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Council Holds Second Listening Session on Vacant Council Seat

by Anna Bedford-Dillow

On Saturday, December 30, Greenbelt City Council held its second listening session on the topic of the vacant council seat (see the December 28, 2023, issue for more on the first session). There were approximately 30 people in the audience at the Greenbriar Community Center, just under half from Greenbelt East.

Only half of current councilmembers were able to attend in person due to illness and travel. Mayor Emmett Jordan and Councilmembers Jenni Pompei and Rodney Roberts were present. Councilmember Kristen Weaver joined via Zoom due to Covid and Councilmember Danielle McKinney joined for some of the meeting from an airport. Councilmember Silke Pope was out of the country.

The meeting began almost 15 minutes late due to technical and audio problems on both Facebook and Zoom, as well as microphones in the room. Jordan began the meeting by standing and shouting remarks until City Manager Josué Salmerón was able to bring him a working microphone.

Jordan pointed to council's re-



PHOTO BY ANNA BEDFORD-DILLOW

Approximately 30 people gathered in the audience for the council's second listening session on Saturday, December 30. This session was held in Greenbelt East.

cent 3-3 vote on how to proceed to highlight the need for expediency in the process, as they're currently a council of six. Council plans to hold one more work-session to formulate a decision rubric to help shape the process.

Jordan shared that council has created a draft list of characteristics they are seeking in a candidate. Among them are motivation (why they are running), qualifications (skills, knowledge, experi-

ence), a track record of community involvement, demonstrated public service and viability (their ability to be a viable candidate if it were a regular election).

Jordan says he personally has received about 60 emails about filling the seat and "they're pretty divided." Roberts requested Jordan make the 60 emails he received public and part of the

See COUNCIL, page 6

Kwanzaa Celebrated in Greenbelt With Food, Fun, Info and Uplift

by Lois Rosado

Delicious food, dynamic, informative, fun and uplifting: these are some of the comments stated about the Kwanzaa Karamu held on Saturday, December 30. The event was organized by Chiquita Jackson Enterprises in collaboration with the Greenbelt Black History and Culture Committee, RUAK, The SPACE and Beltway Plaza. There were 60 participants, including children of various ages. County Councilmember

Ingrid Watson was the primary sponsor of the event and there was additional assistance from the Greenbelt Recreation Department.

Program

Chiquita Jackson, president of Chiquita Jackson Enterprises, hosted the program. She thanked the audience for attending and called on Mayor Emmett Jordan to welcome attendees. He thanked Jackson and the community

group coalition that helped arrange the event. Dr. Lois Rosado explained the purpose of Kwanzaa (which means first fruits

See KWANZAA, page 12



PHOTO BY THOMAS TABES JR.

The PROMISE Youth and Sports Academy cheerleaders performed inspiring gymnastic moves at the Kwanzaa celebration. With Mayor Emmett Jordan, left, and Chiquita Jackson, right, are Brooklyn Williams, Chase Starkey, Khamaya Moon, Khyra Wilson, Skylla Williams, Tyrain Bostic and Zoey Swanson.

A Look Back at 2023

The News Review presents highlights from last year's news stories. The reviews were prepared by Deanna Dawson, Anna Bedford-Dillow, Cathie Meetre, Diane Oberg and Pat Scully.

Ric Gordon

The city was saddened by the sudden death of 41-year-old Councilmember Ric Gordon, who had been reelected just weeks before to his second term. A shocked and grieving council cancelled all significant action at its November 27, meeting, opting to devote it to memorializing their late friend and colleague. With strong ties to Franklin Park and as an advocate for LGBTQ rights and increasing diversity in city government, Gordon brought a new perspective to council. Council then embarked on a search for a new councilmember, deciding to accept applications on a very tight timeline with an application process lasting just eight days. Council will conduct interviews during the first two weeks of January with a goal of appointing the new councilmember on January 22.



PHOTO COURTESY CITY OF GREENBELT

Brandon "Ric" Gordon, 1982-2023

Murder of Madame Sylla

On September 1, the news broke of the brutal death of Mariam Toure Sylla, a teacher at Greenbelt's Dora Kennedy French Immersion school and Greenbelt East resident. The first intimation of the unfolding tragedy was on July 30, when police were notified that she had not returned from her walk the previous evening in Schrom Hills Park. Despite appeals and efforts by many in the community and particularly by teachers, parents and students from her school, no word of her whereabouts was received for over a month. Only on September 1 was a dismembered body (originally found August 1 in a park in Clinton) identified as being hers.

Harold Francis Landon III, 33, of University Park was arrested and charged with her murder and was formally indicted on October 6. He had been seen and photographed with his truck as he dumped the body, and his phone records placed him in Greenbelt at the time of the abduction. He had been in police custody on unrelated domestic violence charges since August 1, the date the body was found.



PHOTO COURTESY GREENBELT POLICE

Mariame Toure Sylla disappeared on July 29.

New City Manager

In August, Greenbelt City Council announced the appointment of a new city manager. Josué Salmerón took the post after a successful stint as city manager of a somewhat smaller city in Ohio and has subsequently moved into a GHI home in the city. He defeated several applicants (including Interim Manager Tim George) vying for the position.

Salmerón's willingness to live in the city was fortuitous, as it made moot an earlier issue when council amended the city charter to give council the power to decide, on a case-by-case basis, whether or not a city manager would be required to live in the city. This had been a tenet of the city charter since the city's founding.

This charter change was deplored by a group of citizens who petitioned to force a referendum on the question of whether or not the city manager must be a resident rather than having the decision rest with council. With a requirement of 20 percent of eligible voters signing the petition (over 3,000 residents – almost as many as all who voted in city elections), the attempt was unsuccessful, but over 800 residents signed, indicating their dissatisfaction with council's pre-emptive move.



PHOTO COURTESY CITY OF GREENBELT

City Manager Josué Salmerón

What Goes On

- Monday, January 8**
7:30 p.m., Regular City Council Meeting, Municipal Building
- Tuesday, January 9**
7:00 p.m., Special Council Meeting: Council Candidate Interviews, via Zoom
- Wednesday, January 10**
7:30 p.m., Council Worksession: Prince George's County Public Schools, Building Services and School Boundaries, Municipal Building
- Thursday, January 11**
7:00 p.m., Special Council Meeting: Council Candidate Interviews, Deliberation Regarding Interviews and Vote to Make an Appointment to Council Vacancy, via Zoom

See the city ad on page 5 or the meetings calendar at greenbeltnmd.gov for more information.

See LOOK BACK, page 7

Letters to the Editor

Cookies on the Bridge

I volunteer for the Cookies on the Bridge activity started by RUAK (Random Unselfish Acts of Kindness). Volunteers greet students coming home from school across the Spellman Overpass from Eleanor Roosevelt High School and hand out cookies and carrots. RUAK is still seeking volunteers and I want potential volunteers to know how much fun this is.

The students are so grateful and respectful and it is really delightful to offer a snack to those who want it. Many students remind me how hungry teenagers are and are thankful I do not have a number of how many they can take.

My day is Friday, but I know I have family obligations at the end of January that will mean I cannot be there. If people are unwilling to commit to every week, perhaps they could sign up to be a substitute on days the regulars cannot be present. It is just 45 minutes of your time, but you leave happy and feeling great that you were able to do this.

The kids bring joy into my day, rain or shine.

Betty Sonneveldt



Why the Euphemisms?

The article, Park Service to Reduce Deer Numbers at Greenbelt Park is unnecessarily cryptic. It states that NPS plans to carry out "wildlife reduction operations," that roads will be closed for the safety of visitors and employees during "reduction activities," and that the operations will be conducted in a manner "proven safe and effective." Readers skimming the article could miss the sentence that describes those carrying out the "operations" as "highly trained firearms experts" and the paragraph further down that explains that "all suitable meat from reduction activities" will be donated to local shelters.

Why not be explicit right in the headline? Park Service to Shoot and Kill Deer at Greenbelt Park. Readers will undoubtedly have various opinions about the plan, as they do about nearly everything that happens in Greenbelt. Why obscure the facts with euphemisms? The News Review is a newspaper, not a condolence card, and sometimes the truth is distasteful. If the language used in the article came directly from the NPS press release, why colude in NPS's obfuscation? The News Review's job is not to protect the public from the truth but to elucidate and enlighten.

Beth Terry



Drop Us a Line!

Electronically, that is.
editor@greenbeltnewsreview.com



Greenbelt Cinema
 129 Centerway
 301-329-2034
www.greenbeltcinema.org
 Members Always \$6.50!
 Member kids are always FREE!

Adults \$9, Kids \$6,
 Senior/Student/Military \$8
 All shows before 5 PM:
 Adults \$7, Kids \$5
 OC = Open Captions
 CC = Closed Captions
 DVS = Descriptive Video Service

SHOWTIMES:
 January 5th - 11th

Fallen Leaves (NR) (CC)
 (DVS) (2023) (81 mins)

Finnish with English subtitles
Screen 1 - Main Auditorium
 Fri. 5:15 PM, 7:45 PM
 Sat. 5:15 PM, 7:45 PM
 Sun. 2:15 PM, 5:00 PM
 Mon. 2:15 PM, 5:00 PM
 Tues. 7:15 PM
 Thurs. 7:15 PM

Screen 2 - The Screening Room
 Wed. 7:15 PM

The Color Purple (PG-13)
 (CC) (DVS) (2023) (140 mins)

Screen 1 - Main Auditorium
 Wed. 7:00 PM
Screen 2 - The Screening Room
 Fri. 5:00 PM, 8:00 PM
 Sat. 5:00 PM, 8:00 PM
 Sun. 2:00 PM (OC), 5:15 PM
 Mon. 2:00 PM, 5:15 PM
 Tues. 7:00 PM
 Thurs. 7:00 PM

Big Business/The Kid
Silent Movie Double Feature
 with live music
 accompaniment by Andrew Earle Simpson

Screen 1 - Main Auditorium
 Sat. 1:00 PM



Letters Policy

Deadline for letters is 6 p.m. Monday. Submission does not guarantee publication. Letters should be no longer than 300 words (shorter letters are more likely to be published).

Letters may be edited for clarity, grammar, civility and space constraints. The News Review may add a comment from the editor if deemed necessary.

All letters must include the letter writer's name, physical address, and telephone number. Only the name will be published; the News Review will consider requests for the name to be withheld.

Greenbelt News Review

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PUBLICATION DEADLINES:

- Monday 2 p.m. Articles/photos over 700 words, Display ads (not camera ready).
- Monday 6 p.m. All letters to the editor (300 word limit).
- Tuesday 2 p.m. Articles/photos under 700 words, photographs not associated with a story.
- Tuesday 6 p.m. Classified ads and camera-ready display ads.
- Email submission is available. Hardcopy submissions (delivered by respective deadline) may be mailed to the address above or left in the Co-op grocery store drop box or GNR external office door mail slot, as shown below.
- Payment must accompany ads except by prior arrangement

MAIL SUBSCRIPTION: \$55/year

Greenbelt Community Center at 15 Crescent Rd.
 OFFICE HOURS: Monday 2 - 4 p.m., Tuesday 2 - 4, 6 - 8 p.m.
 Office is currently closed to the public. Please phone or email.
 GNR external office door mail slot is located up a few stairs 25 yards left of the Community Center's east door near the municipal building.

Send Us Your High Resolution Photos!

The News Review encourages readers to send in photos of Greenbelt landmarks, activities and the changing seasons. Photos should be at least 300 dpi, and must include the name of the photographer and a caption. The caption must name any identifiable people in the photo, as well as explain the picture.

If you are sending photos from your phone, please choose the option to send "actual size", or upload the photos to your computer first and then email the photos at full size. Send photos to editor@greenbeltnewsreview.com.



On Screen at Greenbelt Cinema

Fallen Leaves

In modern-day Helsinki, two lonely souls in search of love meet by chance in a local karaoke bar. However, the pair's path to happiness is beset by numerous obstacles – from lost numbers to mistaken addresses, alcoholism and a charming stray dog. Said critic Odie Henderson of the Boston Globe, "This film is so damn funny, and not in a laugh-out-loud way, though there are some of those moments, too. The humor in a Kaurismäki film is deadpan; it sneaks up on you and always tells you something about the characters."

The Color Purple

A story of love and resilience based on the novel and the Broadway musical, The Color Purple is a decades-spanning tale of one woman's journey to independence. Celie faces many hardships in her life, but ultimately finds extraordinary strength and hope in the unbreakable bonds of sisterhood. "A powerful and electric film, this is an amazing theatrical experience. Director Blitz Bazawule delivers a lavish old school Hollywood musical, yet also the most modern and honest adaptation of The Color Purple to date," said critic Grace Rudoph of Beyond the Trailer. "A must see."

Big Business/The Kid

Oliver Hardy and Stan Laurel fight with a homeowner while selling Christmas trees in Big Business. The Kid, Charlie Chaplin's first full-length feature, is a silent masterpiece about a little tramp who discovers a little orphan and brings him up but is left desolate when the orphanage reclaims him. Chaplin directed, produced and starred in the film, as well as composed the score.

Community Events

Greenbelt Chess Club To Meet at Youth Center

The Chess Club will meet on Monday, January 8 from 6 to 8:30 p.m. at the Youth Center. Note the change of location. Further meetings in January will be on the 15th and 22th. For more details, contact Effie at 443-415-1053.

Baroque Orchestra Gives Free Concerts

The Relic Ensemble returns to Greenbelt with a series of free concerts in January. Formed in 2022 by alumni of the Juilliard Historical Performance Program, Relic is a touring period chamber orchestra with the goal of sharing their music with people in all 50 states. For more information visit relicensemble.org.

Sunday, January 7 at 3 p.m. in the Community Center. A family concert for all ages: through interactive musical storytelling, Relic will introduce unique instruments and composers from the Baroque period.

Wednesday, January 10, 7 to 8 p.m. at the Old Parish House, 4711 Knox Rd., College Park. Open Rehearsal: Ever wondered how a musical group prepares a program for the stage? Observe a rehearsal of Enchanted Forest at College Park Arts Exchange followed by a meet-and-greet reception.

Sunday, January 14 at 3 p.m. in the Greenbelt Community Church. Enchanted Forest: Join Relic on a journey through the Enchanted Forest. From elves and nymphs to trolls and witches, this program sparkles with pleasures and curiosities from the English and French Baroque.

Bus Transfer Lights At Greenbelt Metro

On Sunday, December 17 at the Greenbelt Station, Metro began full implementation of bus transfer lights to ensure customers can make a reliable connection to their bus on low-frequency routes. Metro first tested the system in July.

When a train approaches the station during off-peak hours (9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. to midnight), a strobe light will signal to bus operators to wait up to 5 minutes before departing so that Metrorail customers have time to make it from the station platform to the bus.



Artful Afternoon On January 7

Greenbelt Recreation Arts invites guests of all ages to welcome the new year with an afternoon of free music and art activities on Sunday, January 7 in the Ground Floor East space at the Community Center. From 1 to 2 p.m. or from 2 to 3 p.m., create ornate modeled flower magnets out of Sculpey clay with Community Center Artist-in-Residence Gina Mai Denn. At 3 p.m., enjoy a special family concert with the worldclass Relic Ensemble, a baroque chamber orchestra.

For additional program information, visit greenbeltmd.gov/arts.

Create Mosaic Stepping Stones

The Greenbelt Recreation Arts Program invites artists and aspiring artisans to register for a fun, creative, three-part mosaic workshop this winter. They will learn how to create a beautiful, usable and fully waterproof, 12-by-12-inch, glass mosaic stepping stone perfect for a front stoop or garden with artist Shahin Talishkhan. This workshop is open to everyone ages 16 and older and no experience is required to participate. Materials and sample patterns will be provided.

This three-part workshop will take place Friday, January 26 from 6 to 8 p.m., Saturday, January, 27 from 1 to 3 p.m. and Friday, February 2 from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Community Center, Ground Floor East space located at 15 Crescent Road. Learn more and register online at bit.ly/3QWviYe.

Greenbelt's arts programs are supported in part by a grant from the Maryland State Arts Council. For additional program information, visit greenbeltmd.gov/arts.



Robotics Challenge

Team Quantum is an award-winning community robotics team that includes students from Bowie, CMIT Academy North, DuVal, Eleanor Roosevelt, and High Point high schools. Its task is to build a solution to the CRESCENDO challenge that will be revealed at the Gudelsky Auditorium on the campus of the Capitol Technology University, 11301 Springfield Road in Laurel, on Saturday January 6 at 11 a.m.

The three-day robot build takes place on the same campus in the MCI building starting at noon on January 6. To find out more, go to the Firstinspires.org website and www.firstinspires.org/robotics/frc/game-and-season. The Team Quantum website is www.airtigers.org. Come along if you're interested and watch the action. Teens may wish to join the club. The activity is free.



Senior Nutrition Program Luncheon

The Senior Nutrition Food and Friendship program provides lunch for seniors Monday through Friday at the Community Center beginning at 11:30 a.m. Note the updated start time. Meals must be reserved two weeks ahead so that enough food is ordered. Participants must complete a registration form in person at the Community Center office, on Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. There is a suggested donation. Call 301-397-2208, ext. 4215 with questions.

Two menu options, one vegetarian, will be offered for each luncheon. All meals, which provide at least one third of recommended dietary allowances for older adults, include margarine, coffee or tea and skim milk.

At the Library

Regular hours for the Greenbelt Library are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays; noon to 8 p.m., Tuesdays and Wednesdays; 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturdays; and 1 to 5 p.m., Sundays. Face masks are recommended for all customers over the age of 2 at Prince George's County Memorial Library System buildings.

Storytimes

Monday, January 8, 10:15 a.m., ages newborn to 2. Register at pgcmls.info/event/9685379.

Wednesday, January 10, 12:15 p.m., ages 3 to 5. Register at pgcmls.info/event/9685528.



Golden Age Club

January continues to be a busy month for the Greenbelt Golden Age Club, which meets on Wednesdays at 11 a.m. in the Community Center. However, if public schools are closed due to weather (or open late), the Golden Age meeting is cancelled. The club begins collecting 2024 dues - \$15 for the year - in January; a part of the dues goes toward the annual luncheon in April, so early payment is appreciated. A check made out to Greenbelt Golden Age Club is preferred and paid members get a discounted price for the April Annual luncheon.

January 10, A singalong with Chris Cherry and Stefan Brodd
January 17, January birthdays celebration, bring your lunch and a dessert or finger food to share
January 24, Bingo

January 31, Tea, bring finger food and reading materials to share. In addition, Daniel W. Wendel, EA, ABA, will discuss tax preparation - bring tax questions.

More Community Events are located throughout the paper.

All Year Round, Help Feed Those in Need

Greenbelt PORCH is continuing its program to collect food in January as scheduled below:

Sunday, January 14 - by 11 a.m., for 1-8 Courts Ridge and Crescent Roads

Saturday, January 20 - by 10 a.m. for 14 and 15 Courts Laurel Hill Road

Sunday, January 21 - by 4 p.m. for 9 and 12 Courts Ridge Road, 11 and 13 Courts Ridge Road and Boxwood Village; by 5 p.m. for Lakeside Drive.

To help out, leave a donation of nonperishables or hygiene products by the front door marked RUAK or PORCH visible from the street. Ensure donated items have not expired. If not part of a regular pickup route, contact Robert Goldberg-Strassler by noon on Sunday, January 14 at spreadruak@gmail.com. He will come to your porch and pick up your donations.

Volunteers who would like to expand Greenbelt PORCH to additional neighborhoods in Greenbelt are always welcome; especially needed are coordinators in Greenbelt East. Anyone who has questions or who is interested in being a volunteer or starting a new neighborhood for monthly food collection with Greenbelt PORCH, contact Robert Goldberg-Strassler at spreadruak@gmail.com.



Volunteers Needed

The Greenbelt MakerSpace is seeking volunteers to staff the tool library and organize classes and other events. People are asking for more open hours. Help is needed for the tool library to expand. Sign up for shifts at signup.com/go/UNkLnqk or email staff@make125.org if interested in other times or jobs.

The Greenbelt MakerSpace is down the outside stairs on the west side of the Granite Building at 115 Centerway.

Arts Advisory Board Meeting on Zoom

The Greenbelt Arts Advisory Board will meet on Tuesday, January 9 at 7 p.m. on Zoom. Discussion topics will include public art in Greenbelt and the purpose and goals of the Arts Advisory Board. Greenbelt citizens who may be interested in joining the board are encouraged to attend. For more information and to obtain the Zoom link, email alarsen@greenbeltmd.gov.

This Week at the New Deal Café

SUPPORT Greenbelt's only venue with BOTH dinner AND a show!

RESERVATIONS: 301-474-5642

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK.



113 Centerway, Roosevelt Center, Greenbelt, MD

Hours: Mon/Wed/Th 8am-9pm; Tues 8am-9:30pm; Friday/Saturday 8am - midnight; Sunday 9am - 9pm, UNLESS NOTED.

TH 1/04	FRI 1/05	SAT 1/06	SUN 1/07	
FRENCH CONVERSATION, 5:30p Wolf's Blues Show and Sit-In Jam 6:30-10pm Big, bodacious blues jam	PIANO STYLINGS OF PETER REPERT, 6-7:30 MauVIN Grade & The Grade Line Band NEW TIME: 7-10pm Funk 'n Roll	The Bad Influence Band 8-11pm Blues and Roots.	THIS COULD GO BOOM! 5:30-8pm The best in local marginalized and underrepresented artists!	
MON 1/08	TUES 1/09	WED 1/10	TH 1/11	SPECIALS!
MEMBERSHIP APPRECIATION, 4-9p Basset Hound Boys ELVIS TRIBUTE SHOW 6-8pm	NDC Open Mic w/ Tom Gleason 7-9:30pm SIGN-UPS AT 6PM	Greg Mayer Project 7-9pm A New Deal fav returns!	FRENCH CONVERSATION, 5:30p NEW EVENT! Drag Bingo with D'Manda Martini 7-9pm	HAPPY HOUR 4-7pm \$1 OFF BEER AND WINE WINE WEDNESDAY \$1 OFF PER GLASS \$5 OFF A BOTTLE

Join or renew your membership. Go to www.newdealcafe.com, click on "ABOUT", then "BECOME A MEMBER OR RENEW."
*For more information on these and other events, visit the NDC CALENDAR page on our website.
FUNDING FOR THESE ADS PROVIDED BY A GENEROUS DONOR.

Greenbelt Access Television
Jan. 6, Sat - Jan. 12, Fri
Verizon FIOS Channel 19 • Comcast 77
(School Programming on Your Cable Guide)
Streaming on www.greenbeltaccessstv.org

THIS WEEK on GATE • Your Community Access Station

Featured Live Performance (9am, 3pm, and 8pm)

The New Deal Nut: A Greenbelt Nutcracker
On December 9th and 10th, directors and choreographers Angella Foster and Lisa Pellittiere put on a beautiful, delightfully Greenbelt-coded, performance of The Nutcracker. All dancers are students from the Greenbelt Recreation Department's Fall dance program.

New This Month

Interview with Angella and Adelina Foster
Angella recounts the creative inspiration for the Greenbelt-ified rendition of The Nutcracker, and the processes taken in the months leading up to the performance. Plus: her daughter Adelina joins us to chime in on her leading role as Clara as well as the positive influence dancing has had on her.

All this and more on the GATE channel this week! Check greenbeltaccessstv.org for the full broadcast schedule, and visit Greenbelt Access Television on YouTube for new video productions.

Remembering Greenbelters Who Died in 2023

- Julie Andrus, 68, December 6, 2023
- April Allen Ashpes, 80, September 29, 2023
- Robert "Bob" Baker, 86, October 30, 2023
- Kathleen Williams Brady, 76, September 10, 2023
- Tal Brosh, 58, June 1, 2023
- Gabriella Chesnes, One week, November 17, 2023
- Jonathan Louis Cohen, 73, February 23, 2023
- Barbara Cramer, 75, April 26, 2023
- Dolores M. Downs, 92, July 19, 2023
- Sandra Dwiggins, 81, June 16, 2023
- Judith Moore Evans, 82, April 13, 2023
- David Porter Fogle, 94, June 25, 2023
- Linda Forristal, 71, July 6, 2023
- Carolyn Foxwell, 91, January 3, 2023
- Olga Elizabeth Penney Garber, 67, February 13, 2023
- Helen Gary Warner German, 70, October 23, 2023
- Harriet Gherts Ginsburg, 82, November 24, 2023
- Brandon Ricardo "Ric" Gordon, 41, November 26, 2023
- Melinda Carol Pierson Green, 67, February 25, 2023
- Robert Franklin Haas, 100, May 20, 2023
- Grace "Pat" Hand, 90, October, 2023
- Betty Ruth Harrison, 92, April 23, 2023
- Larry B. Hartzell Sr., 62, June 4, 2023
- Dr. Henry W. Haslach Jr., 81, June 15, 2023
- Wilda Heiss, 85, September 16, 2023
- Azora Hemming-Swift, 88, March 7, 2023
- Mary Wulforst Hernandez, 95, December 17, 2022
- Genevieve "Jenny" Iacovazzi, 80, August, 2023
- Melvin Robert Kent, 83, October 15, 2023
- Martina "Tina" Marie Lange, 59, February 16, 2023
- John "Jack" Leslie III, June 28, 2023
- Rev. Robert Lewis, 92, September 6, 2023
- Robert "Bob" Thomas Luddy, 78, January 8, 2023
- Steve Mayton, 60, July 17, 2023
- Jacqueline "Jackie" Mary McFarland, 61, March 22, 2023
- Kathleen Scott McFarland, 95, April 11, 2023
- Jayda Medrano-Moore, 16, September 11, 2023
- Joan Elizabeth Haslinger Mohan, 81, February 6, 2023
- Barry Paul Moien, 79, May 14, 2023
- Jacqueline "Jacki" Nelson, 82, July 18, 2023
- Dr. Joseph Kanayo Nwude, April 14, 2023
- Dawn Marie Arnold Payne, 61, December 23, 2021
- Harriette Dexter Longacre Phelps, 87, May 24, 2023
- Brenda S. Purvis, June 27, 2023
- Sister Elizabeth May Raffo, 90, July 3, 2023
- Jeanne Schaeffer Rowland, June 15, 2023
- Ellen Yoko Sakai, 80, November 8, 2023
- Jean Snyder, 102, December 10, 2023
- Kevin Francis Sullivan, 67, September 7, 2023
- Mariame Toure Sylla, 59, July, 2023
- Pat Walsh, 88, June 25, 2023
- Sharon Lee Walton, 77, June 28, 2023
- Helen "June" Webb, 81, November 11, 2023
- Gene Child Whaples, 85, March 28, 2023
- Marie Virginia Zanner, 98, February 28, 2023
- Janet Murphy Zevallos, 55, March 1, 2023

- Compiled by Elisabeth Kevorkian

Pepco Offers Billing Assistance For Higher Winter Energy Bills

Winter brings colder temperatures, which lead to increased energy use and higher energy bills. Pepco customers can take advantage of billing assistance programs, including the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), a federally funded program that helps limited-income households pay their home energy bills. Customers

should not wait for winter heating bills to arrive before applying for help. The program is first-come, first-served and is only available until funding runs out.

LIHEAP provides grants in varying amounts with no payback required. Requirements include a household income below a set threshold based on household size (see benefits.gov/benefit/623). Homeowners, renters, roomers and subsidized housing tenants may be eligible. Customers do not have to be behind on their bills in order to receive assistance.

Maryland customers can visit the Maryland Department of Human Services website at dhs.maryland.gov/office-of-home-energy-programs/low-income-household-water-assistance-program or call 800-332-6347 for more information and to apply.

For customers who do not meet the LIHEAP eligibility requirements but are still having difficulty paying their energy bills, Pepco Customer Care is also available to help by offering flexible payment arrangements, extending payment periods for balances, connecting customers to other assistance programs and budget billing. Pepco customers can contact Pepco at 202-833-7500 or visit pepco.com/EnergyAssistance.



PHOTO BY ANNE GARDNER

Holly berries

NR The road to heaven is paved with good advertising. Nonprofits \$11.10 www.GreenbeltNewsReview.com

The Bus
Seniors, Children with School ID and Customers with Disabilities **RIDE FREE**



Danny Betman of Laurel, ex-husband of Susan Lesser of 18 Court Ridge Road, died on December 27, 2023. He was the father of their two daughters, Sarah Betman and Ruth Bryant. He also was the "Papaw" of their four grandchildren. Sarah and Ruth are ERHS graduates.

Send details of your news to editor@greenbeltnewsreview.com.

Sundays @ MT Hosts Game Day January 21

On Sunday, January 21 from 10 a.m. to noon, join Mishkan Torah for Sundays @ MT monthly programming with a Game Day, including mah-jongg, a movie club to watch the film *Oma and Bella*, and bagels for all to enjoy. All are welcome. Visit MishkanTorah.org to RSVP.

CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF GREENBELT MASS
Sunday 10:00 a.m.
City Council Room
25 Crescent Rd
ALL ARE WELCOME!
OR - Join us on ZOOM!
For ZOOM link:
CCG1985+owner@groups.io

"O contending peoples and kindreds of the earth! Set your faces towards unity, and let the radiance of its light shine upon you. Gather ye together, and for the sake of God resolve to root out whatever is the source of contention amongst you." – Bahá'u'lláh
Greenbelt Bahá'í Community
www.greenbeltbahais.org

The Bible Says...
For You (God) have been my stronghold and a refuge in the day of my distress.
Psalm 59:16b
MCF COMMUNITY CHURCH
IN PERSON Sunday Worship Services
10a-11:15a @ Greenbelt Elementary School
MCFcc.org

Mishkan Torah Congregation
10 Ridge Road, Greenbelt, MD 20770
Rabbi Saul Oresky, Cantor Phil Greenfield
An unpretentious, historic, welcoming, liberal, egalitarian synagogue that respects tradition and becomes your extended family in the 21st century.
Friday evening services at 8:00pm
Saturday morning services at 10:00am
Offering hybrid services, online and in-person activities
For further information, call (301) 474-4223 www.mishkantorah.org
Affiliated with these movements: Conservative and Reconstructing Judaism

Paint Branch Unitarian Universalist Church
3215 Powder Mill Road, Adelphi
Phone: 301-937-3666 www.pbuuc.org
Welcomes you to our open, nurturing community
January 7, 2024 at 3:00 pm
Seeing One Another Clearly (Mission Discernment Part 1)
Rev. Ann Kadlecek with Worship Associate Carol Boston
We've all encountered "other people" with a distorted sense of reality, but still we humans like to think that we perceive ourselves, one another and the world clearly. But do we? How might we see one another more clearly? And what difference might it make, for us and for the world?
Streaming to our Facebook page, on Zoom and in person at 3:00 at: University Christian Church, 6800 Adelphi Road, Hyattsville, MD

Obituaries
The News Review publishes obituaries of Greenbelt residents, past or present.
You write it or we will if you prefer. We try to include information about participation in various activities and organizations, where the person lived and something about the family. A photograph and service information should be included. There is no charge.

Mowatt Memorial United Methodist Church
40 Ridge Road, Greenbelt
Open hearts, Open minds, Open doors
Find us on facebook.com/mowattumc
301-474-9410
Pastor Evelyn Romero
Worship Service Sunday 9:30-10:30am
Celebrate hope with us

Greenbelt Community Church
One Hillside Road
We are an Open and Affirming Church
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Join Us Sunday 10:15 AM for Worship and Church School
www.facebook.com/GCCUCCMD
www.greenbeltcommunitychurch.org

ST. HUGH OF GRENOBLE CATHOLIC CHURCH
• Daily Mass: Mon-Fri 7:15am*, Sat 9am*
• Sunday Mass:
◦ Sat vigil 5pm*
◦ Sun 8am, 9:30am, 11am
• Confessions Saturday 3pm - 4pm.
Masks for the unvaccinated encouraged.
*Live-streamed on Facebook and available on our YouTube page later.
CELEBRATE WITH US
135 Crescent Rd.
www.sthughofgrenoble.org

Greenbelt BAPTIST CHURCH
Christ-centered Biblical & Reformed
Sunday Morning Worship 10:30am
Sunday School 9:15am
Wednesday Night Bible Study 7:00pm
101 Greenhill Rd. Greenbelt, MD
www.greenbeltbaptist.org

Winter Activity Guide Available Online

Greenbelt Recreation has a packed schedule this winter. They offer a variety of options, including music, art and dance classes for pre-school, a host of performing arts classes for elementary and middle school, a wide array of visual arts, ceramics, dance, music, and health and fitness classes for teens and adults, and myriad trips, health and fitness and special interest options for active aging.

Registration for classes and events is ongoing for both residents and nonresidents. Visit greenbeltmd.gov/activityguide.

Cookies on the Bridge Seeks Volunteers

It's time for some sweetness for the students. This is a call for volunteers who are looking for something fun and worthwhile to do: consider Cookies on the Bridge. On weekdays from 3:15 to 4 p.m., volunteers meet at the Spellman Overpass to offer cookies (and carrots) to students coming home from Eleanor Roosevelt High School. The goal is to ensure the safety of the students as they make their way home.

Those interested or who have questions should contact Robert Goldberg-Strassler, RUAK (Random Unselfish Acts of Kindness), at spreadruak@gmail.com or 301-345-8755 and leave a message.

Novel Endings Open for Business

Novel Endings is the used book room within the Greenbelt Library. Sales of books and other media from this room support special programming and the Library.

Maintained by volunteers for the Friends of Greenbelt Library, Novel Endings receives donations of book discards from the library as well as donations from the community by special arrangements. To donate books, email friendsofgreenbeltlibrary@gmail.com. Cash and check donations are also accepted in the black box next to the Library's front desk.

Come see what Novel Endings has to offer and support the Greenbelt Library at the same time.

Toastmasters Meet

The Greenbelt Toastmasters Club invites all to join them online every first, third and fifth Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. The club provides a fun and friendly environment for anyone interested in improving their public speaking and leadership skills. Learn more at greenbelt.toastmastersclubs.org.

Donate Sneakers For People in Need

Greenbelt Community Church, United Church of Christ (GCC) is collecting athletic shoes by partnering with GotSneakers. This sneaker recycling program helps to keep sneakers out of landfills, where they have harmful effects on the environment.

A donation box is located outside the Fellowship Center (the small building behind the church) for people to drop off sneakers at any time.



City Information & Events

The strength of Greenbelt is diverse people living together in a spirit of cooperation. We celebrate all people. By sharing together all are enriched. We strive to be a respectful, welcoming community that is open, accessible, safe and fair.

GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL - REGULAR MEETING Monday, January 8, 2024 at 7:30 pm

ORGANIZATION

Call to Order
Roll Call
Meditation and Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
Petitions and Requests
Consent Agenda - Approval of Staff Recommendations (Items on the Consent Agenda [marked by *] will be approved as recommended by staff, subject to removal from the Consent Agenda by Council.)
Approval of Agenda and Additions

COMMUNICATIONS

Presentations
* Minutes of Council Meetings
- Administrative Reports
* Committee Reports

LEGISLATION

- A Resolution to Repeal and Reenact with Amendment Resolution Number 2097 to Adopt Standing Rules for the Council of the City of Greenbelt, Maryland
- 2nd Reading, Adoption

OTHER BUSINESS

- Contract for Broadband Feasibility Study
- Award of Purchase - Planning and Recreation Vehicles
- ARPA Status Update
- Approval of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program Year (PY 49) Contract for Roadwork Improvements at Springhill Lane.
- Council Activities
- Council Reports
* Meetings
* Stakeholders
* Re/Appointment to Advisory Board

In advance, the hearing impaired is advised to use MD RELAY at 711 to submit your questions/comments or contact the City Clerk at (301) 474-8000 or email banderson@greenbeltmd.gov.

MEETINGS FOR JANUARY 8 - 12

Tuesday, January 9 at 7 pm, **SPECIAL MEETING - COUNCIL CANDIDATE INTERVIEWS**

Tuesday, January 9 at 7 pm, **ARTS ADVISORY BOARD**, *On the Agenda: Approval of November Minutes, Public Art in Greenbelt, Purpose and Goals of Arts and Advisory Board*

Tuesday, January 9 at 7 pm, **PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**, *On the Agenda: Draft Report on Updated General Orders*

Wednesday, January 10 at 7:30 pm, **WORK SESSION - PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS - BUILDING SERVICES AND SCHOOL BOUNDARIES**

Thursday, January 11 at 7 pm, **SPECIAL MEETING - COUNCIL VACANCY APPOINTMENT**

Thursday, January 11 at 5:30 pm, **BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

Thursday, January 11 at 7 pm, **COMMUNITY RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD**

In advance, the hearing impaired is advised to use MD RELAY at 711 to submit your questions/comments or contact the City Clerk at (301) 474-8000 or email banderson@greenbeltmd.gov. This schedule is subject to change. For confirmation that a meeting is being held call (301) 474-8000. For information on public participation for the meetings above, visit the meetings calendar at www.greenbeltmd.gov/calendar.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR DAY OF SERVICE

JANUARY 15, 10 AM - 1 PM
Buddy Attick Park, 555 Crescent Road

Be a part of the community effort to protect trees from beaver herbivory and invasive vines at Buddy Attick Park. Volunteers will work with Public Works staff to place wire caging around the trunks of native trees to protect them from beaver herbivory and remove invasive vines.

Register by email at kdricoll@greenbeltmd.gov.

CITY FIBER OPTIC INSTALLATION PROJECT UNDERWAY

We're making our connectivity better! Please pardon our appearance as a City fiber optic installation project will take place on Crescent Road beginning the week of December 4, 2023, and is projected to last two months. Thank you!

EMERGENCY DIAPER DISTRIBUTION

The Emergency Diaper Distribution supports Greenbelt families in need of diapers. Greenbelt residents only, you must sign-up each month.

To register: <https://forms.gle/uYJLegTD7HGjaAz76> or call (240) 424-0302.

CURRENT CARES PROGRAMS

CARES is happy to provide the following programs FREE of charge this fall: Emergency Diaper Program, Family and Unpaid Caregiver Resource Fair, Alzheimer's Awareness Month Webinar Series, Coffee & Conversations, two Free Produce Distribution events, Mental Health and Suicide Prevention in Older Adults webinar, Staying Strong webinar, and more.

For descriptions and information, visit www.greenbeltmd.gov/CARESprograms.

OFFICIAL NOTICE

In accordance with Section 3-305(b)(1) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of the Public General Laws of Maryland, a closed session of the Greenbelt City Council will be held on Thursday, January 11, 2024, in Council Chambers of the Municipal Building immediately following the Special Meeting – Council Vacancy Appointment to discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals.

The purpose of this meeting will be Council to deliberate and take action regarding Candidate qualifications for an appointment to Council vacancy.

*** The public may attend the Special Meeting prior to the closed session, and observe the vote of Council to move into closed session on Thursday, January 11, 2024.**

Bonita Anderson, City Clerk

ARTFUL AFTERNOON WORKSHOP AND FAMILY CONCERT Sunday, January 7, 1 - 4 pm Greenbelt Community Center, Ground Floor East

Create ornate flower magnets with Gina Mai Denn then listen to a free concert by the Relic Ensemble. All ages. FREE.

Details and sign-up: <https://bit.ly/46T967k>.



GREENBELT SAVE OUR SENIORS GRANT PROGRAM Are you homebound and need help with personal care?

The Greenbelt Assistance in Living Program, in partnership with Pickett Fences Senior Services, has been awarded a grant to provide temporary home health support, bathroom safety assessment, and equipment to residents 60+ or 50+ with a disability, who reside within incorporated Greenbelt. During this time staff will work to identify and link residents with long-term support programs.

Benefits:

- RN Assessment
- Bathroom Safety Assessment and Equipment
- Home Health Visits

Limited spots are available!

Please email Trinity Cephas, GAIL Student Intern, for more information at tcephas@greenbeltmd.gov or call the Bilingual Health Caseworker, Brendy Garcia, at (240) 424-0302 or bgarcia@greenbeltmd.gov.



COMMITTEES & BOARDS VACANCIES VOLUNTEER TODAY!

Volunteering for City of Greenbelt Committees & Boards is an excellent opportunity to engage with your community and make a difference. Choose from a number of committees & boards such as the **Senior Citizens Advisory Committee, the Youth Advisory Committee, or the Advisory Committee on Education**, Arts Advisory Board, Board of Elections, Community Relations Advisory Board, Employee Relations Advisory Board, Forest Preserve Advisory Board, Greenbelt Advisory Committee on Environmental Sustainability, or the Park and Recreation Advisory Board and make a difference in Greenbelt!

By dedicating your time and expertise, you will help shape the future of Greenbelt and create a community that values the voices of all its residents. Take the first step towards making a positive impact and apply for one of these committee vacancies today! Call (301) 474-8000.

BRING YOUR OWN BAG ORDINANCE

Effective January 1, 2024, the City of Greenbelt's Bring Your Own Bag bill aims to reduce single-use plastic bag waste and litter in our local waterways and tributary system.

The Bring Your Own Bag bill will prohibit a retail establishment from providing a plastic carryout bag to shoppers and can charge at least 10 cents for each paper bag provided to a customer at the point of sale.

Visit www.greenbeltmd.gov/BYOBag.



Applicants for City Council Share Their Motivation, Skills

The Greenbelt News Review invited the six applicants for the Greenbelt City Council vacancy to share with our readers why they are applying for the position and the most important credentials or skills they would bring to the role of councilmember, if appointed. One applicant, April Tanter, withdrew from consideration January 2. Here are the responses we received from the remaining five applicants, in alphabetical order.

Matthew Inzeo

I am a longtime Greenbelt resident, now 31 years. I am an Eleanor Roosevelt graduate, and also attended Greenbelt Elementary School and Greenbelt Middle School. For 14 of those years I have served on city committees, currently on the Advisory Planning Board, and coached Little League teams for 10 years. I have lived in four Greenbelt neighborhoods: GHI, Lakeside North, Greenbriar and finally Greenspring, in Greenbelt East, where Domenek and I are raising four children.

I reiterate my commitments, if appointed to council, to applying my law enforcement experience to Greenbelt's rising crime rate, expanding recreation facilities and programs (especially including Franklin Park), promoting business and job growth, improving intra-city transportation, sharing Greenbelt's tradition of environmental advocacy and putting community first. I eagerly anticipate welcoming the FBI to Greenbelt, but also realize that significant city planning decisions are needed before it arrives.

If appointed I would be the first Latino ever to serve on the city council, adding diversity to the council at a time when Greenbelt's Hispanic population is growing. Within the council, I promise again to be a team player, speak in a collaborative voice and respect differences of opinion.

In the recent council election, I received 1,092 votes but finished one position short of election. It is meaningful to me that this council vacancy resulted from Ric Gordon's tragic passing. I am honored that Carla, his widow, has supported my appointment.

I repeat again my previously-stated commitment to serve you, your children and the entire Greenbelt community.

Amy Knesel

Greetings! I'm Amy Knesel (NEE-sil), but you can call me Amy K. Ten years ago, I fell in love with Greenbelt and moved my growing family from a single-family home in Hyattsville to a tiny townhouse in GHI. Since then, I've immersed myself in our vibrant community: serving on various boards (Greenbelt Elementary School, Greenbelt Soccer Alliance and the Labor Day Festival Committee) and engaging with local businesses in both paid and volunteer capacities, including our beloved Greenbelt Cinema.

Among my most gratifying roles was spearheading the Greenbelt Pumpkin Festival from 2017 to 2022. In 2018, supported by CHEARS and a grant from the Greenbelt Community Foundation, I expanded the Festival across Greenbelt West, East and



PHOTO BY ANNA BEDFORD-DILLOW

Council applicant Leon Schachter speaks at the recent listening session.

Center – increasing accessibility so that everyone in our city can experience the magic of our namesake green spaces.

I am excited to have the chance to continue my service as a member of Greenbelt City Council. It is a weighty honor to have this opportunity in the wake of Councilmember Ric Gordon's passing. If selected, I will serve the remainder of his term respectfully, with an eye toward community, equity and accessibility.

Building on my decade of volunteerism, I approach community service with a dynamic mindset, seeing "community" as an action word – ever-evolving, with constant room for improvement. Teamwork is ingrained in my approach, and I am eager to bring my passion, dedication and collaborative spirit to council.

For more information about my experiences and vision, please visit amykforgreenbelt.com.

Leon Schachter

Leon "Lee" Schachter believes serving on the Greenbelt City Council will help residents prosper for which he will be emotionally rewarded; that he will hit the ground running given his extensive public service on another

city council and that he will add diversity to the current council as a senior citizen and renter living near the Roosevelt Center.

Being retired, Lee has time and energy to make council his top priority. He was in the Senior Executive Service for the federal government, a chief administrative judge and a law instructor. He served for 14 years as an elected councilperson for Cheverly, Md., which, like Greenbelt, relies on volunteers, its own police and public works departments, hosts diverse populations and has a significant budget.

Lee has decades of connections to Greenbelt through involvement with his two children raised in Greenbelt and his brother, Dr. David Schachter, who maintained a medical practice in Greenbelt. Lee belongs to the Mishkan Torah synagogue, Golden Age Club, Aquatic & Fitness Center and is a New Deal Café regular.

Lee, due process champion and leader within DOD, listened to stakeholders, was open to compromise and made decisions based on his informed conscience.

Being the victim of an armed robbery and home invasion, Lee is pro police, provided they are well trained to use force only when necessary for the safety of themselves and others. Like many senior citizens, Lee would have to be hard pressed to raise taxes.

Lee pledges to maintain a

See **CANDIDATES**, page 8

On January 2, April Tanter, one of six applicants for the seat on Greenbelt City Council, withdrew from consideration. Tanter, a resident of Greenbelt East, said she was declining the opportunity for consideration due to family matters.

COUNCIL continued from page 1

record for the meeting. He also asked the public to share their feelings about opening the application period back up, calling the timeframe "totally inappropriate" and insisting "the more candidates we have the better."

Six individuals collected signatures, provided financial disclosures and statements, and successfully filed during the nine-day window. As announced last week, the applicants are Matthew Inzeo, Amy Knesel, Leon Schachter, James Whipple, Julie Winters and April Tanter, who has now withdrawn. Knesel, Schachter and Winters attended the listening session and introduced themselves. (See their statements on this page.)

Would-be applicant Kevin Lockhart "Coach K" was present, as he was at the first listening session, and spoke of his desire to represent Greenbelt West, though he did not complete an application during the window. Lockhart spoke of raising his son alone in Franklin Park for 15 years, after his son's mother died, and of Ric Gordon. "I knew Ric very well. We worked together on some things," he said. Speaking about the lack of participation from Franklin Park, he pointed to the two members of the audience from that apartment complex, saying, "Out of that 9,000, there's three people here. That's crazy." Lockhart said he was jealous of all the resources in Greenbelt Center, listing a few and contrasting that to "a gym for basketball. That's it" in Greenbelt West. "The bridge is not broken. We will continue that bridge," he said of the isolation of Greenbelt West. Lockhart expressed willingness to serve as a liaison in some way but asked council to "open it up and let me in."

Louise Weissman of Hillside Road spoke against reopening the process, saying Greenbelt has a representative democracy not participatory democracy. Questions she'd like posed to candidates are

their opinions on rent stabilization and affordable housing, their thinking on commercial development and how to address police accountability.

Carmen Healey, of Motiva in Greenbelt West and formerly of Franklin Park, said she would like to see the process opened. "The one week was not enough," she said, "especially for the West side. No one over there knows ... I've been in Greenbelt for about seven or eight years. Had no clue ... so I don't think it's a waste of anyone's time ... Ric Gordon was a big part of the West side of Greenbelt ... We do need representation on the West side."

Vijay Kowtha of Greenbelt East was against opening the application period again. "I'm very happy you have good candidates that have signed up, there's no reason to increase it," he said. He wanted to ask candidates how they'll face societal changes, including an influx of immigrants. "The world is changing in front of us," he stressed. Other priorities he shared were transportation and engaging the three parts of Greenbelt. "We are failing in transportation," said Kowtha.

Aileen Kroll of Greenbelt Center expressed appreciation that council has the ability to consider the "totality of the circumstances" and not just appoint the next highest vote-getter, saying, "I'm looking for somebody who has shown they are engaged with all of Greenbelt." She hopes council appoints someone invested in the city, with the ability to listen to divergent voices, to create unity and be accountable and transparent.

Susan Harris, also of Greenbelt Center, praised the process as "excellent" and asked if the interviews would be held publicly. Jordan believed they would be.

A resident of Windsor Green in Greenbelt East, said, "Representation does matter." She

See **COUNCIL**, page 8

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Non-alcoholic Beers



Going meatless?

Healthy Eating at New Deal Café



LOOK BACK continued from page 1

FBI HQ May Come to Greenbelt

On November 8, the General Services Administration (GSA) announced that it had selected Greenbelt over Landover, Md. and Springfield, Va., as the site for the new headquarters for the FBI, the culmination of a 14-year process. Jubilant federal, state and county representatives extolled the 7,500 new jobs and the economic boost to Prince George's County (issue of November 16). Within a week, FBI director Christopher Wray and Virginia elected officials challenged the selection, alleging that impropriety and political considerations fouled the selection process. GSA is reviewing the selection.



PHOTO BY ANNA BEDFORD-DILLON

Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks cheers at the podium in Greenbelt's council meeting room during a press conference on November 10. Behind her stand Comptroller Brooke Lierman, Attorney General Anthony Brown, U.S. Representative Glenn Ivey, Lt. Governor Aruna Miller, Governor Wes Moore and U.S. Representative Steny Hoyer.

New Deal Café

The New Deal Café had another bumpy ride this year when the arrangement with the Greenbelt Co-op Supermarket, which had run the food service aspect of the Café, posted a significant loss from running the operation. The Café, exercising due diligence, and with the support of the Co-op board, began a preliminary search for a new vendor in case the two boards were unable to negotiate a mutually beneficial contract.

At the moment, the Co-op is still on deck but its contract, originally ending June 2023, was first extended to October 31, 2023, and extended once more to January 31, 2024. The Co-op's ongoing losses were almost eliminated when the New Deal picked up paying the rent (which had been paid by the Co-op), but the current arrangement so far benefited neither the Co-op nor the New Deal. (Editor's Note: The boards of the Co-op and Café are currently in negotiations for a new contract. Again exercising due diligence, the Café board is keeping its options open for a new vendor, should that become necessary.)

In a lively open quarterly meeting in August (issue of August 31), New Deal Café President Michael Hartman hoped more sales could be generated and Treasurer Dorian Winterfeld reported reserves were being whittled away from paying the rent and there was also over \$100,000 in long-term debt to consider. He appealed to supporters for help.

Juvenile Crime

In February, we reported on a "TikTok Challenge" fueling car thefts by juveniles. Begun in 2022, it exploited a security loophole in Kia and Hyundais that enabled certain models without push-button ignitions to be hotwired using just a USB cord. It drove a spike in car thefts by juveniles in 2023.

In September (the most recent monthly crime report currently available) the total year-to-date motor vehicle thefts in Greenbelt was 429, which compares to 75 for the same period in 2022. Greenbelt Police Department reported 51 arrests of juveniles from January to September 2023, up from 12 for January to September 2022.

In August, we reported that Greenbelt's Chief of Police Richard Bowers feared police were prevented from interrogating youth and breaking up carjacking rings. "He is concerned that a nonviolent youth offender can be arrested in the morning, released to their parents and rearrested again that same evening," reported Lois Rosado (see page 1 of the August 3, 2023 issue). Three recent Acts – the Maryland Juvenile Justice Reform Bill of 2021, the Interrogation Protection Act of 2022 and Child Safe Harbor–Abuse–Trafficking Act of 2023 – are designed to protect juveniles from exploitation

See LOOK BACK, page 12

Council Holds Disappointing State Highways Worksession

by Cathie Meetre

Mayor Emmett Jordan opened the December 18 worksession with two representatives from District 3 of the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) which serves Prince George's and Montgomery counties. He noted that SHA has jurisdiction over the two main highways that divide the city – Greenbelt Road (Route 193) and Kenilworth Avenue (Route 201). Assistant City Manager Tim George, Director of Planning and Community Development Terri Hruby and Planner Jaime Fierer also participated.

Carm Saimbré and Patrice Emezie attended on behalf of SHA. Jordan launched the meeting by asking about the impact of the overall 8 percent funding cut that will affect state transportation. The answer was unspecific though it seemed the effect will be felt more in the next Fiscal Year (FY) beginning July 2, 2024, and that SHA would continue to prioritize safety. This became much the pattern of response from SHA, with only rarely any specific information available. An exception was when council was assured by Saimbré that the state was well-prepared for the onset of winter driving conditions.

Greenbelt Road/Hanover Parkway

Much of the discussion concerned the stretch of Greenbelt Road between the intersection with Southway eastward to Hanover Parkway. Concerns included inadequate lighting at the northwest corner of the Hanover Parkway intersection where pedestrians, including many students, cross from the school to Greenway Center. The bus stop on the north side of Greenbelt Road at the exit ramp from the Baltimore-Washington Parkway was cited as a safety hazard. The relative priority of the merging lanes of traffic from the Parkway with the westbound traffic on Greenbelt Road was also pointed out as confusing and dangerous. The condition of the road bed on the entrance ramp to the southbound Parkway also needs attention.

No Immediate Action

SHA representatives, who were reminded by Jordan and Councilmembers Silke Pope and

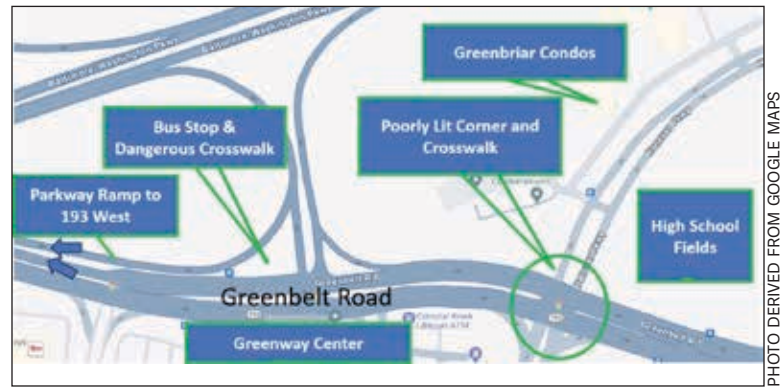


PHOTO DERIVED FROM GOOGLE MAPS

Greenbelt Road east of Southway was the topic of much concern in the council worksession with the State Highway Administration.

Rodney Roberts that these questions were perennial, said that it was likely that resurfacing would take place as part of regular maintenance planned in early 2024. While frequently reminding council that safety was a priority, the SHA estimate for the unsafe lighting and the hazardous bus stop crosswalk at the Parkway off-ramp were described as 18 months to two years out for planning. Pope, perhaps tongue-in-cheek, asked if this was from the time council last asked about it a couple of years ago or the time of the current meeting and the answer was, from this meeting. Citing increased local pedestrian deaths, Jordan requested that SHA place more priority on this before a pedestrian was killed. Pope requested a plan of what is included in the improvement plan at the intersection for early 2024 – though it seemed to be more routine road mending than any improvement to the intersection's overall safety.

Bus Stop and Parkway Merge

Councilmember Jenni Pompe suggested potential traffic calming and additional signage for the bus stop located on the north side of Greenbelt Road across from Greenway. It sits on a small island with the ramp off the Parkway on one side and Greenbelt Road on the other and a risky crosswalk to access it. This stimulated a proposition from Roberts to eliminate the westbound exit ramp from the Parkway so that westbound traffic would instead made a sharp right turn onto Greenbelt Road at the light. He pointed out that this would render the bus stop much safer and would also eliminate the merging

and speed problem between the Parkway and the right turn to Southway. (Editor's Note: The potential of backups onto the Parkway by restricting the exit of traffic turning right onto Greenbelt Road was not addressed.)

On the bus stop issue, SHA's Emezie noted that a safety study which would include a traffic study to observe traffic patterns and analyze crash data could be performed within an approximately 30-to-60-day timeline, but she didn't think that changes in road configuration such as suggested by Roberts would be included in such a consideration and said she would need to confer with the construction division to ascertain more.

Bike Paths

Greenbelt bike proponent Jeff Lemieux (connecting online) sparked encouraging news for the local trail segment from Mandan Road to Good Luck Road along Greenbelt Road that would form part of the larger project to run protected bike lanes from

See SHA, page 11

Amy Knesel for City Council

COMMUNITY - EQUITY - ACCESSIBILITY



To learn more about my goals and submit your letter of support, please visit amykforgreenbelt.com



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COUNCIL continued from page 6



PHOTO BY ANNA BEDFORD-DILLOW

Mayor Emmett Jordan speaks over the technical difficulties as City Manager Josué Salmerón assists with a new microphone. To the right are Councilmembers Jenni Pompei and Rodney Roberts.

suggested Greenbelt West should be a big part of the consideration since that's where Ric Gordon was from.

Heather Bloomhart, who lives in Greenbelt East near Schrom Hills Park and moved during the pandemic, spoke of the exclusion from Greenbelt. At the Greenbelt Aquatic & Fitness Center she was told that she didn't qualify for resident membership and wasn't a resident but found she was when she voted and checked her tax bill.

Judith Davis, former councilmember and resident of Greenbelt East, said, "I hope council does maintain a diverse council." She hopes council will determine through their interviews that the person wants to do the work, read agendas and emails, meet people, attend meetings inside and outside Greenbelt. "I hope that this person has resided in Greenbelt for several years, that they have attended council meetings and worksessions, that they have time for meetings," said Davis. "Finally, one thing I know the council will have to do when this is all over: Change the charter, please!"

Davis also shared that at one point Greenbelt East had a majority on council. "It changes ... We all work for all of Greenbelt," she said.

Bill Orleans argued, "It was not an excellent process as has been suggested several times today by several people. It's a flawed process. Maybe even a very bad process ... There's someone aggrieved by the process. Allow it to open up if they did not receive the information to know about the week-and-a-half period to submit an application."

Jordan said it was an oversimplification to break the city down into three sections.

Reverend Ray Raysor from Franklin Park asked, "If the process is already decided on, what is the purpose of the listening sessions?"

Jordan said the decision criteria and matrix are not set and councilmembers are interested in hearing from the public.

Pompei said the councilmembers are using a matrix and ru-

bric to try to level the playing field and be as fair as possible, "We want to be fair, we want to be transparent and accountable too," she said.

Roberts expressed appreciation for everyone coming out. "I think if you look back at Greenbelt's history, you were not even allowed to live in Greenbelt unless you agreed to participate in the community," he said. "That is a big, a huge part of our town. It always has been and it needs to be. Greenbelt is a participatory community and it needs to stay a participatory community."

Toni Mathewson, of Hunting Ridge in Greenbelt East, would like the person who is chosen to demonstrate a collaborative nature and willingness to compromise. "Regarding extending the application process, I'm not particularly in favor of that but I think it highlights the issue of communication, especially with Greenbelt East and West, two-way communication," said Mathewson.

Pompei stressed that residents can email council to have their comments be part of public record. That email address is council@greenbeltmd.gov.

Council Schedule for Considering Applicants
 January 3, 7:30 p.m. Work-session. Council candidate interviews, formulate decision rubric and finalize interview format for council vacancy.
 January 8, 7:30 p.m. Regular meeting. The agenda includes voting on the matrix and which questions to ask candidates.
 January 9, 7 p.m. Special meeting. Council candidate interviews.
 January 11, 7 p.m. Special meeting. Council candidate interviews, deliberation regarding interviews and vote to make an appointment to council vacancy.
 Residents are invited to give feedback to council on the candidates, selection criteria or questions to ask during the interviews. Email comments to council@greenbeltmd.gov.

CANDIDATES continued from page 6

regular presence throughout Greenbelt, especially west of its historical center and work tirelessly for the benefit of all residents.

James Whipple

I am applying for the Greenbelt City Council vacancy because I have a vision for our city that continues the legacy left behind by Ric Gordon. The Greenbelt that I envision is one where all people are recognized and respected, regardless of where they live, the color of their skin or their socioeconomic class. The problems we face now are hidden beneath the surface and require a keen insight in order to find the right solutions. My campaign for the 2023 city council was rooted in this drive; I sought to enable walking and biking as feasible means of traversing our city, so those who cannot afford a car can still do things we take for granted: go to work, get groceries, visit friends and loved ones.

I seek to bring my empathy and honesty to the council. I have served as a member of the Greenbelt Homes, Inc. board of directors shortly after moving to the community in 2022 and have been politically active since moving to Greenbelt in 2016. During that time, I have never shied away from my beliefs and never misrepresented myself to those who place their trust in me. While serving on the board, I have mediated conflicts between neighbors and friends, made hard decisions to ensure the continued



PHOTO BY ANNA BEDFORD-DILLOW

Council applicant Julie Winters introduces herself at the listening session in Greenbelt East on Saturday. Front right is fellow applicant Amy Knesel.

stability of the community and collaborated on policies and budgets to guide the neighborhood to the egalitarian ideals I hold close to my heart.

Julie Winters

A friend asked me recently, "You didn't run for council in November; why are you [applying] now?"

That is a fair question.

As a somewhat introverted editor, I had never seen running for any office on my personal horizon. But when the city announced that it was seeking applicants to fill the council vacancy, I saw a unique opportunity for service: to be a steady, thoughtful presence on the council for the remainder of this term.

I have lived in Greenbelt for

27 years, nearly half my life. I love this city and understand its history and character and something of the challenges it faces. I am willing to do the work to understand the technical aspects of areas outside my expertise (e.g., the land and environmental issues surrounding the maglev project and the FBI relocation).

I have served on the board of Friends of New Deal Café Arts for the past six years, the last few as vice president. For the last eight years, I have also been one of the three principal administrators of Greenbelters, the largest Greenbelt-oriented community group (membership approximately 7,400) on Facebook. This role has involved collaboration and compromise with my fellow administrators. It has also given me deep exposure to the opinions, concerns and values of diverse Greenbelt residents.

I am diplomatic, practical and able (and willing) to consider issues from a variety of perspectives. If chosen to fill the council seat, I will do my utmost to serve our city well.

These applicants are being considered by current councilmembers for the vacant seat. Though residents will not vote on the applicants, they are invited to give feedback to council on the candidates, selection criteria, and/or questions to ask during interviews. Emails should be sent to council@greenbeltmd.gov.



PHOTO BY MARY LOU WILLIAMSON

Last year's recycled pumpkins and gourds volunteered from the compost pile to the garden.



PHOTO BY JULIA SHAPIRO

Now that's a real squash! Spotted at 58 Crescent Road.



PHOTO BY CHRISTINE DORAN

A colorful fungus sprouts by the Lake path.

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Police Blotter

Incidents reported here occurred December 25 - 31, 2023. Readers are encouraged to contact the police if they have information that may aid in an enquiry. Call the non-emergency number 301-474-7200 or email pd@greenbeltmd.gov. Times provided are when the incidents were reported.

Greenbelt Police Department reported two mental health diversions, one involving an overdose; seven domestics, three with an arrest and two involving mental health; and two missing person cases resolved. On December 25, officers assisted a woman who slipped on a wet floor at Beltway Plaza. One case of sexual assault was alleged, and believed to be a mental health issue.

Robbery

On December 31 at 3:52 p.m. near Springhill Lane and Breezewood Drive, five men jumped out of a vehicle and robbed a man of his money. When he attempted to flee he was knocked to the ground and assaulted.

Disorderly

On December 28 at 8:13 a.m. near 9230 Springhill Lane, a recently terminated employee returned to the property and began to dump several bags of trash along the roadway creating a traffic hazard for citizens.

Commercial Theft

On December 25 at 11:58 p.m. near 7900 Good Luck Road, a woman stole food. On December 26 at 12:40 p.m. near 5910 Greenbelt Road, a man stole 20 items by putting everything into a bag and walking out of the store; video surveillance was taken. On December 28 at 9:13 a.m. near 5700 Cherrywood Lane, a man stole several food items; at 7:16 p.m. near 5900 Greenbelt Road, a man stole cleaning supplies. On December 30 at 11:53 a.m. near 7595 Greenbelt Road, a loss prevention employee prevented a man from stealing items; he was banned from the property and escorted off the premises. On December 31 at 1:50 a.m. near 7900 Good Luck Road, a suspect took a box of tea and fled; at 5:21 p.m. near 7400 Greenbelt Road, two men entered the AT&T store and stole the display cell phones.

Theft

On December 30 at 10:15 a.m. near 7800 Hanover Parkway, an electric bicycle was stolen from the bike rack in front of the building.

Vandalism

On December 27 near 7900 Mandan Road, the front door of an apartment entrance and building common area was vandalized with red paint.

On December 27 at 5:37 p.m. near 7480 Greenway Center Drive, a disorderly woman was yelling and throwing objects at the staff inside the lobby. The woman damaged hotel equipment and left before police arrived.

**Vehicle Crimes
Stolen Vehicles**

Two vehicles were stolen: on December 27 near 6440 Cherrywood Lane, a black 2020 Toyota Highlander (Md. 6EJ3826), and on December 30 near 6500 Lake Park Drive, a gray 2018 Hyundai Elantra (Md. T1608587).

Stolen Vehicles Recovered

On December 25 near 6300 Golden Triangle Drive, a 2023 Mitsubishi was reported stolen and later located. On December 27 near 6015 Springhill Drive, a stolen vehicle was found; it had been involved in an armed robbery and it was taken by the county for its investigation.

On December 27 near 6300 Ivy Lane, a vehicle was recovered before it was reported stolen, and the owner was notified. On December 27 near 9100 Edmonston Terrace, a 2023 Kia Soul was found unoccupied with the engine running. On December 29 near 6400 Cherrywood Lane, a Hyundai with window and ignition damage was found and impounded for safekeeping. On December 30 near Mandan Road and Mathew Street, a vehicle was stolen after the keys were left in it. The car was involved in a brief pursuit with a Prince George's County vehicle and is a vehicle of interest in an unknown crime.

Attempted Theft of Auto

On December 28 at 1:52 p.m. near 7500 Hanover Parkway, a witness saw a man trying to break into a Hyundai Elantra, leaving a window smashed and the ignition damaged. The car alarm frightened the suspect away.

Theft from Auto

Tags were stolen on December 28 near 6000 Greenbelt Road and on December 30 near 6200 Springhill Drive. Vehicle windows were broken and items stolen on December 27 near 6400 Ivy Lane, and on December 30 near 6900 Hanover Parkway, including a credit card that was then used at a nearby store. On December 29 near 6500 Capitol Drive, wheels were stolen from a 2023 Honda Accord. On December 31 near 8100 Mandan Terrace, a tablet and AirPods were taken from an unlocked vehicle.

Vandalism to Auto

On December 28 near 6200 Springhill Court, a 2023 Hyundai Santa Fe had a smashed passenger-side front window. On December 31 near 7800 Hanover Parkway, someone damaged the driver-side mirror of a Mercedes.

Vehicle Accident

On December 27 at 3:17 p.m. near Southway and Greenbelt Road, an officer witnessed two Hyundai sedans crash into each other, causing one to hit another car. The officer went to check on an injured person, and the two vehicles took off in separate directions. One of the cars was found crashed off Lakecrest Drive. No suspects were apprehended.



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16-Year-Old Pleads Guilty in Murder Of Greenbelter at Wheaton Metro

On Thursday, December 28, 16-year-old Emmanuel Simmonds, of Gaithersburg, pleaded guilty to first-degree murder in the death of 18-year-old Tenneson Vaughn Leslie Jr., of Greenbelt.

Simmonds shot Leslie on a platform at Wheaton Metro Station after a fight between two groups of young men, believed to be unknown to each other, began on the Metro's escalator and culminated with the shooting on the platform (see the May 25, 2023 issue of the News Review).

According to the Montgomery County State's Attorney's office, Simmonds shot Leslie in the back of the head, then he and the group he was with fled the scene.

According to the plea agreement, Simmonds will face a maximum sentence of 40 years. He will be sentenced on June 28, 2024. Due to the fact that he is a minor, a police photograph was not released.

Another teen, who was 14 at the time, is being charged in

juvenile court as accessory after the fact.

"This was a shockingly brazen, callous act by a young offender. The defendant executed a young man on a crowded Metro platform, not only claiming one innocent life but placing many other people at risk as there were other citizens, simply using the Metro system, that easily could have been struck by a bullet," said State's Attorney John McCarthy.

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Carrier for Washington Post Carjacked on Ridge Road

On the morning of Sunday, December 31, the Washington Post called several residents to inform them their newspapers would be late because their long-time carrier, whom many know personally, was carjacked.

The carjacking took place late Saturday, December 30, as the carrier was delivering papers in the area of 54 Court Ridge. She reported parking her white 2023 Toyota Corolla (Md. 9FH9232) in the court while delivering the newspapers. After she finished her deliveries, she saw a male in his early 20s attempting to put

the vehicle in reverse. The suspect appeared to have difficulty operating the vehicle, and the victim tried to pull him out of her car. She even offered him all of her money to let her keep the car, but the suspect pulled out what she believed to be a gun and pointed it at her. The suspect was then able to put the car in reverse and push the victim away as he fled toward Crescent Road.

The police searched the area but were unable to find the suspect. Fortunately, the victim did not sustain any injuries during the incident.

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TEAM Quantum

COMP. HOST!

Team Quantum is competing against students from the Bronx, NYC to build an underwater robot on the spot. Those interested are invited. Teens may wish to join the club.

11 a.m. Jan 6, Gudelsky Auditorium, Capitol Tech 11301 Springfield Road, Laurel. Build starts at noon at campus MCI Bldg. Free. For more info go to www.airtigers.org

Team Quantum

We are a culturally diverse team that is in its fourth year. It was started by two seniors who recruited a mentor and helped raise funds. All skill levels are represented in either technical or non-technical positions.

The students

Team currently composed of:
20% Female
2% White
72% Minorities

Results

The positive impact on FIRST Robotics Competition participants is gratifying and well documented.

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Our team consists of:

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Electrical Team: This is responsible for laying out and wiring the hardware on our robot

Programming Team: This team is responsible for developing and running the code that enables us to control our robot

Business Team: Our business team is responsible for raising funds, finding sponsors and helping expand our team's outreach

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Volunteer Crowd Managers Needed for Theater Events

by Carol Shaw

Greenbelt Arts Center needs volunteer crowd managers. This is a new position with the theater. A crowd manager (CM) is an usher trained in crowd management through the Maryland State Fire Marshal's Office. The CM welcomes patrons, manages any issues in the lobby prior to showtime, seats people with special needs and latecomers, and greets patrons at the theater door and checks their tickets. They stay until the audience leaves. Throughout their two-to-three-hour shift, they are responsible for making sure egress is not blocked, escorting people to safety in an emergency and basic monitoring of the crowd. For the most part, they can watch the performance while keeping an eye out in the

periphery for emergencies.

Good candidates include volunteers already involved with safety and emergency management, such as firefighters, police officers and members of a Community Emergency Response Team. Welcome are those who love theater, are good with managing diverse people, at least 18 years old and available for two to three performances a month. A typical show is nine performances over three weekends. Both initial and ongoing training is provided. A background check is required by the City of Greenbelt because the volunteers work with children. Email boxgac@greenbeltartscenter.org if interested.

Pop-up Art Show



Ellie Young-Wilson sells her art outside her home on Maplewood Court.

- Photos by Elise Young



Canada geese on the Lake ignore a great blue heron, who returns the favor.

PHOTO BY KATHRYN BEARD

SHA continued from page 7

Washington, D.C., to Annapolis. SHA said that the feasibility study for this Greenbelt section is expected at the end of January, with the overall feasibility study expected in the spring. SHA confirmed that they were working with the Innovative Contracting Division on the bike path planning.

Also on the topic of local cycling, Jordan asked about the markings for the bike lanes on Greenbelt Road between Kenilworth and Beltway Plaza. He was keen to see physical markers such as bollards or flex poles that would give more guidance to motorists about bike lane delineation and crossing points – especially for those getting to the Dora Kennedy French Immersion school. He also wondered why, unlike Montgomery County and D.C., Prince George's was not using bright green paint to emphasize pedestrian and cycle demarcations. SHA's Emezue was unaware of the use of green paint for this purpose.

Other Location-Specific Issues

Councilmember Danielle McKinney recommended no U-Turn signs at Greenbelt Station Parkway's intersection with Greenbelt Road where such turns have already caused major accidents. Pope pointed out that the

intersection of Lakecrest Drive and Greenbelt Road was confusing and dangerous and had been brought to the SHA's attention for many years without any action being taken. On the topic of speeding on Kenilworth, council was informed that it is the police who are responsible for speed cameras and a location proposed by Jordan near Pontiac Street on Kenilworth is unincorporated and therefore a county police issue.

Jordan asked about mowing and trash pickup. He was informed that the schedule was about every six weeks and mowing was seasonal. He was also concerned – again a perennial request – that the pedestrian/cycle path on Greenbelt Road as it passes under the Beltway was in poor condition with overgrown bushes and debris. He said it remains sorely in need of adequate lighting. Roberts asked if a barely-visible historic marker between Ivy Lane and the SHA District Office could be placed more visibly.

Lastly, the potential arrival of the FBI in Greenbelt and the effect on state roads, according to Saimbré, has not been formally addressed but has been under discussion. Jordan emphasized that planning for this would need to be started well ahead.



Free Covid Tests Are Available Again

Once again, four at-home Covid tests per household are available for free from the federal government. Sign up to receive the tests at covid.gov/tests.

Français, s'il vous plaît: French at the Café

A group of people interested in speaking French meets at the New Deal Café every Thursday from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. All ages, all levels of fluency are welcome.

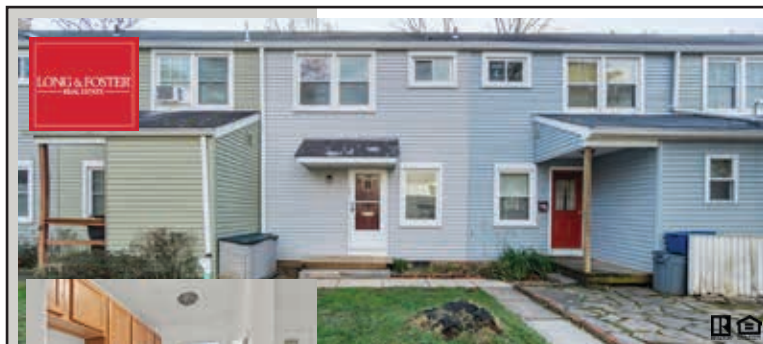
Community Orchestra Welcomes Musicians

Greenbelt Community Orchestra rehearses on Thursday evenings and welcomes new members, especially string players. For more information, visit GreenbeltOrchestra.org.

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LOOK BACK continued from page 7

and over-policing but are cited by some as impediments to curbing juvenile crime. In October four teens died in a crash in Bowie in a vehicle that was stolen at gunpoint in Greenbelt earlier that day (see page 8 of the October 5 issue).

Wildfire Smoke Impacts Air Quality

Air quality was poor in Greenbelt on several days in June as smoke from wildfires in western Canada drifted in on the prevailing winds. A code-red air quality warning was issued on June 7, upgraded to code purple on June 8 when the smoke was particularly dense. The city advised everyone to limit outdoor activity and close windows and doors. The outdoor pool closed for a day and the Greenbelt Police Station, Community Center, Youth Center and Springhill Lake Recreation Center offered indoor space for residents who needed to escape the unhealthy air. Prince George's County Public Schools cancelled outdoor activities and groups planning outdoor events cancelled or moved them inside. Those who work or exercise outdoors curtailed their activities, wore a mask or wished they had.

Musical Highlights

Greenbelters had expanded opportunities in 2023 to both listen to and perform music. In February, the Baroque music ensemble Relic, of which Greenbelt resident Natalie Kress is a member, played free concerts at the Community Center, Greenbelt Community Church and New Deal Café, nearly filling each venue.

These concerts inspired Greenbelter Anne Gardner to organize a local orchestra. The newly formed Greenbelt Community Orchestra started rehearsals in July with more than 50 members and played its first concert in November.

The street band Greenbelt Honk! Situation, which formed in 2022, enlivened many Greenbelt events, including the Green Man Festival, Pride Fest, Summer Camp Showcase, Labor Day Festival, Blues Festival, HUG Walk, Halloween, Krampus Festival and a winter solstice parade and gathering.

The long-established Greenbelt Concert Band always welcomes new members. The band or its wind and brass ensembles played concerts on Greenbelt Day, July 4th, for the holiday tree lighting and at the American Legion Hall, Green Ridge House and some out-of-town venues. And the New Deal Café hosted live music most nights of the year.



Greenbelter Derek Maseloff conducts the new Greenbelt Community Orchestra on November 19.

Green Schools, More Secure School, Maybe a New School?

In May, three Greenbelt schools – Eleanor Roosevelt High, Greenbelt Middle and Springhill Lake Elementary – were recognized by Prince George's County Public Schools for their environmental accomplishments. Recognized also were teachers Danielle Todd-Jones of Springhill Lake and Martha Leighty of Dora Kennedy French Immersion School.

The 2023-24 school year saw the introduction of new security measures in county middle and high schools, in the wake of several guns being found on school property over the past year. Students were required to carry clear backpacks from the start of the school year. In mid-December, weapons detectors were implemented at ERHS for all students and visitors.

Under Phase Two of the County's Public Private Partnership (P3) Blueprint Schools, used to more rapidly build new schools using private funds, a new building for Springhill Lake Elementary School is among the eight schools planned. Rancorous Board of Education meetings ensued, putting the project in jeopardy. Debate raged over language in the memorandum of understanding with labor unions. At a special meeting on September 28, the Board approved the Phase Two funding.

City Council

By year's end there had been unprecedented turnover on council. Councilmember Colin Byrd resigned in August; council appointed former Councilmember Konrad Herling to finish out Byrd's term. Councilmember Judith Davis declined to run for reelection after 30 years on council. The new council was majority female, represented all three areas of the city and had three Black members with Councilmember Danielle McKinney becoming the city's first Black woman on the council. These statistics changed quickly with the death of Councilmember Ric Gordon at the very beginning of his second term on council.

The electorate will likely also look different in 2025 as a ballot question asking if noncitizens should be allowed to vote was overwhelmingly approved. This vote was nonbinding but council is expected to honor the referendum results.

KWANZAA continued from page 1

or first harvest) and that it was part of the harvest ceremonies in many African societies. Dr. Maulana Karenga, born in Parsonsburg, Md., studied the cultural traditions of Swahili-speaking societies and adapted some of their traditions for African Americans and members of the African Diaspora. Kwanzaa is celebrated worldwide.

Rosado described the symbols of Kwanzaa. The Pan-African flag was designed by the United Negro Improvement Association, founded by Marcus Garvey; the red, green and black colors have been adopted in the flags of several African nations. The Kinara holds the seven candles called the Nguzo Saba, representing the principles and values of Kwanzaa, which begins on December 26 and ends on January 1. Other symbols include a mat representing history and tradition, fruits representing the harvest and ears of corn for the number of children in a given family. A moment of silence was held to honor the memory of the late Greenbelt City Councilmember Ric Gordon, and next a Libation ceremony was performed to remember and thank ancestors for their sacrifice and determination to survive en-

slavement, discrimination and lost opportunities because of systemic racism.

Principles of Kwanzaa

Joe Parks, of the Greenbelt Black History and Culture Committee, explained that the seven principles are designed to build relationships in a community and several are reflective of Greenbelt: 1) Umoja – unity within the family and within the community; 2) Kujichagulia or self-determination – defining ourselves and our interests and not letting others define our interest and needs; 3) Ujima – collective work and responsibility by working together to solve community issues; 4) Ujamaa – Cooperative economics, helping to build wealth within the community; 5) Nia or purpose – determining our personal goals, developing and sharing our skills to build local and nation communities; 6) Kuumba – creativity, fostering innovation in the arts, music and industry; and 7) Imani – faith in ourselves, in our people and in our community. As Parks named each principle, a child from the audience came up and helped light a candle.

Dan Gillotte, manager of the Greenbelt Co-op Supermarket, identified Umoja, Kujichagulia,

Ujima and Ujamaa as Kwanzaa principles that align with the Co-op's purpose and values in a recent membership letter. Kwanzaa principles are universal and relatable to everyone.

Supportive Organizations

Jackson shared information about her nonprofit organization whose purpose is to be a poverty disruptor and to organize at-risk youth through mentoring, athletic pursuits and counseling. Carolyn Lambright-Davis, an active Greenbelt resident, shared the history of the Greenbelt Black History and Culture Committee and invited attendees to join. RUAK provided free books for children to take. The books represented zawadi – what gifts are called in the celebration.

Rev. Ray Raysor blessed the food.

Activities

Lambright-Davis led an exciting game of Kwanzaa Bingo and Rosado led a Black History game that was more conversational than competitive. Some folks danced and some children played with the toys available in The SPACE. The program was a positive way to end the year and begin a new one.



Celebrations at the New Deal Café



Patrons enjoy Christmas caroling at the New Deal Café on December 24. There was standing-room only at the event led by Katy Gaughan and Frank Gervasi, standing at center.



New Year's Eve revelers welcome the new year while enjoying the music of Honey Sol as well as delicious food and drink at the New Deal Café.

- Photos by Michael Hartman