

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Monday, September 19, 2016, to meet with the County Executive.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 7:33 p.m. The meeting was held in the Council Room of the Municipal Building.

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 WERE: Michael McLaughlin, City Manager, and Cindy Murray, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Todd Turner, Prince George's County Council Member; Beatrice Tignor, Prince George's County Municipal Liaison; Aaron Markovitch, Anacostia Trails Heritage Area; Bill Orleans, Colin Byrd, Michael Hartman, Laura Kressler and others. Rushern Baker, County Executive, arrived at 8:05 p.m.

County Council Member Turner provided an update on the start of the Fall Legislative Session. He said County Council had met with Kevin Maxwell, Prince George's County School System (PGCPS) Chief Executive Officer (CEO), as well as the Chair and Vice-Chair of the School Board today regarding the Head Start Program and school safety issues. Council Member Turner reported that while the federal Head Start grant had been suspended for PGCPS, the Head Start program is still functioning in the county through a third-party group because of actions taken by the school system.

Mr. Putens asked about the role of the County School Board. Dr. Tignor explained that the role of the County School Board is to oversee the school system budget and determine the policies to be implemented by the CEO. She said the CEO is hired by the County Executive.

In response to a question from Ms. Davis, Council Member Turner explained that the County Council is considering a charter amendment that would add two at-large seats to the Council. He said if this is approved by the County Council, the charter amendment can be included on the ballot this year.

County Executive Baker arrived at this time.

Mr. Baker thanked Council for being part of the efforts to attract the new Federal Bureau of Investigation Headquarters to the county. He reported on economic development activities in the Bowie, Suitland and New Carrollton areas, as well as the MGM National Harbor Resort and the new Regional Medical Center in Largo. Mr. Baker said the commercial tax base has grown which has eased the county budget deficit. He also mentioned that the county police continue to work well with municipal police agencies and the crime rate in the County is decreasing.

Mr. Baker stressed the need to make sure children are safe and getting a quality education in PGCPS. He said that while the school system has made a lot of progress in recent years, there is still more work to do. Mr. Baker reported that specialized language and arts programs are attracting more students back to the public school system.

Mayor Jordan expressed concern about the reduction in late night service for Metro. Mr. Baker said the County has the same concern and noted the importance of safe and dependable public transportation service to the entire area for the residents and for the local economy. He said the concerns need to be taken to the State legislators.

Mayor Jordan asked how Greenbelt residents can be appointed to County Boards and Commissions. Mr. Baker said residents can submit applications or Council can submit the name(s) of individuals they recommend be considered for appointment to Dr. Tignor. He said he would provide the City with a list of boards and commissions.

Council Member Turner said information on County Boards and Commissions was available on the county website. Ms. Davis suggested a link directly to this information be included on the city website. She also suggested that Council Member Turner include board and commissions information in his newsletter to residents. Council Member Turner said he can arrange for a county representative to come to the city and speak with any residents who may be interested.

There was discussion about the need for affordable housing options in the city and county. Mayor Jordan said the city has a legacy of providing a diversity of affordable housing options as well as a good quality of life. Mr. Baker commended the city on its legacy and said continuing to maintain affordable housing options in the county is one of his biggest concerns. He added that maintaining affordable housing options will not happen without efforts from both the city and the county.

Ms. Davis mentioned the Housing Affordability Study prepared by Mary Kolar, the city's Maryland Municipal League Intern. Mr. Baker requested a copy of the report be sent to his office.

Ms. Davis said there was currently no county law that prohibited landlords from refusing to rent to potential tenants solely based on their payment with a federal housing subsidy. Mr. Baker said most rentals in the county accept subsidies but added that he will check into the situation.

Mayor Jordan asked about the Zoning Rewrite Project. Mr. Baker noted the importance of this project with the county changing to a more urban area. Council Member Turner agreed, noting the current Code did not serve the county and/or residents very well.

Ms. Mach expressed Council's concern and frustration regarding children residing in Greenbelt Station being assigned to attend Berwyn Heights Elementary School and Parkdale High School. She stressed the importance to Council, as well as the commitment made by the county many years ago, that all children residing in the city attend city schools.

Ms. Davis mentioned the Advisory Committee on Education supports Greenbelt schools with its grants to educators program, awards for outstanding educators and students, funding of after-school Science and Reading clubs and funding a School Resource Officer. She said taxpayer money is used to fund these programs and the students in Greenbelt Station attending schools outside the city are not able to benefit from them.

Mayor Jordan said Council has brought this concern to the attention of Council Member Turner and Mr. Baker previously and had met with Dr. Maxwell as well as representatives from the

County Department of Pupil Accounting and School Boundaries. Mr. Baker and Dr. Tignor said they will discuss the concern with Dr. Maxwell.

Mayor Jordan mentioned the Greenbelt Lake Forebay Dredging Project and the positive impact it will have on the environment. Mr. McLaughlin said the project is about 50% complete.

Council Member Turner said funding for road paving in the county had been increased this fiscal year and the Department of Public Works and Transportation is in the process of identifying the roads in greatest need of repaving. He noted that because of the shortfall of funding from the gasoline sales tax, the State was scaling back on some proposed projects included in the Consolidated Transportation Program.

Mr. McLaughlin thanked Council Member Turner and Mr. Baker for their support in securing state Youth Service Bureau funding for Greenbelt CARES.

Ms. Pope thanked Council Member Turner and Mr. Baker for their participation in the National League of Cities Small Cities Steering Committee meeting held in Greenbelt in July.

Mr. Orleans said that the County needs to improve its transportation services to better accommodate disabled individuals and those in need of special services.

Mr. Byrd commented on recent incidents in PGCPs. He also requested the County Council adopt an ordinance to prevent income discrimination.

Council thanked Council Member Turner and Mr. Baker for attending.

Council Reports

Ms. Mach reported on her attendance at the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee meeting.

Ms. Davis reported on her attendance at the Maryland Municipal League Legislative Committee meeting and the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite Focus Group meeting.

The meeting ended at 10:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Cindy Murray
City Clerk*