

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, August 10, 2011, for the purpose of holding a stakeholders meeting with the County Executive.

Mayor Pro Tem Jordan called the meeting to order at 8:03 p.m. It was held in the Council Room of the Municipal Building.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Konrad E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Silke I. Pope, Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Pro Tem Emmett V. Jordan. Mayor Judith F. Davis was out of state attending to family matters.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; David Moran, Assistant City Manager; and Cindy Murray, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Rushern Baker, Prince George's County Executive; Bradley Frome, Khalil Thompson, and Beatrice Tignor, County Executive's Office; Marc Bashoor, Prince George's County Fire Chief; Kap Kapastin, Quantum Companies; Barbara Simon, Ed James, Cary Coppick, Gwen Worley and David Lange.

Mayor Pro Tem Jordan welcomed Mr. Baker to Greenbelt.

County Fiscal Situation

Mr. Baker said that many difficult cuts had been made in the current budget but said the County is in fairly good shape. He mentioned that the County had built up a substantial fund balance but expressed concern regarding the County's financial rating since the recent downgrading of the federal securities. Mr. Baker said he felt it was critical that rating agencies look at each State and local government apart from the federal government.

Economic Development/Greenbelt Metro

Mr. Baker said the focus of his administration is around transit oriented development in the County. He noted the opportunity for economic growth in the County, specifically in Greenbelt, College Park, and Suitland areas. He said he was hopeful the Economic Development Incentive (EDI) Fund will provide incentives for development. Mr. Baker stressed that it was essential to improve education and public safety in the County in order to be competitive in attracting both federal offices and private business to the area. He also noted his support of the Purple Line, with the line starting in New Carrollton.

Greenbelt Middle School

Mr. Jordan thanked Mr. Baker for his support of the new Middle School project. Mr. Baker said he was glad to see this project moving forward and will continue to work with the School Board on other school improvement projects.

Mr. Jordan and Ms. Mach mentioned the work of the Greenbelt Middle School Task Force and discussions with the School Board regarding the future of the old Greenbelt Middle School building. Mr. Jordan questioned whether additional funding may be available for renovations to the building. Ms. Mach mentioned the numerous additions to the original school and the need to know exactly which sections are required to be preserved. Mr. Frome said they would check on these questions.

Envision Prince George's

Mr. Baker commented on the importance of Envision Prince George's. He said he expects the Planning Board will become very active in this project.

Planning

Mr. Baker reported that Betty Hewlitt, Dorothy Bailey and Shaunise Washington had been appointed to the Planning Board. He said he believed all the new appointments will be an excellent addition to the Board.

Mr. Roberts and Mr. Putens emphasized the need for municipal planning and zoning authority. Mr. Baker noted that many municipalities have strong planning departments but said there are challenges with other municipalities that don't have the same resources. He said he was hopeful that with his in-house restructuring of the County Planning Board, they will be able to work cooperatively with individual municipalities.

Maintenance of Greenbrook Lake

Mr. Putens reviewed the history of Greenbrook Lake, the original maintenance agreement, and the on-going disagreement between the City and County regarding who is responsible for maintenance. He advised that the City takes care of short term emergencies and day to day maintenance but the long term maintenance of the actual structure is a County responsibility.

Stormwater Management Regulations

Mr. Baker said he feels the new stormwater regulations recently adopted were a good compromise for both the environmental community and development community. Mr. Jordan and Mr. Roberts commented that the City supported stronger stormwater regulations.

WMATA and TheBus

Mr. Jordan and Mr. Putens expressed Council's appreciation to the County Department of Public Works and Transportation, as well as the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, on their willingness to work together with Council and Greenbelt residents on the recent transportation route restructuring process. Mr. Jordan said there was still a need for Sunday service as well as an expansion of the hours of operation.

Mr. Roberts asked if the County would be willing to transfer transportation funds to a municipality to operate their own transportation system in place of the County system. Mr. Baker said he would be willing to look at this idea as well as the idea of a partnership.

Health and Human Services

Mr. Baker stressed the need for better health care in the County and said that he supports comprehensive health care for the State. He said they are currently working with the University of Maryland Medical System and are optimistic that a world class regional medical complex will be built in the central part of the County. He said he was hopeful this will be one of the biggest projects that will happen in his tenure as County Executive.

Social Services

Mr. Jordan mentioned the need for one-stop facilities for administration of social service programs. Mr. Baker agreed and said he would like to make the process easier for residents in need of assistance. He commented that the Department of Social Services does a tremendous amount of good work for residents in the County but said they do not have the adequate resources due to budget constraints.

Franklin Park

Mr. Jordan commented on the recent improvements made in Franklin Park. Mr. Baker said Eric Brown, Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development, was actively involved with Franklin Park.

Homelessness

Mr. Baker noted the need to make changes/improvements to address the lack of adequate shelters, especially for families. He said he has asked his staff to review the situation and come up with a long term solution. Mr. Baker added that the County and State do not have the resources to address this growing issue on their own.

Landlord Tenant Commission

Mr. Putens stressed the need for the reestablishment of this commission. Mr. Baker and Mr. Frome said they would look into this request.

State's Attorney's Office

Mr. Baker noted the backlog in the State's Attorney's Office was a result of too few a number of prosecutors handling too large a number of cases. He said he has provided additional resources to this office to increase the number of prosecutors.

Fire Department Staffing

Mr. Jordan asked if there were any concerns regarding staffing at the County fire stations. Chief Bashoor said each fire station has four full time paid staff members from 7am to 3pm weekdays. He said he hoped to increase this number to five staff members in the future.

Mr. Putens asked if the County was experiencing any problems with the recruitment and retention of fire fighters. Chief Bashoor said no, and reported that 600 applicants had tested for 60 open positions recently.

Mr. Orleans asked and was provided answers to several questions.

The meeting ended 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Cindy Murray
City Clerk*