

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL
Held Wednesday, August 21, 2024

Meeting: Chairpersons of the City Advisory Groups

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

In Attendance: Councilmembers Amy E. Knesel, Danielle P. McKinney, Jenni A. Pompei, Silke I. Pope, Rodney M. Roberts (7:43 pm), Kristen L.K. Weaver and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan.

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

Others present: *Janet Mirsky, Advisory Committee on Education (ACE); Charles Jackman, Advisory Committee on Trees (ACT)(virtual); Benjamin Friedman, Advisory Planning Board (APB); Kristin Stenson, Arts Advisory Board (AAB); Steven Skolnik, Board of Appeals (BoA); Richard Ransom, Community Relations Advisory Board (CRAB); Bob Rudd, Employee Relations Board (ERB); David Shapiro, Ethics Commission (EC); Bryan Bruns and Thomas Doggett, Forest Preserve Advisory Board (FPAB); Ronald Bjorkland, Greenbelt Advisory Committee on Environmental Sustainability (Green ACES); Matthew Sickie, Park and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB); Peggy Higgins, Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC); Mary Wade, Senior Citizens Advisory Committee; Dr. Lois Rosado, Repartitions Commission; and others.*

Mayor Jordan began the work session with introductions. Chairs were asked to provide the number of members on the Boards/Committees and any vacancies:

- Ms. Janet Mirsky stated that the Advisory Committee on Education has (6) vacancies.
- Mr. David Shapiro reported the Ethics Commission has (1) vacancy and another member may step down from the (5) member commission.
- Mr. Benjamin Friedman conveyed the Advisory Planning Board has (0) vacancy on (7) member board.
- Mr. Ronald Bjorkland reported Greenbelt Advisory Committee on Environmental Sustainability has (3) vacancies on the (11) member committee.
- Ms. Kristin Stenson reported the Arts Advisory Board has (3) vacancies on the (11) member board.
- Mr. Matthew Sickie informed the Park and Recreation Advisory Board has (2) vacancies on the (9) member board.
- Ms. Peggy Higgins reported that (7) member Public Safety Advisory Committee has (0) vacancy.

- Dr. Lois Rosado shared the Reparations Commission has (1) vacancy on its (20) member board and that it is an elected body.
- Mr. Bob Rudd reported (1) vacancy on the Employee Relations Board.
- Mr. Bryan Bruns reported to the Forest Preserve Advisory Committee that there is (1) vacancy on the (9) member board.
- Ms. Mary Wade reported that the Senior Citizen Advisory Committee has (2) vacancies on the (11) member committee.
- Mr. Steven Skolnik reported that the Board of Appeals has (0) vacancy on the (3) member board with a member possibly stepping down.
- Dr. Charles Jackman reported that the Advisory Committee on Trees has (1) vacancy on the (3) member committee.

Mayor Jordan asked Chairs to provide an update on the board/committee, highlighting their top priorities and accomplishments or any issues the board/committee is experiencing. Ms. Mirsky, ACE shared the committee has been having membership issues and has submitted articles to the Greenbelt News Review. She highlighted the committee's accomplishments:

- Marching in the Greenbelt Labor Day Parade
- Providing Educator of the Year Awards
- Student of the Year Awards
- Providing grants to schools to subsidize items or activities not covered in the school budget
- Only (1) school applied by the deadline
- Committee financed a field trip to Greenbelt Cinema

Mayor Jordan suggested the city write a letter to PTAs and PTSAs to provide a member to serve on ACE and suggested scheduling a work session with Mr. Millard House, the Prince George's County Public Schools Superintendent. Ms. Knesel suggested ACE have a preplanned grant for the schools. There was a discussion regarding ACE partnering with the Youth Advisory Committee. Ms. Pompi suggested having ACE brochures at the PTA/PTSA open house meetings. Ms. McKinney stated that Council has a table in Labor Day Festival/ Information Day, and the boards/committees could provide brochures. Ms. Weaver added the board/committee includes service requirements and time commitments. Mr. Shapiro, EC highlighted the commission's accomplishments which included reviewing Financial Disclosure Forms and creating a guidance sheet for new members to fill out. Update Financial Disclosure Forms, requested a sense of boundaries regarding its input on the Reparations Commission and Buddy Attick Park Master Plan. Updated information about the roles and operations of City Advisory Boards and Committees. Mr. Salmerón suggested creating a form with purpose, activities, meeting times, and other relevant information regarding each board/committee. Mr. Shapiro and Mr. Salmerón discussed activities of Advisory Boards/Committees that evolved into and offered a recommendation that should be made to the Council to adjust the ordinance that established that board/committee.

Mayor Jordan made a formal referral that each Advisory Board or committee review the founding resolution or ordinance to be updated annually. Mr. Friedman, APB highlighted the board accomplishments which included reviewing various projects including the Buddy Attick

Master Plan and Municipal Building, Sign Standard Departure for Honda and working with Planning Department regarding alignment of the bike/ped plan with the ARPA funding. He informed Council that the board will continue to work on the Buddy Attick Master Plan and will be working on the traffic study for Ridge Road, Lakeside, Greenhill, and Lastner Lane. Mr. Friedman shared that the board has been having issues getting a quorum for meetings and expressed issues regarding the negotiation process with Royal Farms on behalf of the City. Ms. Stenson, AAB highlighted the board's accomplishments which included an arts related mixer organized by Arts Advisory Board, handling arts-related issues, providing feedback to the Council and asking for more funding for public art. She stated the board has been reaching out for more memberships and had an open house.

Mayor Jordan suggested hosting an Open House for recruitment for all the Advisory Boards/Committees. Mr. Bjorkland, Green ACES highlighted the committee's accomplishments:

- Held an EV event at Beltway Plaza
- Purchasing more than 600 reusable bags to distribute to the community
- Requesting Council to write a letter in support of Beverage Container Recycling Refund
- Litter Reduction Program had a table at the Green Man Festival
- Researched and developed a report for Council regarding on the use of biodiesel with recommendations
- Hosting EV event on September 22, 2024, in the Greenbelt Library parking lot.

Mayor Jordan stated that Council was discussing its legislative priorities for this year and advocating for sunseting restaurants exemption of plastic bag ban. He also suggested banning gas-powered blowers. Ms. Weaver pointed out that an accomplishment for Green ACES was assisting with Sustainable Maryland application. Mr. Sickie, PRAB highlighted the board's accomplishments including guiding the Buddy Attick Master Plan. He stated that staff is limited to program activities across the city due to the lack of indoor recreation space in Greenbelt East and Greenbelt West. Mr. Sickie noted an increased Ranger presence in the parks was needed, particularly in Schrom Hills Park. Ms. Wade, SCAC highlighted the committee's accomplishments, hosted two open forums, and discussed the need for additional pickleball courts, affordable and accessible senior housing. She stated that younger members are needed on the committees.

Discussion on Affordable Senior Housing

Dr. Rosado, Reparations Commission explained the working definition of the Reparations Commission. She asked the Council to approve the Reparations Commission's \$750.00 postcard to be shared at Information Day, and there is a planned event in October. Dr. Rosado explained that the Reparations Commission has three subcommittees:

- Policy and Research Subcommittee
- Historical Research Subcommittee
- Engagement, Education Subcommittee.

Ms. Pope shared that the Senior Citizens Advisory Committee had secured an additional shuttle for senior outings, and the number of trips for the seniors has doubled. Ms. Higgins, PSAC shared that the committee is reviewing and discussing with Mr. Salmerón PSAC's recommendation, which was identified in the March 6, 2024, memo to Co. PSAC will be hosting three community meetings in October on the dangers of carbon monoxide and preparation for weather crisis. She noted that PSAC supports the City's position regarding the fire department and staffing issues. Lastly, Ms. Higgins advised that PSAC will review the Police Department's drafted License Plate Reader and Camera General Orders. Mr. Rudd, ERB shared that the board has emphasized the importance of fairness, maintained employee procedures and upheld high ethical standards. Mr. Ransom, CRAB shared the board's recent initiative to place multilingual welcome signs in various parts of the city to include:

- Requesting support for the upcoming movie "Join or Die" which promotes volunteering.
- Planned to promote the movie and volunteer opportunities at the Labor Day Festival.
- Mr. Ransom also expressed concern about low membership numbers and the need for fresh perspectives, encouraging interested individuals to contact him or CRAB for information on joining.

Mr. Bruns, FPAB shared the board's recent accomplishments, including rerouting trails in North Woods and controlling invasive species. He also shared their priorities such as implementing the Master Trails plan, improving signage, and exploring opportunities in Greenbelt West. The concerns about the large deer population in the Forest Preserve and its impact on tree growth were discussed. Dr. Jackman, ACT highlighted the committee's accomplishments as follows:

- Celebrating Arbor Day with planting 150 trees
- Trash, litter pick-up and removing invasive species
- Supporting the City's 63% tree canopy
- Reviewing Attick Master Plan
- Impetus to recruit new members

Mr. Skolnik, BoA shared that there are very few appeals. However, he mentioned that he also serves on the Green Team and has an upcoming solar project at Claggett Farm. The Green Team has been working on this project for (5) years and is expected to offset over half of the municipal electric bills. Council clarified the proposal negotiation process between the Planning Department, Advisory Planning Board, and Council, emphasizing that Council approval is not implied by accepting a report from an Advisory Board/Committee. The council also discussed a past conflict with a developer over the Royal Farms project. The Council discussed the importance of regular meeting minutes and the need for a quorum to approve them. They also addressed attendance issues and the possibility of removing members. The Council thanked all the board and committee members for all their work.

The meeting ended at 9: 35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shaniya Lashley-Mullen

Shaniya Lashley-Mullen,
Deputy City Clerk