

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL
Held Wednesday, December 4, 2024

Discussion: Ethics Ordinance and the Preliminary Armory Feasibility Assessment

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. Pompei, Silke I. Pope, Rodney M. Roberts, Kristen L.K. Weaver and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan.

City Staff: Josué Salmerón, City Manager; Tim George, Assistant City Manager; and Shaniya Lashley-Mullen, Deputy City Clerk.

Others present: Taylora Imes-Thomas, Ottley, Tremayne, Amar Group LLC; Chair David Shapiro and Isiah Horton, Ethics Commission Members, Bill Orleans and others.

Greenbelt Armory

Ms. Imes-Thomas presented a PowerPoint on Preliminary Feasibility Study and Assessment Report for Greenbelt Armory at Southway and Greenbelt Road. The report included the following:

- visual observations
- site inspections
- structural analysis
- water leakage testing
- hazardous materials testing

Phase I Environmental Study. The team began community outreach to find the original blueprints. Ms. Imes-Thomas addressed structural problems with the building facade including visible cracks, exposed rebar, and corroding concrete. She noted issues with limestone facades, eroded mortar joints, and non-functional downspouts. The Council emphasized need for repairs and further investigations especially regarding garage and roof which had missing shingles and failed drains.

The results from lead and asbestos tests showed lead in some wall surfaces and flooring, while black and green tiles contained asbestos. However, asbestos was absent in other materials like drywall and ceiling tiles. The presence of asbestos in the floors is concerning yet encapsulation could help mitigate risks. Ms. Imes-Thomas acknowledged building is 1950's construction age made asbestos presence expected. Ms. Imes-Thomas highlighted several issues with the facility including the need to replace surface mounted electrical system to include toggle switches and outlet plates. Mold has been found in various areas and plumbing fixtures such as water closets, urinals and sinks have exceeded their useful life. The gas fired steam boiler and water heater also require replacement. Also, the corroded pipes leading to and from this equipment. There is

currently no air intake and exhaust are present in bathrooms and kitchen and the concealed steam pipes are in poor condition.

The Council discussed essential repairs for an older building that has been vacant for nearly ten years. Accepting that its condition stems from a lack of maintenance and weather exposure. Ms. Imes-Thomas indicated that repair recommendations would be provided in January and February. The Council also noted issues with the building's facade including poor connections to the main structure, inadequate drainage in the brickwork and clogged weep holes.

The Council explored the feasibility of assessing the facility knowing that some areas may not be cost effective to repair but others could be beneficial. They underscored need for immediate repair recommendations and the importance of aligning city maintenance standards with county standards.

Ethics Ordinance

The Council addressed updating City Ethics Ordinance to comply with state laws. Mr. Shapiro suggested adopting a State recommended framework for clarity. The Council discussed the Financial Disclosure Statements and agreed on a late fee of \$5 per day capping at \$500 for late filings. They also considered an escalating fee structure and highlighted the need for better training for campaign treasurers through workshops or videos. Resident Bill Orleans suggested the Ethics Commission's involvement in non-financial conflicts of interest when City employees present grievances to the Employee Relations Board.

Ms. Weaver raised concerns about soliciting and accepting gifts within the "Buy Nothing" Facebook group, emphasizing potential conflicts of interest. The Council concluded it's essential to distinguish between acceptable exchanges and those that may appear improper, reinforcing adherence to the City's Ethics Code.

The Council discussed the timely submission of Financial Disclosure Forms, weighing late fees against flexibility for extraordinary circumstances. They agreed to standardize notification procedures and penalties. After consulting with the Assistant State Council, they considered changing "officials" to "officers" in the disclosure document for clarity. They acknowledged state recommendations for fines: \$5 per day for employees and \$35 per day for elected officials, and discussed the possibility of submitting written requests to waive penalties. They also considered sending reminders to individuals who have not filed their Financial Disclosures.

Informational Items

The Council reviewed the list of responsibilities with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) and vacancies on various committees. The Council agreed to continue with current committee assignments and to consider a work session in January to discuss environmental initiatives with The Greenbelt Advisory Committee on Environmental Sustainability (Green ACES). Ms. Weaver proposed to change the December 30, 2024 Work Session to a "no meeting" due to the holiday season.

The meeting ended at 9:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shaniya Lashley-Mullen

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Deputy City Clerk