television and highlighted the success of their animation program, expressing a desire to expand it. Ms. Pompi inquired about potential partnerships with the University of Maryland, while Ms. Weaver discussed a possible collaboration with NASA's new streaming service, NASA Plus, for educational content.

Ms. Tilert outlined GATe membership benefits, including studio access, potential training, and event broadcasting. Mr. Salmerón stated requests for portable audio equipment. Mayor Jordan

suggested preserving old recordings. Mr. McMullin raised concerns about production costs and emphasized need for public access to media training.

Scheduling Work Sessions and Meetings

Council discussed scheduling work sessions with community stakeholders, prioritizing those needing more frequent communication. Ms. McKinney highlighted the importance of strategic planning ahead of the budget. Ms. Weaver proposed community walks and virtual meetings for better engagement, emphasizing direct outreach rather than relying solely on attendance. They focused on upcoming meetings with Beltway Plaza and Greenway Shopping Center regarding development. Ms. Pompi suggested scheduling the Legislative dinner earlier. Council also plans to meet with the school board, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, the State Highway Administration, and others to enhance communication on key issues.

Informational Items

Council discussed the soft opening of Royal Farms. Mayor Jordan noted parking issues blocking the Honda dealership and asked Code Enforcement or the Police to intervene. He also mentioned the closest election drop box at the Berwyn Heights Community Center, proposed a public meeting with Chief Green, and suggested a booth at the Labor Day Festival. Finally, he inquired about a correction for the incorrect crime statistics in the Greenbelt News Review.

The meeting ended at 9: 58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shaniya Lashley-Mullen

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Deputy City Clerk