

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, August 24, 2016, to meet with Fieldstone Properties/Franklin Park.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 8:01 p.m. The meeting was held in the Leasing Office of Franklin Park.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Judith F. Davis, Leta M. Mach, Silke I. Pope, Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan. Councilmember Konrad E. Herling was ill and unable to attend.

STAFF PRESENT: Michael McLaughlin, City Manager; Celia Craze, Director of Planning and Community Development; and Cindy Murray, City Clerk.

FIELDSTONE PROPERTIES REPRESENTATIVES: Joe Kazarnovsky, Gail Comfort, Lea Garcia, Aaron Martin, Crystal Cornish, Denise Knight and Theresa Hammonds.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Diane Oberg – Greenbelt News Review, Jillian Davis, Carolyn Lambright-Davis, Ray Raysor, Rene Sewell-Raysor, Ann Wallace and Bill Orleans.

Mr. Kazarnovsky, Owner/Managing Partner of Fieldstone Properties, reported that it will be six years in October since Fieldstone took over the property. He said they had accomplished a great deal in six years and added there was more to be done. Mr. Kazarnovsky noted that they had invested \$2 million in capital improvements this year alone.

Mr. Kazarnovsky reported that Franklin Park now had a 93% occupancy level, and a 68% retention level with approximately 95 units turning over every month. He said Franklin Park had now become a destination/place of choice for renters in the region because it is known to be clean, quality housing at an affordable price. He added that 2,066 units out of 2,877 units had been totally renovated with new kitchens, bathrooms, flooring and plumbing. In response to a question from Ms. Mach, Mr. Kazarnovsky said renovations hadn't been done in the remaining units because residents of those units were not willing to relocate to another unit to allow the renovations to be done. He noted that it was not safe for unit renovations to occur while residents were residing in the unit.

Ms. Craze said that the number of code complaints received by the City for Franklin Park have significantly decreased over the past few years. She reviewed the City's property inspection process. Ms. Craze mentioned on-going problems with the old laundry rooms in the buildings, and recognized Franklin Park's efforts to address these problems.

Ms. Mach asked about shuttle service within Franklin Park for transportation for residents to the laundry center and/or leasing center. Mr. Kazarnovsky said there was no shuttle service in place but added that if any resident had transportation problems due to lack of transportation or a disability, they should contact the Franklin Park Resident Relations and accommodations would be made.

Ms. Pope asked about the incidents involving children falling out of unit windows this year. Mr. Martin said window locks are provided for the windows. He said that in one of the fall incidents, the mother had removed the lock from the window, and in the other instance, the child had fallen through the glass portion of the window. Ms. Pope stressed the need to find a solution to the

problem of children falling from windows. After discussion, Mr. Putens suggested window problem/window locks be included in the lease documents. Ms. Davis suggested Franklin Park send an email blast to residents explaining the window safety concerns. Celia Craze, Director of Planning & Community Development, said staff is working on drafting language for window safety to be included in the City Code.

Mr. Kazarnovsky said continued improvements are planned for the property including boiler, HVAC and roof replacements. He noted that approximately 23 buildings have new roofs installed each year. Mr. Kazarnovsky mentioned that the water/sewer bill for the property had dramatically decreased following the replacement of the underground water/sewer piping.

Mr. Kazarnovsky said that Franklin Park has an excellent working relationship with the City, especially the Code Enforcement and Police Departments. Mr. McLaughlin thanked Franklin Park for the work on the Affordable Housing Study conducted by Mary Kolar, the City's Maryland Municipal League summer intern.

Ms. Pope suggested Franklin Park consider hosting forums to provide the residents an opportunity to talk through issues with the Police or other City Departments. Ms. Knight mentioned Franklin Park had done this in the past and received very low turnout from the residents. Ms. Davis mentioned the large turnout Greenbriar had experienced when they brought an ice cream truck in to provide free ice cream during community events. Ms. Knight said they would consider that idea. Ms. Lambright-Davis mentioned the need to engage teenagers, especially 12-14 year olds.

Mr. Putens said the City has vacancies on City Advisory Groups and requested Franklin Park advertise these vacancies in their newsletter to residents. Ms. Davis suggested the voting registration deadline for the General Election be advertised and Ms. Pope suggested the Greenbelt Labor Day Festival be advertised also.

Mr. Martin advised that Franklin Park had just signed a new contract for waste and recycling removal and had requested that more recycling opportunities be provided to make recycling more convenient to all residents.

Ms. Davis asked if Franklin Park accepts Section 8 housing vouchers. Ms. Knight said yes. Mr. Kazarnovsky added that 72 units in Franklin Park are set aside as transitional housing units for Prince George's County.

Ms. Davis said residents had reported that Franklin Park does band aid type repairs. Mr. Martin said no, permanent repairs are done. He noted that on some occasions, depending on the problem, temporary repairs are made until the permanent repairs can be scheduled. Mr. Martin mentioned that Franklin Park maintenance has programs to track all maintenance repairs. In response to a question from Mayor Jordan, Mr. Martin said an average of five maintenance employees are on call after hours and can respond in one hour or less to any type of problem.

Ms. Wallace, 6007 Springhill Drive, reported a problem with the air conditioning in her unit and expressed her dissatisfaction with Franklin Park.

Ms. Pope asked if Franklin Park distributed a newsletter for the residents. Mr. Kazarnovsky said management currently has over 3,200 email addresses and they have found email communications to be the most successful way to communicate with residents.

Mr. Kazarnovsky said over 50% of Franklin Park employees live on the property. Ms. Knight added that Franklin Park is now included on the military housing opportunity list.

Mr. Kazarnovsky stressed the need for better signage for Franklin Park and asked for City support of signage on significant State/County owned roadways such as Kenilworth Avenue, Greenbelt Road and Edmonston Road near the old Greenbelt Middle School. Council indicated he should keep the City apprised of signage plans. Ms. Davis suggested Mr. Kazarnovsky contact Kap Kapastin at Beltway Plaza to see if Franklin Park signage can be placed on Beltway Plaza property.

Council thanked the representatives for hosting the work session.

The meeting ended at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Cindy Murray
City Clerk*