



Black Artists at New Deal, p.12



Chelsea Wood has heat, p.7

## How BusPatrol Ties PGCPS To StopFinder, Making Millions

by Anna Bedford-Dillow and Brooke Kenny

	FY 23 Total	Notes
Revenues		
School Bus Stop Arm Enfo Revenue	8,354,818.80	Cash pymts from violators for valid School Bus Camera violations
Total Revenues	8,354,818.80	
Gross Profit	8,354,818.80	
Expenses		
Salaries	43,436.83	Prgm staff - review of data to issue citations.
Federal & FICA Taxes ER	3,322.95	Prgm staff - review of data to issue citations.
State Unemployment Tax ER	228.17	Prgm staff - review of data to issue citations.
Lease Facility	2,800.00	Office space use - 1300 Mercantile Lane ste 108
Processing Fees	6,662,811.28	Vendor (Bus Patrol) fee per installed Bus Camera
Bank Service Charges		bank fee to operate a dedicated account for School Bus Prgm
Administrative Fee Expense	1,044,352.35	Mgmt fee per MOU between PGCPS & RANPC
Total Expenses	7,757,374.03	
Net Income	597,444.77	Net revenues provided to PGCPS

PHOTO COURTESY PRINCE GEORGES COUNTY COUNCIL

A table shows revenue from school bus stop-arm fines.

Battling ongoing transportation challenges, in September 2023 Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) contracted 4Mativ Technologies to provide a transportation audit for a cost of \$210,600. At the start of this school year PGCPS implemented numerous changes including bus stop locations, distances between them, walking zones and, most significantly, school start and end times. The school system also changed its parent information portal and grade center from SchoolMax to ParentVUE/Synergy (see the June 20, 2024,

issue). With all the changes, their decision to keep the unpopular and frequently non-functioning StopFinder seems baffling (for more on StopFinder see page 6).

PGCPS' five-year contract for over \$1.3 million with Transfinder, creator of StopFinder, shows it was paid for by another company, BusPatrol, a company that was accused of bribery and corruption by Maryland Delegate David Moon in a 2023 committee hearing. In order to understand why BusPatrol pays for the app, one

See **BUSPATROL**, page 6

## Rebuilding GAFC with Care: Construction for Community

by Susan Taylor



PHOTO BY ANNA BEDFORD-DILLOW

Members of the Greenbelt Municipal Swim Team, many in tie-dye and green team attire, fill the council chambers on Thursday, January 30 for a town hall about the upcoming pool renovations and closure.

Greenbelt City Manager Josué Salmerón hosted a Town Hall on Thursday, January 30 to answer questions and address concerns about upcoming repairs to the indoor pool at the Greenbelt Aquatic & Fitness Center (GAFC). The Town Hall served as an informational follow-up to the city council worksession on January 22 (see the January 30 issue).

Director of Public Works Brian Kim, Recreation Director Greg Varda, Assistant Director of Recreation Andrew Phelan, GAFC Director Stephen Parks and City Councilmembers Jenni Pompei and Amy Knesel rounded out the panel. The council chamber,

live and virtually, buzzed with members of the community, many of whom are associated with the Greenbelt Municipal Swim Team (GMST) – Go Barracudas!

### Project Scope

Kim outlined the scope of the construction project – structural, mechanical, electrical, plumbing and reroofing of ~3,000 square feet – scheduled to run 120 days. By planning for closing the indoor pool from April 7 to September 28, the project team has built contingency and flexibility into both the work scope and budget in case any additional unseen damage is revealed.

See **GAFC**, page 12

## Musk's Dismantling of USAID: The View from Greenbelt

by Anna Bedford-Dillow

This week, three of several Greenbelt residents who work for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) agreed to speak with the News Review about their experiences as Elon Musk attempts to dismantle the agency they work for. All USAID employees we reached out to feared reprisal and we are using aliases to protect their identities.

David (not his real name) lives in Greenbelt and has worked for USAID for 15 years. He works in the Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA). "We're like FEMA for the rest of the world," he explained. "So whenever there's a natural disaster or a conflict or a humanitarian crisis outside of the United States we respond to them." USAID has direct hires, civil servants and institutional services contractors (ISCs) who work for a company but are embedded in USAID. There are also personal services contractors (PSCs) who have a direct contract with the government and act like an individual company, explains David. He's in the latter category.

Melissa (not her real name) is a federal employee at



PHOTO BY JASON ANDREW

Democratic lawmakers including Senator Chris Van Hollen, at center, gather for a press conference outside the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) headquarters in Washington, D.C., on Monday, February 3. Newly appointed Secretary of State Marco Rubio said he's now in charge of the agency.

USAID, which she joined in 2013. She described her role as working in compliance. Greenbelter Stephanie (not her real name) has worked for USAID for over a decade. She preferred not to share the area in which she works.

### Week of January 20

Like other federal workers with whom we talked, Melis-

sa describes a series of strange emails claiming to be from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Melissa said the emails came from opm.gov addresses that didn't make sense. One email instructed recipients to trust emails from that address. Metadata also shows the

See **USAID**, page 8

## Will Greenbelt Police Assist In Immigration Enforcement?

by Diane Oberg

At its January 27 regular meeting the Greenbelt City Council discussed several aspects of the impact of the Trump administration's increased deportation efforts, recognized Black History Month and International Holocaust Remembrance Day and heard an update on the status of the city's animal control services.

### Immigration

Former councilmember Judith Davis raised the immigration issue during Petitions and Requests, noting that on January 23, Acting U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Benjamin Huffman issued a directive giving U.S. Department of Justice law enforcement agencies, including the Marshals Service, the "authority to investigate and apprehend illegal aliens."

### What Goes On

Monday, February 10  
7:30 p.m., City Council Meeting, Municipal Building

See the city ad on page 5 or the meetings calendar at [greenbeltnmd.gov](http://greenbeltnmd.gov) for more information.

Davis pointed out that the Greenbelt Police Department has a partnership agreement with the U.S. Marshals Service and expressed concern that this agreement will cause the city police force to be "called up to do these raids in Greenbelt," she said, in violation of city policy. Davis asked that this concern be added to the list of issues being discussed by the city government.

Kevin Lockhart ("Coach Kevin") of Franklin Park said that he can obtain Immigrant Legal Re-

source Center (ILRC) red "know your rights" cards for those who want them. These cards can also be printed from the ILRC's website at [www.ilrc.org](http://www.ilrc.org). Greenbelt has a link to the ILRC's red card page on its website, on the Government tab in the Public Information and Communications column.

Cynthia Newcomer called for council to strengthen the city's noncooperation policy in

See **COUNCIL**, page 9



PHOTO COURTESY NORFOLK BOTANICAL GARDEN

A statue at Norfolk Botanical Garden commemorates the role that African American women played in creating the garden in the 1930s. See story on page 12.

# Letters to the Editor

## Thanks to Reporter

I'd like you to know that Erica Johns did great coverage of Chelsea Wood's no-heat situation. I felt very comfortable discussing the situation and answering her questions. She was very thorough and followed up with me to make sure I was accurately quoted. She continued to follow the story. Half of us have not had heat all season. When we went through our first cold spell in November, we felt abandoned. We couldn't get in touch with the board and the management company wasn't helpful. Government officials were not very helpful

either. All we could do was turn to the media; it was coverage by Erica and other reporters bringing the situation to light that pushed the responsible parties to do something.

As of this evening (Thursday, January 30), tentatively we all have heat. I am in the last building to get it. We've had heat for a few hours; I'll be more confident once we've had it for at least 24 hours. I will certainly notify Erica if failures occur.

Take care and keep up the great work. I read the Greenbelt News Review regularly!

Jessica Fomalont

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See p. 9 to get yours!



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OC = Open Captions  
CC = Closed Captions  
DVS = Descriptive Video Service

**SHOWTIMES:**  
FEBRUARY 7th - 13th

**The Brutalist** (R) (CC) (DVS)  
(2024) (215 mins)  
Screen 1 - Main Auditorium  
Fri. 2:45 PM, 7:00 PM  
Sat. 3:20 PM  
Sun. 5:00 PM  
Mon. 12:45 PM (OC)  
Tues. 6:00 PM  
Screen 2 - The Screening Room  
Sat. 6:30 PM  
Sun. 1:00 PM  
Mon. 5:15 PM  
Wed. 6:00 PM  
Thurs. 6:30 PM

**Nickel Boys** (PG-13) (CC)  
(DVS) (2024) (140 mins)  
Screen 1 - Main Auditorium  
Sat. 7:45 PM  
Sun. 1:15 PM (OC)  
Mon. 5:00 PM  
Wed. 4:00 PM  
Screen 2 - The Screening Room  
Fri. 4:00 PM, 7:15 PM  
Sat. 3:30 PM  
Sun. 5:15 PM  
Mon. 1:00 PM  
Tues. 6:30 PM  
Thurs. 3:30 PM

**Neon Genesis: The End of Evangelion** (R) (1997) (87 mins)  
Cinema Pop! Japanese w/  
English subtitles  
Screen 1 - Main Auditorium  
Mon. 8:00 PM

**The Six Triple Eight** (PG-13)  
(2024) (127 mins)  
Free. Sponsored by  
Elizabeth Helm-Frazier  
Post-film guest speaker  
Screen 1 - Main Auditorium  
Wed. 7:00 PM

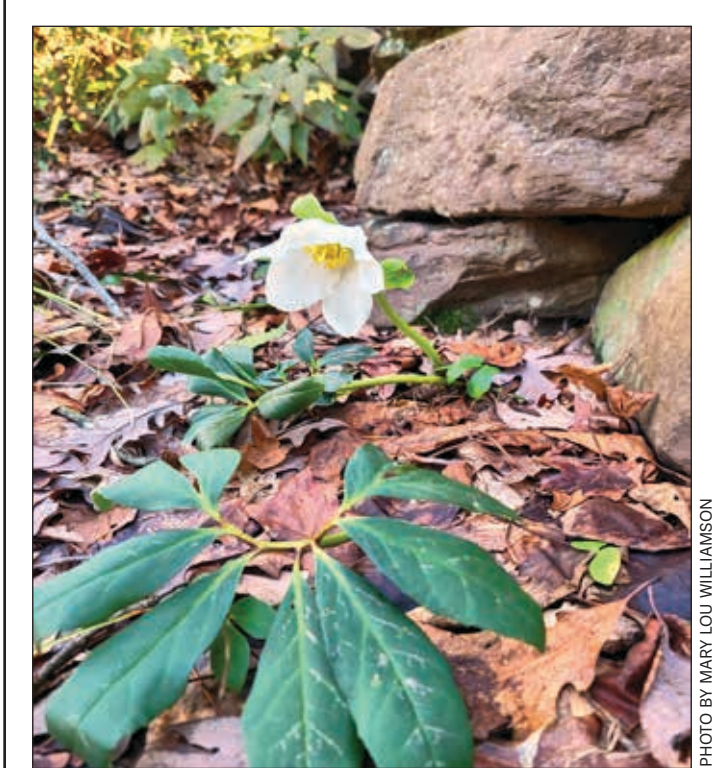


PHOTO BY MARY LOU WILLIAMSON

This white flowering Christmas rose, hellebore, emerged in good shape after our recent snow.

## On Screen at Greenbelt Cinema

### The Brutalist

Escaping post-war Europe, visionary architect László Toth (Adrien Brody) arrives in America to rebuild his life, his work and his marriage to his wife Erzsébet (Felicity Jones) after they had been forced apart during wartime by shifting borders and regimes. On his own in a strange new country, László settles in Pennsylvania, where the wealthy and prominent industrialist Harrison Lee Van Buren (Guy Pearce) recognizes his talent for building. But power and legacy come at a heavy cost. The film won three awards at the Golden Globes and has received 10 nominations for this year's Oscars. Said critic Ty Burr of The Washington Post, "For [director] Corbet, a film – this film – is its own reward. It offers more than enough rewards for us as well."

### Nickel Boys

Elwood Curtis' (Ethan Herisse) college dream shatters alongside a two-lane Florida highway. Bearing the brunt of an innocent misstep, he's sentenced to the netherworld of Nickel Academy, a brutal reformatory sunk deep in the Jim Crow South. He encounters another ward, the seen-it-all Turner (Brandon Wilson). The two Black teens strike up an alliance: Turner dispensing fundamental tips for survival, Elwood clinging to his optimistic worldview. Backdropped by the burgeoning Civil Rights Movement, Elwood and Turner's existence appears worlds away from Rev. Martin Luther King's burnished oratory. Despite Nickel's brutality, Elwood strives to hold onto his humanity, awakening a new vision for Turner.

### Neon Genesis: The End of Evangelion

In this Japanese mecha anime television series, when violent monsters descend upon Earth to destroy humanity, a reluctant young man joins a small squad of pilots under the command of his cold and dictatorial father to drive back the menace using giant machines that seem to have minds of their own. "The show introduces a brilliant chicken-and-egg conundrum: Do humans define machines, or do machines define us?" said critic Maya Phillips of The New Yorker.

### The Six Triple Eight

During WWII, the only US Women's Army Corps unit of color stationed overseas takes on an impossible mission in Tyler Perry's drama based on a true story.

## 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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15 Crescent Road, Suite 100, Greenbelt, Maryland 20770-1887  
Phone: 301-474-4131

editor@greenbeltnewsreview.com (stories, letters, photos)  
ads@greenbeltnewsreview.com (ads)  
business@greenbeltnewsreview.com (billing)  
website: www.greenbeltnewsreview.com

Presidents: Alfred M. Skolnik, 1959-1977, Elaine Skolnik, 1977-1985  
Mary Lou Williamson, Editor  
Anna Bedford-Dillow, Managing Editor

STAFF  
Matt Arbach, Ann Bauman, Kathryn Beard, Anna Bedford-Dillow, Laura Bonkosky, Jerry Bonnell, Letty Bonnell, Alan Burt, Rasheeda Childress, Maurice Crawford, Deborah Daniel, Deanna Dawson, Christine Doran, Joan Estenson, Anne Gardner, Elizabeth Gardner, Jon Gardner, Jim Giese, Ian Gleason, Patrick Gleason, Angie Gordon, Carol Griffith, Kyla Hanington, Amy Hansen, Erik Hanson, Michael Hartman, Butch Hicks, Peggy Higgins, Donna Hoffmeister, Melanie Iversen, Erica Johns, Jeff Jones, Tom Jones, Jennifer Jurling, Lesley Kash, Elisabeth Kevorkian, Amina Khalifa, Michael Kusie, Sandra Lange, Amanda Larsen, Linda Lucas, Charlene MacAdams, Marc Manheimer, Anne Marigza, Cathie Meetre, Mary Moien, Diane Oberg, Julie Rapp, Peter Reppert, Joe Robbins, Sandy Rodgers, Ian Blackwell Rogers, Lois Rosado, Richard Roth, Bonnie Schrack, Pat Scully, Bonnie Seaton, René Sewell-Raysor, David Shapiro, Melissa Sites, Lola Skolnik, Susan Taylor, Beth Terry, Daniel Thies, Nancy Tolzman, Jeff Travis, Mary Lou Williamson, Janice Wolf, Ray Zammuto and Michael Zelfiff.

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- 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 and Tuesday, 2 - 4 p.m.  
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.

# Community Events

## Meet-up Monday For Nonbinary Support

Those who have trans or non-binary loved ones (including themselves) who want to meet people who choose joy and love can meet on Monday, February 10 at 5:30 p.m. at the New Deal Café.

Organized by the mother of a trans adult with no agenda, just seeking community.



## At the Library

The Greenbelt Library will be closed on Monday, February 10, for a scheduled Wi-fi upgrade. The Library's regular hours are Mondays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Tuesdays and Wednesdays noon to 8 p.m., Thursdays and Fridays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturdays 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays 1 to 5 p.m.

### Storytimes

Friday, February 7, 11:15 a.m., ages 2 to 3. Register at [pgcmls.info/event/12620695](http://pgcmls.info/event/12620695).

Wednesday, February 12, 12:15 p.m., ages 3 to 5. Register at [pgcmls.info/event/12620652](http://pgcmls.info/event/12620652).

Thursday, February 13, 10:15 a.m., ages newborn to 2. Register at [pgcmls.info/event/12620677](http://pgcmls.info/event/12620677).

## Novel Endings Open House: Find a New Literary Love

On Saturday, February 15 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., the Novel Endings Book Room in the Greenbelt Library, offers a Blind Date with a Book. Discover a new literary treasure with this exciting activity. Each pre-wrapped book comes with a hint to pique a reader's interest. Unwrap the mystery date and embark on a new reading adventure. It's all the fun of a blind date, without the jitters.

This is also an opportunity to support young readers. Novel Endings is currently seeking donations of children's picture books and juvenile books. Bring gently used children's books to the Open House, receive stickers and praise as a thank you.

The used book room, Novel Endings, is located in the back of the Children's Department inside the Greenbelt Library. Enter through the main entrance, walk to the left of the circulation front desk into the children's section (look for the blue Novel Endings donation box on the wall to the left of the desk), and continue toward the back of the Library.

The Open House is a chance to meet the Friends of Greenbelt Library. Chat with volunteers, browse the wide selection of books and enjoy the fun.

Novel Endings raises funds to support the Library's outreach, programming and staff enrichment, and promotes the Library's mission. Books are offered for suggested minimum donations.

Book Donations: Novel Endings welcomes donations of like-new fiction, history, memoirs, science, sci-fi/fantasy, gardening, cooking and spirituality/reflective books, with a focus on books that appeal to the public at the Greenbelt Library. They work with online booksellers for more specialized titles.

To donate books (by appointment only), email [friendsofgreenbeltlibrary@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofgreenbeltlibrary@gmail.com).

## Black History Month Events at the Library

The Prince George's County Memorial Library System is celebrating Black History Month with over 75 free programs and events to give library customers of all ages a lively and engaging experience centered around the heritage and community of Black culture in Prince George's County and beyond. Here are two events happening at the Greenbelt Library.

On Saturday, February 8 at 1 p.m., the Library offers Jazz Journeys: From Blues to Now, presented by Muneer Nasser, a trumpeter and jazz historian. Explore the rich history of jazz through live music, rare recordings and interactive demonstrations – perfect for teen and adult music lovers and history enthusiasts interested in discovering jazz's Memphis blues roots.

On Saturday, February 15 at 1 p.m., the Library hosts the Underwater Archaeological Slave Wrecks Project presented by Kamau B. A. Sadiki of Diving with Purpose, in conjunction with the Greenbelt Black History & Culture Committee and the Prince George's County Office of Human Rights. Sadiki will discuss the archaeological underwater research of the Slave Wrecks Project of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American Culture and History in partnership with the Izeko Museum of South Africa, George Washington University and Diving with Purpose.



## Bilingual Story Time At SHL Rec Center

On Friday, February 14 at 10:30 a.m. at the Springhill Lake Recreation Center, RUAK (Random Unselfish Acts of Kindness) with the Prince George's County Memorial Library System will present engaging, lively stories and activities for young children and their caregivers to help build early literacy skills. This monthly program is an introduction to reading aloud to children as a way to instill the love of literature. After the readings, the children can stay and play with balls in the gym. There will be free children's books and free healthy, nutritious snacks. Come, and spread the word to friends and family.

### Los Niños Leen y Juegan

El viernes 14 de febrero a las 10:30 a.m. en el Centro Recreativo de Springhill Lake, RUAK (Random Unselfish Acts of Kindness) con el Sistema de Bibliotecas Conmemorativas del Condado de Prince George's presentarán interesantes historias y actividades divertidas para niños pequeños y sus cuidadores, para ayudar a desarrollar las habilidades de alfabetización temprana. Este programa mensual es una introducción a la lectura en voz alta a los niños como forma de inculcar el amor por la literatura. Después de las lecturas, los niños pueden quedarse y jugar con pelotas en el gimnasio. Habrán libros infantiles gratis y aperitivos saludables y nutritivos. Como dijo un padre al irse, "Fue muy bueno!" Unete a nosotros, y corra la voz a amigos y familiares.

## Unplugged Monthly Game Night Moves

Greenbelt Unplugged has moved its monthly game night to the second Monday of the month. Meet at the Community Center from 7 to 9:30 p.m. (room varies, check at the front desk). The next event will be Monday, February 10. Games will be available or bring favorites to share. For questions email [events@greenbeltunplugged.org](mailto:events@greenbeltunplugged.org).

## Greenbelt Chess Club Meetings for February

The Greenbelt Chess Club will meet on Tuesday, February 11 at the Youth Center from 6:30 to 8:45 p.m. The club welcomes people of all ages and skill levels. To be added to the mailing list, go to [tinyurl.com/yzy2nz4m](http://tinyurl.com/yzy2nz4m) and complete the brief form. Email questions to [greenbeltchessclub@gmail.com](mailto:greenbeltchessclub@gmail.com).



## Lifeline Offers Health Screenings at Legion

Residents living in and around Greenbelt can learn about their risk for cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, diabetes and other chronic, serious conditions with affordable screenings by Life Line Screening. Greenbelt American Legion Post 136 will host this community event on March 19.

Screenings can check for the level of plaque buildup in arteries, related to risk for cardiovascular disease, stroke and overall vascular health; HDL and LDL cholesterol levels; diabetes risk; kidney and thyroid function and more.

Screenings are affordable and convenient. Free parking is also available.

Pre-registration is required. Consultants will work to create a package based on age and risk factors. Call 1-877-237-1287 or visit [lifelinescreening.com](http://lifelinescreening.com) to register.

## Orchestra to Perform Black History Concert

Greenbelt Community Orchestra will give a free concert at the Community Center on Sunday, February 23 at 3 p.m. The program will feature works by composers from the African diaspora, including Florence Price, Quinn Mason, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, and Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges. For more information about the orchestra, visit [greenbeltorchestra.org](http://greenbeltorchestra.org).

## Contemplative Prayer Group Meets Tuesdays

A contemplative prayer group meets on Tuesdays at the Greenbelt Community Church, United Church of Christ, 1 Hillside Road, from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. This gathering is a time to pray in silence for oneself, others and the world. It nurtures inner and outer peace and reinforces the oneness of all people and creation.

The format for this group is an opening introduction, 30 minutes of silence and then some sharing. All are welcome to attend from all denominations and faith traditions. For more information, email [Patience Robbins](mailto:patience.robbins@gmail.com) at [patience.robbins@gmail.com](mailto:patience.robbins@gmail.com).

## GES Designated For Additional Support

Greenbelt Elementary School has been designated as an Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) School by the Maryland State Department of Education. This designation means that the school will receive additional support to develop and implement a plan to address areas in need of improvement.

Greenbelt Elementary families will learn more about the designation and improvement plan in a meeting planned for 6 p.m. on Thursday, February 27 at the school. For more information or questions, call 301-513-5911.

## Stamp Out Hunger Close to Home

The impact of a fully stocked pantry is profound. The shelves at the Greenbelt Interfaith Leadership Association food pantry at St. Hugh of Grenoble Church were emptied during the holiday. To help keep the shelves stocked, PORCH will pick up nonperishable food placed on porches as scheduled below.

Sunday, February 9 – by 11 a.m. at 1-8 Courts Ridge Road, 1-8 Courts Crescent Road and 1-2 Courts Westway.

Saturday, February 15 – by 10 a.m. for 14 and 15 Courts Laurel Hill Road.

Sunday, February 16 – by noon P.A.L. (PORCH at large) members, including former Woodland Hill donors. Contact Robert Goldberg-Strassler at [spreadruak@gmail.com](mailto:spreadruak@gmail.com); he will come by and take donations from the porch after 4 p.m.

Sunday, February 16 – by 4 p.m. for Boxwood Village.

Sunday, February 23 – by 5 p.m. for 14 and 16 Courts Ridge Road, 8 and 10 Courts Southway, and Lakeside Drive.



## Golden Age Club

The Golden Age Club meets Wednesdays at 11 a.m. in Room 201 of the Community Center. The club does not meet when inclement weather delays or closes Prince George's County schools. Annual dues are up for renewal.

### February schedule

February 12 – Carroll Gibbs will be the guest speaker. He is an historian, author, national and international lecturer and griot. His topic will be African American Men & Women of The Old West. Those planning to attend may want to review one of his books prior to this presentation.

February 19 – January and February combined birthday celebration. Everyone who comes should bring a snack to share.

February 26 – Bingo

## This Week at the New Deal Café

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

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**Monday, 9am-10pm; Tuesday—Thursday, 9am - 10pm; Friday/Saturday, 9am – 12midnight; Sunday, 9am – 9pm**

TH 2/06	FRI 2/07	SAT 2/08	SUN 2/09	
<p><b>FRENCH CONVERSATION,</b> 5:30p - 6:30pm</p> <p><b>Wolf's Blues Show &amp; Sit-In Jam</b> 6:30 - 10pm</p> <p><b>A big, bodacious boogie blues jam</b></p>	<p><b>UKULELE LADIES, 3 - 5p</b></p> <p><b>Magical Mystery Four</b> 8-11pm</p> <p><b>All-female rockin' quartet that plays the Beatles</b></p>	<p><b>COMMUNITY DRUM CIRCLE,</b> 3:30 - 5PM</p> <p><b>Proverbs Reggae Band</b> 8-11pm</p> <p><b>Unique roots reggae with strong lyrical content</b></p>	<p><b>ASL BRUNCH, 10:30a - 12noon</b></p> <p><b>SUPER SUNDAY CELEBRATION - IT'S THE BIG GAME!</b></p> <p><b>KICK-OFF AT 6:30pm</b></p>	
MON 2/10	TUES 2/11	WED 2/12	TH 2/13	New Deal Cafe
<p><b>NDC MEMBERS-ONLY APPRECIATION NIGHT*</b> 4 - 9pm</p> <p><b>10% OFF BEER, WINE &amp; APPETIZERS</b></p>	<p><b>NDC Open Mic w/ Tom Gleason</b> 7-9:30pm</p> <p><b>Sign-ups at 6:15p</b></p> <p><b>EXPRESS YOURSELF!</b></p>	<p><b>BIBLIOPHILES BOOK CLUB, 11a - 12noon</b></p> <p><b>DRAG BINGO w/ D'MANDA MARTINI</b> 7-9pm</p> <p><b>UNLIMITED BINGO!</b></p>	<p><b>FRENCH CONVERSATION,</b> 5:30p - 6:30pm</p> <p><b>Swamgrass</b> 7 - 9pm</p> <p><b>Energetic, vibrant, DC-based with varied repertoire</b></p>	<p><b>PLEASE TIP GENEROUSLY. IT'S THE ONLY PAY BANDS RECEIVE, AND WE WANT THEM TO COME BACK! [MINIMUM: \$10]</b></p>

\*Join NDC! Go to [NewDealCafe\(dot\)com](http://NewDealCafe(dot)com), click on "ABOUT", then "BECOME A MEMBER OR RENEW."

**FUNDING FOR THESE ADS PROVIDED BY A GENEROUS DONOR.**

# Obituaries

## Kevin Kincius



PHOTO COURTESY THE FAMILY

### Kevin Kincius

Kevin Gerard Kincius, 61, of Greenbelt, died at Holy Cross Hospital on Friday, January 24, 2025, after an almost three-year battle with prostate cancer.

He lived his entire life in Greenbelt where he participated on the following teams:

Greenbelt Boys & Girls club football, Greenbelt Little League baseball with the Orioles and Greenbelt's Finest softball. Kevin also coached/managed adult co-ed softball and played goalie for Greenbelt co-ed soccer team. Within the Greenbelt co-ed adult leagues, he was on multiple championship teams.

Kevin enjoyed daily walks and runs through Greenbelt, watching golf, the Washington Capitals hockey team and NASCAR on television. He also relished time with close friends Thomas Noël, Donnie Dorsey, Mark Opsasnick and Joe Hawk.

Numerous times he traveled to Fort Ashby, W.V., to attend the famous Greenbelt Annual Maggs camping trip the first week in March.

Kevin retired September 30, 2024, after serving 36 years as a letter carrier at the University of Maryland. He toiled part-time for Greenbelt Recreation Department for many years.

Each Sunday after Mass he visited his mother.

Kevin was preceded in death by his father, Kazimer and nephew, Ryan Brown.

He is survived by siblings

Colleen (Charles), Charles aka Whitey (Teresa) and Joe.

Other family members are nephews Andrew, Thomas, Christopher (Bethany), Patrick (Katie), Joe Vincent and Justin; nieces Juliana (James) and Jacqueline and numerous grandnieces and grandnephews.

A Funeral Mass will be held Wednesday, February 12 at 10 a.m., at St. Hugh of Grenoble Catholic Church. In lieu of flowers, gifts in Kevin's memory may be directed to support the Prostate Research Fund at the University of Maryland Medical System Foundation. Checks payable to University of Maryland Medical System Foundation may be mailed with a memo indicating that this gift is in memory of Kevin Kincius to the UMMS Foundation, P.O. Box 64573, Baltimore, MD 21264; gifts can also be made online at [ummsfoundation.org/give](http://ummsfoundation.org/give).

## Remembering Joe Mack

Thank you to Rick Ransom for his tribute to Joe Mack Schubert. I worked at Greenbelt Aquatic & Fitness Center (GAFC) from 1993 to 2002 and had the pleasure of seeing Joe Mack regularly. As he once told Hot Rod magazine, he never saw his injury as a handicap – and he truly lived that way.

He would graciously decline offers to have a door held open for him, often turning the gesture around and offering to hold it himself. He would roll past my office with a cheerful hello, pull up at the deep end of the pool and push himself forward into the pool, coming to the surface with a big grin. At the end of his swim, he would haul himself up and out.

A steadfast vocal supporter of the GAFC staff during challenging times, I will always be grateful.

RIP Joe Mack Schubert – you were an amazing human being.

- Di Quynn Reno  
*Happily retired city employee*

# Two Public Forums on County Development Issues Saturday

This Saturday, February 8, Greenbelters can participate in two forums on county development. The later but closer one, from 1 to 3 p.m., will focus on areas along Kenilworth Avenue between Carter's Lane and Good Luck Road. It will take place at St. Bernard's Church, 6700 St. Bernard Drive in Riverdale. Or, from 9:30 a.m. to noon, join a forum on areas around Route 450 between the Baltimore-Washington Parkway and the Beltway, to be held at the West Lanham Hills Community Center, 7700 Decatur Road in Hyattsville.

One topic will be rules protecting the environment and consideration of the effects of re-

development on transportation. Other topics include what zoning allows, how community voices are heard and the process for approving or amending development proposals. Another issue is how more walkable, transit-oriented communities get created and obtain needed infrastructure investment and amenities that are wanted.

Both forums are sponsored by County Council Member Eric Olson, in collaboration with the Prince George's County Planning Department. Light refreshments will be served. For details, email Karen Guzman at [keguzman@co.pg.md.us](mailto:keguzman@co.pg.md.us) or call 301-952-3060.



Our condolences to the family and friends of Kevin Kincius who died on January 24. During his life in Greenbelt he enjoyed participating in several sports.

Congratulations to Fiona O'Brien who was named to the 2025 USA Acrobatic Gymnastics Junior National Team. Fiona is currently in eighth grade and was featured in our July 11, 2024, issue. She will be representing the USA in Bulgaria this spring.

Our thoughts are with all our neighbors impacted by the turmoil at the U.S. Agency for International Development and other federal agencies.

Send details of your news to [editor@greenbeltnewsreview.com](mailto:editor@greenbeltnewsreview.com).

## Poetry in the Garden

The Poetry Club will meet on Sunday, February 9 from 3 to 5 p.m. in the clubhouse at Schrom Hills Park in Greenbelt East. The topic for this free session will be African American poetry. The public is invited to read their chosen poems or enjoy listening and discussing this topic. Refreshments will be served.

For more details, call Effie at 443-415-1053.



## Patuxent Refuge Offers Free Program on Friday

The Patuxent Research Refuge's upcoming free public program, First Fridays Film & Speakers for February takes place this Friday, February 7 from 5 to 7 p.m. The theme is Rachel Carson's impact on the world.

Programs in the Film & Speaker Series take place on the first Friday of the month. For more information visit [fws.gov/event/patuxent-wildlife-research-refuge-film-speaker-series-1](http://fws.gov/event/patuxent-wildlife-research-refuge-film-speaker-series-1). Included are free movie screenings and Q&A's with local wildlife professionals.

"Truthfulness and trustworthiness involve much more than not telling lies; they embody the overarching capacity to discern, value, and uphold truth itself." – Bahá'u'lláh



## Greenbelt Bahá'í Community

[www.greenbeltbahais.org](http://www.greenbeltbahais.org)

## Mowatt Memorial United Methodist Church

40 Ridge Road, Greenbelt  
Open hearts, Open Minds, Open doors

Find us on [facebook.com/mowattumc](https://www.facebook.com/mowattumc)

301-474-5410

Pastor Evelyn Romero

Worship Service, Sundays 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.  
Celebrate hope with us.



## CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF GREENBELT

Mass Sundays at 10:00 a.m.

COME TO OUR NEW LOCATION

Community Center Room 114

15 Crescent Rd

ALL ARE WELCOME!

A Roman Catholic  
Intentional Eucharistic  
Community

OR - Join us on ZOOM!  
For ZOOM link:  
[CCG1985-owner@groups.io](https://www.zoom.us/j/CCG1985-owner@groups.io)

The Bible Says...

But seek first God's kingdom and  
God's righteousness,  
and all these things will be added to you.  
Matthew 6:33



Sunday Worship Services  
10a-11:15a @ Greenbelt Elementary School  
(66 Ridge Rd.)

[MCFcc.org](http://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](http://www.mishkantorah.org)

Affiliated with these movements: Conservative and Reconstructing Judaism

## Paint Branch Unitarian Universalist Church

Postal address: P.O. Box 676, Laurel, MD 20725  
Phone: 301-937-3666 [www.pbuuc.org](http://www.pbuuc.org)



Welcomes you to our open, nurturing community



February 9, 2025 at 3:00 pm  
**Shadows and Light**

Anthony Jenkins with Worship Associate Sue Bollens

In the spirit of our February theme (Interdependence) and Groundhog Day, we'll share a service centered in rude awakenings. Together we'll explore the ways in which the light of spiritual growth depends upon intermittent (and often involuntary) 'winter' seasons of shadow work.

Streaming on PBUUC's Facebook page, on Zoom, and in person. Worship service held at University Christian Church, 6800 Adelphi Road, Hyattsville, MD

**Holy Cross Lutheran Church**  
6905 Greenbelt Road  
Greenbelt, MD 20770  
[www.myholycross.org](http://www.myholycross.org)  
Sunday Worship: 9:30 A.M.  
Bible Study: 11:15 A.M.

**Thursday Thrift Store**  
10:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

**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](http://www.greenbeltbaptist.org)

**St. John's Episcopal Church**  
11040 Baltimore Avenue, Beltsville, MD 20704  
301-937-4292 [www.saintjohnsbeltsville.org](http://www.saintjohnsbeltsville.org)

Welcomes you each Sunday for  
Worship & Sunday School  
at 10:00 AM

**Greenbelt Community Church**  
One Hillside Road

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Join Us Sunday  
10:15 AM  
for Worship  
and Church School

We are an  
Open and Affirming  
Church

[www.facebook.com/GCCUCCMD](http://www.facebook.com/GCCUCCMD)  
[www.greenbeltcommunitychurch.org](http://www.greenbeltcommunitychurch.org)

**ST. HUGH OF GRENABLE 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](http://www.sthughofgrenoble.org)



# 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 CALENDAR**  
 Be sure to check out the City calendar for all up to date events at [www.greenbeltmd.gov/calendar](http://www.greenbeltmd.gov/calendar).

**GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL - REGULAR MEETING**  
**Monday, February 10 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**  
**- A Statement Reaffirming Our Commitment to Greenbelt as a Respectful and Welcoming Community**  
 \* Minutes  
**Administrative Reports**  
 \* Committee Reports

**LEGISLATION**  
 - An Ordinance to Repeal and Replace Chapter 2, Article IV Ethics Provisions of the Greenbelt City Code; *1st Reading*  
 - Retroactive Charter Amendment Resolution for Council Compensation Adjustments

**OTHER BUSINESS**  
 - State/County Legislation  
 - Council Activities  
 - Council Reports  
 \* Meetings  
 \* Stakeholders  
 \* Resignation/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](mailto:banderson@greenbeltmd.gov).*

*This agenda is subject to change. For the most up-to-date agenda, visit [www.greenbeltmd.gov/municipalTV](http://www.greenbeltmd.gov/municipalTV) or call (301) 474-8000.*

**MEETINGS FOR FEBRUARY 10-14**

Tuesday, February 11 at 7 pm, **ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TREES**, *On the Agenda: Review Past Meeting Minutes, Further Arbor Day Planning, Possible Activities Acknowledging the 25th Year Since ACT Was Established*

Thursday, February 13 at 5:30 pm, **BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

Thursday, February 13 at 7 pm, **COMMUNITY RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD**

*In advance, the hearing impaired are 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](mailto: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](http://www.greenbeltmd.gov/calendar).*

**GREENBELT WEBSITE REDESIGN SURVEY**

We are excited to share we have recently contracted with CivicPlus to redesign our website! CivicPlus is a trusted technology company in the gov tech space, dedicated to empowering government staff and powering digital experiences for you, the resident! Before we officially get started, we want your feedback so we can build the best website possible for you. This survey is dedicated to design and aesthetic, we would love to hear from you!

**The survey closes Wednesday, February 12 at 5 pm, take the survey TODAY!**  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/J6BBFHG>

**UTILITY PROVIDER TOWN HALL**  
**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18 AT 7 PM**  
*Council Chambers, Municipal Building, 25 Crescent Road*

Join us as we host a town hall with Greenbelt's utility providers. PEPCO, the Maryland Energy Division, Washington Gas, and WSSC will be in attendance to provide information on changes in rates, policies, and services. They will also be available to answer questions and concerns that you may have.

Visit [www.greenbeltmd.gov/calendar](http://www.greenbeltmd.gov/calendar) for more information or call (301) 474-8000.

**CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

Join us this February as we celebrate black history month with events brought to us by The Greenbelt Black History & Culture Committee, Greenbelt Recreation, and the Prince George's County Office of Human Rights.

Learn about the 11 events scheduled at [www.greenbeltmd.gov/BHM](http://www.greenbeltmd.gov/BHM) or visit the City's calendar at [www.greenbeltmd.gov/calendar](http://www.greenbeltmd.gov/calendar).

**RFP: MASTER PRESERVATION PLAN FOR THREE HISTORIC GREENBELT CEMETERIES**

**Close date: February 14 at 3 pm**

The City of Greenbelt ("Owner") requests proposals from qualified historic preservation and cultural planning professionals ("Consultant") for the preparation of a Preservation Master Plan for the preservation, maintenance and use of three historic cemeteries: Hamilton, Walker, and Turner located in the City of Greenbelt. The Master Preservation Plan will provide guidance for the restoration, preservation, heritage tourism and maintenance of the cemeteries.

Please provide an electronic and original hard copy to:

Terri Hruby, Director  
 Department of Planning and Community Development  
 15 Crescent Road, Ste. 200, Greenbelt, MD 20770  
[thruby@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:thruby@greenbeltmd.gov) (301) 345-5417

View the RFP and the responses to the RFP Q&A at <https://www.greenbeltmd.gov/government/advanced-components/rfp-posts-list>.

**KNOW YOUR RIGHTS**

In the City of Greenbelt, we remain committed to embracing and celebrating the diversity of all. As our nation undergoes change, feelings of pride, uncertainty, and even fear may arise. Yet, we stand firm in the pledge that has defined Greenbelt since its inception and will not falter.

Community Pledge:  
 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.

Learn more at <https://www.greenbeltmd.gov/government/know-your-rights-immigration-resources>.

**COMPOST YOUR FOOD SCRAPS**

For 6 months your food scraps can be collected for free to reduce food waste and return valuable compost to Greenbelt. Compost Crew will pick up your food scraps weekly and deliver them to their Compost Outpost at Trinity

Questions? Luisa Robles: [lrobles@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:lrobles@greenbeltmd.gov) or (240) 542-2153.

**FREE PRODUCE DISTRIBUTION**

**UPCOMING PRODUCE DISTRIBUTIONS**  
**THURSDAYS: FEBRUARY 20, MARCH 20, APRIL 17**

**Greenbelt Community Center, 15 Crescent Road, Lower Parking Lot:** 1 - 3 pm, while supplies last. Open to all Greenbelt residents. **Must have a registration card** via Brendy Garcia Maddox at (240) 424-0302 or [bgarcia@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:bgarcia@greenbeltmd.gov).

**Springhill Lake Recreation Center:** Registration required. For Greenbelt West residents only. Register via email [bgarcia@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:bgarcia@greenbeltmd.gov).

**DANCE WORKSHOP AND FILM SCREENING**  
**February 16, 11 am - 3 pm**  
*Greenbelt Community Center, 15 Crescent Road*

**Hip-Hop Dance Workshop.** *Sign-up* to attend a FREE hip-hop dance workshop at the Greenbelt Community Center! Ages 10-adult. 11 am - 12:30 pm. Taught by Manish Chouhan, star of the award-winning documentary *Call Me Dancer*.

**Film Screening.** *Sign-up* also to attend a FREE screening of the film and a Q&A session at the Greenbelt Cinema, 1:30 - 3:30 pm. Sponsored by Greenbelt Cinema with support from Greenbelt Recreation.

Sign-up today at <https://ow.ly/oNwk50UTJrZ>.

**JOIN THE CHARTER REVIEW TASKFORCE**

Are you passionate about shaping the future of our city? Do you want to have a say in how our local government operates? Now is your chance to make a difference!

The City of Greenbelt is forming a Charter Review Task Force to evaluate and recommend changes to our city's charter. We are looking for dedicated residents who are eager to contribute their time and expertise to this important process.

Submit an application at the following link: <https://www.greenbeltmd.gov/government/boards-committees/application-for-appointment-to-boards-and-committees>. *Scheduling interviews for February 3 at 7:30 pm.*

For more information or to apply, please contact City Clerk at [banderson@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:banderson@greenbeltmd.gov) or (301) 474-3870.

**"IF I WERE MAYOR" ESSAY CONTEST**  
**25TH ANNIVERSARY**

This digital essay contest has inspired nearly 50,000 young minds to dream big & learn about local government. The theme for this year's contest is "building community for a new generation."

This contest is open to all Maryland 4th grade students enrolled in the 2024-2025 school year. Essays must be submitted digitally, not exceed 275 words, begin with "If I were mayor," and received no later than March 7, 2025.

Visit <https://bit.ly/3W3nVBG> to learn more.

**HYPERTENSION AWARENESS & MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP**  
**Wednesday, February 19, 12:30 - 1:30 pm**  
*Greenbelt Community Center, Room 202, 15 Crescent Road*

Take Control of Your Blood Pressure! Hypertension Awareness & Management Workshop Join Greenbelt Recreation and Luminis Health for an informative workshop where we'll educate you about high blood pressure, its health risks, and effective strategies for prevention and management.

Contact Priya Gardner Lemieux, (240) 542 2056, [pgardner@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:pgardner@greenbeltmd.gov), for more information. FREE. Open to All Ages. Activity # 177211-1.

**CHARTER AMENDMENT RESOLUTION NOTICE**

At its regular meeting of January 13, 2025, the City Council adopted a resolution to amend the City Charter. As required by state law, this resolution will be posted in its entirety for 40 days, until February 22, 2025, at the Municipal Building, as well as on the City's Web site at [www.greenbeltmd.gov](http://www.greenbeltmd.gov).

Copies may also be requested from the City Clerk. It will become effective on March 4, 2025, unless a proper petition to submit the amendment to the voters on a referendum is filed as permitted by law. As also required by state law, this notice is given to provide a fair summary of the resolution. Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2114.

Charter Amendment Resolution of the Council of the City of Greenbelt to Amend §32 "Vacancies on Council" to Change the Procedure for Filling Vacancies on the Council by Following Procedures in Newly Enacted § 8-14 of Chapter 8 of the City Code

Purpose: To amend the City Charter to establish procedures for filling a vacancy on the City Council.

For additional information, contact Bonita Anderson, City Clerk, at (301) 474-8000 or [banderson@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:banderson@greenbeltmd.gov).

**NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY VISIT**  
**Monday, February 10, 11 am - 4 pm**

Join Greenbelt Recreation and Senior Globetrotting as we visit The National Museum of African American History and Culture. It is the only national museum devoted exclusively to the documentation of African American life, history, and culture. Enjoy lunch on your own at the museum or at a local restaurant.

You may register online or in person at Greenbelt Community Center. Activity #178202-1. Resident: \$5, Non-Resident: \$7

Events and programs are 60+ (Open to All Ages). Contact Priya Gardner Lemieux, (240)- 542- 2056, [pgardner@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:pgardner@greenbeltmd.gov).

**PUBLIC STATEMENT REGARDING PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY FIRE/EMS SUMMER STAFFING PLAN FOR GREENBELT VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT**

**Greenbelt, MD** - The City of Greenbelt is disappointed in the County's decision to reassign 24 career personnel from Greenbelt Station 835 on July 1, resulting in the removal of all career personnel from our Station. County Fire Chief Tiffany Green and County leadership ordered the redeployment of 55 career firefighters from Berwyn Heights, Greenbelt, Bunker Hill, and Bowie Station. We are gravely concerned with the impact in response times of emergencies in Greenbelt and our surrounding areas.

Greenbelt will continue to work in tandem with College Park and Berwyn Heights alongside County leadership in addressing our concerns and fighting for the City of Greenbelt.

**WHO CAN I CONTACT?**

**Office of the County Executive**  
[countyexecutive@co.pg.md.us](mailto:countyexecutive@co.pg.md.us)  
 (301) 952-4131

**Office of the County Fire Chief**  
[tdgreen@co.pg.md.us](mailto:tdgreen@co.pg.md.us)  
 (301) 883-5200

**At-Large County Council Member Hawkins**  
[At-LargeMemberHawkins@co.pg.md.us](mailto:At-LargeMemberHawkins@co.pg.md.us)  
 (301) 952-2195

**County Council Member District 4**  
[councildistrict4@co.pg.md.us](mailto:councildistrict4@co.pg.md.us)  
 (301) 952-3094

*Letters of Support to keep/return career staffing to Greenbelt Station 835 can be sent to:*

*City of Greenbelt, 25 Crescent Road, Greenbelt, MD 20770 or [council@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:council@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 **Advisory Committee on Trees, 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!

Take the first step towards making a positive impact and apply for one of these committee vacancies today!  
 Call (301) 474-8000.

**RECOGNITION GROUP APPLICATIONS ARE OPEN**

Fiscal Year 2026 Recognition Group applications and policy guide are now available on the City website at <https://www.greenbeltmd.gov/government/recreation-parks/recognition-groups-applications>.

**Applications are due by close of business Monday February 3, 2025.**

Please call Cathryn Pracht at (240) 542-2196 with any questions.

# BUSPATROL continued from page 1

needs to look at another contract that diverts millions of dollars in traffic fines (for vehicles not stopping for school buses) away from the county and to that same private company, BusPatrol.

### TransFinder Contract

The contract with TransFinder to use their StopFinder app (obtained through a Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA) request) shows that in 2020 PGCPSS committed to a five-year contract, whose stated cost was over \$1.34 million. It was paid in full by the company BusPatrol. The News Review attempted to find out if PGCPSS was obliged to use TransFinder in order for BusPatrol to pay for the StopFinder contract or if alternatives were considered. PGCPSS' Director of Purchasing and Supply Services De'Nerika Johnson told this newspaper to file a public information act request, though it's unlikely that information is in public records. BusPatrol's website lists TransFinder as a "Technology Partner." Following the five-year contract PGCPSS has the option of continuing to use TransFinder at an annual fee of \$123,287, paid for by BusPatrol, according to the contract.

### BusPatrol's Agreement

On May 1, 2023, then-chair of Prince George's County Council Edward Burroughs sent a budget overview memo that noted an increase of \$4.9 million over the previous year's budget. "The increase is primarily due to increases in operating costs to support the new School Bus-Arm Camera safety program in partnership with Prince George's County Public Schools," states the memo's Budget Overview. "The \$6.5 million increase in the School Bus Stop Arm program expenditures in FY2022 is a result of the agreement between the Prince George's County Public School System and BusPatrol (the vendor). BusPatrol is paid a contracted fixed 'Technology Fee' of \$400 per month for each school bus that is equipped with a BusPatrol Camera. The fee is continuous with the operation of the program," it states in the Facilities and Operating Revenues and Expenditures section.

An FY2023 chart summarizing the revenue and expenditures of the School Bus Stop-Arm Camera program shows a gross profit of \$8,354,818.80 from violations. From that amount BusPatrol is paid \$6,662,811.28 in processing fees. After other expenses, PGCPSS itself makes a net income of \$597,444.77, dwarfed by BusPatrol's share of over \$6.6 million.

### Concerns about Contracts

In September 2022, an audit

report for Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) raised concerns about their partnership with BusPatrol. That five-year contract began in May 2016, with five annual renewal options, and allowed BusPatrol to install and operate cameras, which BusPatrol would own and maintain, on MCPS school buses. According to the report, BusPatrol's cameras would also be able to "monitor the conduct of drivers and students inside the bus along with global positioning units to track the buses."

The audit states that according to a July 2019 report from the Montgomery County Office of the Inspector General (OIG), "The OIG initiated the review in August 2018 after the County was made aware of concerns regarding the vendor's history of prior convictions involving fraud and bribery in another state where it operated a similar program. Although the report disclosed that employees of the County or MCPS did not violate a rule, law, or procedure, or had any inappropriate relationship with the vendor, the report identified the following two findings related to the County:

1.) The business case for this program was built around the desired use of a predetermined vendor rather than an objective analysis to design an effective and economical method to achieve an identified outcome.

2.) County officials relied, at least in part, on information provided by a criminal conspirator in vetting the vendor and they continued to rely on vendor supplied information when considering the future of the program."

In addition to the concerns of the OIG report, Maryland's Office of Legislative Audits said it "received an allegation on our fraud, waste, and abuse hotline that MCPS had entered into a contract to place monitoring cameras on school buses that diverts fines to a private entity when they should be paid to the County." "Based on our review, we were able to substantiate the allegation as the contract provided that all funds were to go to the vendor until the vendor recovered its cost of investment," stated the audit. Finding 10 of the audit report on MCPS is that: "MCPS contracted with a vendor for a school bus camera system without a competitive procurement process or a fixed total cost to be paid. In addition, the contract lacked sufficient details to enable effective monitoring of the amounts invoiced and paid to the vendor."

### BusPatrol's Corporate History

Maryland Delegate David Moon, speaking at an Environ-

ment and Transportation Committee hearing on House Bill 849 in 2023, cited the findings of the audit of MCPS, raising concerns that BusPatrol was "convicted of bribery in another state" and "flagged by a DLS audit that Montgomery County's procurement was flawed, and no bid, and didn't have proper controls ..." In response BusPatrol issued a public statement that they had "purchased intellectual property stemming from a now-defunct company (Force Multiplier Solutions, or FMS) that developed nascent school bus stop arm enforcement technology. That defunct company unfortunately had certain individuals in corporate leadership who violated the law. None of those individuals work for or are even associated with BusPatrol. We strongly condemn the actions of these individuals as they are not representative of anyone at our company or our mission to protect students on their journey to and from school." Records show that in 2019 the CEO of FMS was sentenced to seven years in federal prison for what the United States Attorney's Office, Northern District of Texas, described as "a bribery scheme that took down multiple public officials and precipitated the collapse of Dallas County Schools."

### Future Plans

PGCPSS was asked if they plan to renegotiate a better share of the over \$8.35 million in revenue from fines from the county's school buses with BusPatrol and if BusPatrol will be involved in selecting the next transportation management system and bus tracking app or paying for them, since the five year contract ends this year. Johnson told us to file a public information act request, though since we were asking about future plans for these contracts that information won't be available in public records. The News Review reached out multiple times to every person listed under PGCPSS' Media Inquiries and Public Information team, for whom we also left messages, with the exception of Director of Communications Meghan Gebreselassie, whose mailbox was consistently full. On Monday Senior Public Information Specialist Lynn McCawley answered our call to her cell phone and said she'd get back to us but hadn't by time of press.

*The authors have children who are students at PGCPSS.*



# Understanding the Significance And Opposition to StopFinder

by Anna Bedford-Dillow

At the start of the 2024-25 school year Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPSS) had several significant changes in place to improve their longstanding difficulties with transportation, most significantly, school start and end times. PGCPSS had contracted 4Mativ Technologies to provide a transportation audit for the cost of \$210,600. But amidst all the "transportation enhancements" rolled out, one thing remained the same: StopFinder, an app opposed by parents and school board members alike.

If you do not have children who take the bus to school, you might wonder about the importance of the StopFinder app. It tracks school buses, potentially down to their GPS location so that parents know in real time where a bus is on its route. That kind of technology can help a family make it to the stop when the bus comes early, and see where their child's bus is when they haven't made it home from school at the expected time. When there's no driver available that day, which happens when there's an illness, for example, due to the general driver shortage, the app can let parents know that no bus is available before they leave their children standing

at the stop in the morning. When buses ran an hour or more behind schedule during snow delays, the app was supposed to let families know the expected arrival time so children didn't have to stand in freezing temperatures wondering if a bus would come at all. Despite the promise of the technology, StopFinder fails to deliver.

### Terrible Record

For years, large numbers of parents have testified and complained that StopFinder doesn't work - on parent forums and groups, to their representatives and at board of education meetings. At the March 2024 school board meeting when numerous transportation changes were announced, board members warned the administration that their constituents wanted something other than StopFinder (see the April 4, 2024 issue). At that time the administration spoke of a "rebranding" and fewer doubled routes, which they said had been causing problems for the app.

### School Board Members' Opposition

In April 2024, PGCPSS Director of Transportation Keba Baldwin said they would "open up" more options in the app to use capabilities they hadn't yet.

See STOPFINDER, page 7



PHOTO BY JEFFREY ALLEN JONES

Geese land on the frozen Greenbelt Lake on January 27.

**NO LAUGHING MATTER**  
A Comedy by Jeff Dunne

**FEBRUARY 21 THROUGH MARCH 8, 2025**

**FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS 8 PM**

**SUNDAYS 2 PM**

(FACEMASKS REQUIRED SUNDAY, MARCH 2)

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Free community event

**Sunday Feb. 16th**  
11am-12:30p - Street dance workshop with Manish Chouhan at Greenbelt Community Center gym  
1:30-3:30p - Free film screening at Greenbelt Cinema with Q&A

scan for additional info and workshop sign-up  
bit.ly/3CDHO6T

STOPFINDER continued from page 6

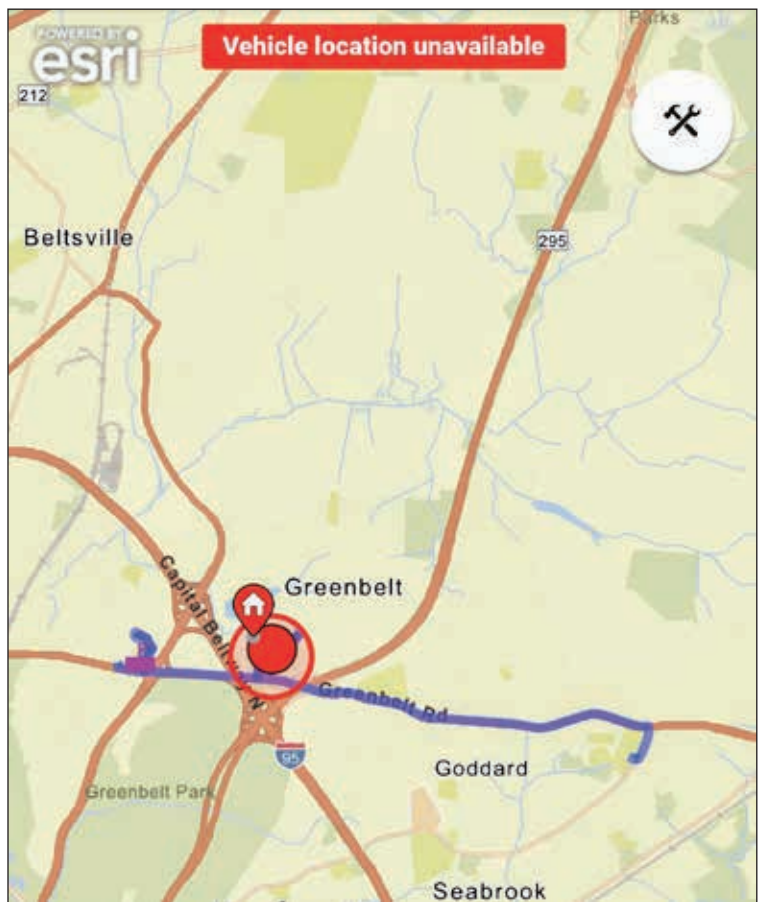


PHOTO COURTESY STOPFINDER APP

The StopFinder app should enable parents to see where their child's school bus is in real time but the vehicle location is rarely available.

Board Member Pamela Boozer-Strother (District 3) was skeptical, having heard it before. Board Member Brannon Jackson (District 6), who has since been elected chair of the board of education, said he wanted to go on record opposing Stopfinder. "I don't know what rebranding we can do. No. We need to look for other opportunities ... There's other companies out there ... I just want to go on record so my community knows that I'm saying that we don't want Stopfinder," he said.

Coleman responded that the administration could consider alternatives in 2025-2026 but didn't want to change too much in the upcoming year and "leave our community behind." "I feel like we're already behind with Stopfinder," retorted Jackson. Board Member and then-Vice Chair Lolita Walker (District 9) said, "I think every community has heard about Stopfinder. As a parent I'm on the picket line about Stopfinder myself." She asked that PGCPs carefully communicate the optimization of a tool that "we already know parents are beside themselves about." She told the administration they'd have to educate the public when they "keep things the same that aren't necessarily working."

Then-Board Member Kenneth Harris (District 7) (who lost reelection in the fall) agreed, "Our communities do not want Stopfinder," but he believed changing it was not a conversation they could have at this point.

**Continued StopFinder Problems**

Despite promised improvements, problems with the app continue this school year. In December 2024, StopFinder an-

nounced a "simplified view" that would no longer display the bus trip path or other stops. Parents objected, saying they would like to know which stop the bus was currently at, as it is helpful to know if the bus is approaching and also because a student who misses a bus might be able to catch it further on.

In January 2025, PGCPs shared an "Update on StopFinder App Issues," apologizing for the inconvenience caused by technical issues. "Our team is actively working with the vendor to identify and resolve the issue as quickly as possible," said the update on January 29. In fall 2024, families had been advised to use "geo alerts" to know where their children's buses were, a function the system said was being automatically created for all accounts in their message on December 16, which also announced the "simplified view." As of February, Greenbelt families reported the app is displaying "Vehicle location unavailable."

In response to questions about why PGCPs left behind their previous app, Here Comes The Bus, which parents reported as useful and reliable and why they persist with StopFinder despite objections and ongoing problems that make it unusable for some, the News Review looked into PGCPs' contract with TransFinder, StopFinder's parent company, in another article this week (see page 1).

The author has two children who are currently PGCPs students.



# Chelsea Wood Condos at Last All Finally Have Enough Heat

by Erica Johns

Heat was restored to the last four of 47 buildings in the Chelsea Wood condo complex on Thursday, January 30. Buildings 8489, 8491, 8493 and 8495 Greenbelt Road had no heat this heating season until now, being in the half of the complex where the first of two underground pipes broke in October.

**Missing Welder**

Residents of those buildings were notified January 25 to expect repairs to their building to be carried out on Monday, January 27. However, delays excavating the broken pipe and securing a second welder when the first didn't appear meant that heat was not restored until January 30.

**What Next?**

Metropolis' heat restoration message listed the repairs completed up to that point, including two boilers, two underground pipes, two domestic water pipes, one drain pipe and burst pipes in six condos. They wrote that after restoring heat to all units, they would proceed to address repairs needed throughout the complex because of past leaks. Metropolis did not respond to a News Review query to describe those repairs or plans to substantively address Chelsea Wood infrastructure.

**Home Again**

Resident Jessica Fomalont told the News Review that she appreciates Metropolis making it a priority to restore heat, and doing so within one month of becoming Chelsea Wood's management company. She also appreciated the excavators and HVAC companies who worked in frigid temperatures on the pipes and boilers.

Fomalont said she is relieved after spending three winter months without heat. She can work from home, no longer forced to go to her Washington, D.C. office every day for warmth. Fomalont said that what is im-

portant to her as a condo owner is having control over her own environment. She said the lack of heat removed that sense of control, making her uncomfortable in her own home. Now, she says, "It feels like my home again."



PHOTO BY ERICA JOHNS

Buildings 8489, 8491, 8493 and 8495 Greenbelt Road in the Chelsea Wood condo complex were the last four of Chelsea Wood's 47 buildings to have their heat restored.

## Update on Parkway and Crescent Apartments Still Without Heat

On Monday, February 3, City of Greenbelt Community Development inspectors reinspected the 54 apartment units in the Parkway Gardens and Crescent Pointe Apartment buildings which have been without adequate heat. According to Public Information Officer Chondria Andrews:

- 35 citations were issued.
- Two units were found to be in conformance with interior temperature requirements.
- Nine units' tenants were satisfied with their heat and declined inspection.
- Eight units are vacant and will not be occupied until the

heating issues are resolved.

Community Development staff reported that technicians are on site making repairs to two of the three boilers, hoping to have repairs completed by the end of the week, barring unforeseen problems. Information on the status of repairs to the third boiler is expected by the end of the week.

Dreyfuss, the apartment management company, is encouraging any residents with concerns about the temperature of their units and/or temporary heat sources to contact them directly.

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# USAID continued from page 1

messages are coming from outside of the government, says Melissa. She believes they are coming from a server installed by a non-OPM group, employees of Musk, some of whom have been given positions with the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). "It's a coup! Legitimately, that's what it is. The government is not being run by the government right now. It's being run by associates of Elon Musk. I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that elected officials are not in charge, they're not the ones making the decisions and the ones implementing them are not the civil service," she says.

Immediately following the inauguration, USAID employees received a directive email informing them that Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) programs were being discontinued and their DEIA colleagues had been put on administrative leave. They were also told to report any DEIA programs or workers attempting to hide their work under different names. The email was signed by someone they later found out was their new acting administrator, David reported. Melissa said she spent the week removing keywords from documents, to a point of absurdity where phrases such as "diversity of opinion" were being flagged. The impact of this is huge she said, since the federal government is seen as a leader, and industry across the country looks to it and follows suit.

Melissa said she was instructed to close programs relating to DEIA by day two, something that wasn't possible. "You can't just shut it off. There's a whole process you have to go through to close out an award. ... at the same time they're shutting off all the spigots to make sure no funding goes out - funding doesn't go out this time of year anyway; we have a funding cycle," she said. The "spigots" being shut off are the same ones that are needed to close things out, she explained, describing a bottleneck in the agency's awards. It's "unimplementable," she said. "It's not possible to get things out the door and at the same time we're still dealing with the whole 'you can't send emails.' They all have to go through the head of the agency. ... It's absurd. It's bizarre."

There's been an outcry over funding freezes for domestic grants and foreign aid and subsequent announcements of exceptions and waivers, Melissa notes. "Word like that has gone out but those spigots I was talking about still have not been opened so no funding is going out for the things they've announced. ... It's

just PR lies," she says.

### Week of January 27

On Monday, January 27, David was in morning meetings when an ISC he works with started receiving emails telling them to stop working and go home. "About 700 of those people, a week ago Monday, were sent home," he told the News Review. The rest of the workers, including civil servants and PSCs, like David, were left there, thinking, "Okay? We just lost about a third of our workforce," he said.

Melissa confirmed, saying, "Last week we were told to shut down all the institutional contracts, which is about a third of the USAID workforce."

David says one of the things those who remained started to do was to communicate with each other outside of work, something they didn't regularly do before. On the night of Sunday, February 2, somebody commented to David that they were unable to get into their USAID account. When he checked he found he couldn't get into his email, either. "So, they were just shutting down our emails Sunday night," he said. "They were shutting down the PSCs by turning off their emails. There was no communication. There was no, 'Hey we've decided we're gonna put you all on administrative leave.' ... I still don't know what's going on. I just know I don't have an email," he said Monday. His contract is for one year and is renewable four times, a way of giving a five-year contract that's reviewable annually, he explained. There is a clause that allows for the government to cancel the contract with 15 days' notice. "But they haven't done that," he notes. "We haven't heard anything. I still don't know what's going on except what I hear on the outside,"



PHOTO BY JASON ANDREW

One participant in a protest outside USAID headquarters in Washington, D.C., on Monday, February 3.

says David. "No one's communicated to us anything. ... But I do have a contract that's signed by a U.S. government contracting officer," he says. David said his supervisors said they didn't know anything.

On Friday, January 31, DOGE and Musk employees had arrived at the USAID headquarters in Washington, D.C. and tried to gain access to classified areas, the Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility (SCIF). Security personnel who attempted to stop them were placed on administrative leave. By Saturday, the group had gained access to the SCIFs. On Sunday, February 2, Musk, now head of DOGE, announced on X, "USAID is a criminal organization. Time for it to die." Later, on the same platform, he gloated, "We spent the weekend feeding USAID into the wood chipper. Could gone to some great parties [sic]. Did that

instead."

### Week of February 3

Speaking with the News Review on Monday, Melissa said of the PSCs, "They've all been locked out. But no one knows who locked them out. The people who have the authority to do that have not been notified." Alarming, many of those overseas are PSCs, she noted. She had to fill out information about the PSCs in her unit but wasn't told what it was for, though "we didn't imagine anything good was going to happen," she said. "We're duty bound to follow due process. We wouldn't just strand people. I don't know any civil servant who would do that. We all take this very seriously. And if we're comfortable disregarding the law then we're not fit for the position." Yet they've been given instruction that Executive Orders are to supersede law and policy where they conflict, "which is egregious," she says. "We're demonstrating contempt for the law, which is appalling. That's not the way any civil servant I've ever worked with behaves. That's insane." Their general counsel and ethics lawyers have been put on leave, she says. "All the means of recourse are being shut down," she says.

Up until Thursday of last week Stephanie thought they were preparing for a 90-day review of the agency. Since then, things have been unpredictable, though it makes sense they'd fire the ethics lawyers first, she said. On Monday she arrived at her office, which is not in the headquarters, around 7:30 a.m. A little later she and a couple of colleagues already there started to get messages from other col-

leagues that they weren't being let in. They prepared themselves for being removed. But instead, the colleagues downstairs were let in and she stayed in the building the whole day. On Tuesday she participated in a union meeting. She was encouraged to know people were trying to help them. "We just want to do our work. We're all so mission driven. We believe in it," she said. "This does not make America safer, stronger or more prosperous. It's risky for all those things." This week it's heartening to see people start to speak out and pay attention, she said Tuesday. "There's not a lot of trust being built. We think of ourselves as the good guys," she told the News Review.

### What's Next?

Those who spoke to the News Review expressed concern for their colleagues abroad. BHA has people in Washington, D.C. managing responses, David said, but also people abroad in Thailand, Ukraine, Kenya and Israel. "It's putting people in harm's way. ... These people who are out there doing their job one day wake up and they're no longer being supported by their organization. They're not sure how they're going to get home," David said, noting some were posted overseas with their families. "People were saying, 'I don't know how me and my children are going to get back.' Because nobody's communicating. It's all just, 'Shut it all down.' It's really one of the most incredibly stupid things I've seen in my entire life," he said. "It's like it's not thought out. It's just this guy [Musk]."

Melissa says there are USAID workers in Ukraine cut off from their USAID access now: "No one will answer their calls, they don't have access to their email, they don't know how they're getting home, they're stranded in a war zone." The same is true of people involved in evacuations

See USAID, page 11

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# Police Blotter

Incidents reported here occurred January 27 to February 2, 2025. 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@greenbeltnmd.gov](mailto:pd@greenbeltnmd.gov). Times provided are when the incidents were reported.

**Incident Summary**

Greenbelt Police reported one domestic incident, leading to arrest. Two missing person cases were resolved.

**Armed Robbery**

On January 27 at 1:31 p.m. near 6106 Breezewood Court, three boys robbed another boy at knife point and stole his jacket and shoes; he attends school with the suspects.

**Robbery**

On January 31 at 9:30 a.m. near 7601 Hanover Parkway, juvenile suspects forcibly took \$30 and a ski mask from a juvenile victim.

**Robbery**

On February 1 at 3:05 a.m. near 7900 Good Luck Road, a group of thieves broke into an ATM using crowbars; they stole an unidentified amount of money, including a tracker.

**Assault**

On January 27 at 4:04 p.m. near 6000 Greenbelt Road, a man was shopping in the store when he and another individual got into an argument that turned physical.

**Residential Breaking and Entering**

On January 29 at 3:53 p.m. near 9158 Springhill Court, someone entered a residence and stole multiple personal items. No forced entry was observed. The resident suspected an acquaintance.

**Police Assist**

On January 28 at 2:40 p.m. near 107 Northway, a man told police that someone had put a yellow sticky note on his door that said “Requesting A Certified Disposition For Immigration.”

**DUI**

On February 1 at 5:27 p.m. near 6400 Cherrywood Lane, a single vehicle hit a sign. The driver admitted she was drunk and was arrested for DUI.

On February 2 at 1 p.m. near Kenilworth Avenue and Pontiac Street, a vehicle was driven with suspended tags. The driver was intoxicated and was arrested.

**Fraud**

On January 27 near 6218 Breezewood Drive, someone used a debit card to make unauthorized transactions; near 6811 Landon Court, someone wrote a fraudulent check.

On February 2 near 7344 Morrison Drive, a credit card had charges from an unknown person.

**Theft and Shoplifting**

On January 27 at 8:50 a.m. near 5910 Greenbelt Road, a man stole merchandise.

On January 29 at 8:13 a.m. near 7607 Greenbelt Road, a woman stole items; at 4:42 p.m. near 6100 Greenbelt Road, a man stole items he placed in his backpack; at 5:47 p.m. near 6000 Greenbelt Road, a male with a gray duffel bag stole items and fled into Berwyn Heights; at 3:02 p.m. near 6000 Greenbelt Road, a man was taken into custody at the bus stop for stealing items from a store. All items were returned.

On January 29 at 3:23 p.m. near 6100 Greenbelt Road, loss prevention detained a suspect, who lied to the officers about his identity. He was taken to the station, and once his identity was revealed, he was charged and arrested.

On January 30 at 3:19 p.m. near 6100 Greenbelt Road, a man stole several items and fled; at 5:58 p.m. near 7429 Greenbelt Road, three men stole merchandise and fled before the police arrived.

On January 31 at 3:18 p.m. near 6000 Greenbelt Road, two suspects stole items; at 9:35 p.m. near 7327 Hanover Parkway, a man stole money from the register when the cashier turned away.

On February 1 at 8:51 p.m. near 5707 Cherrywood Lane, a man stole items and fled.

**Trespassing/Disorderly**

On January 30 at 8:43 p.m. near 5510 Cherrywood Lane, a man and woman were caught trespassing in a building. They had been removed from the building a few days earlier. The female refused to comply when asked to leave and was arrested.

**Vandalism**

On January 29 near 5914 Cherrywood Terrace, officers located graffiti believed to be gang related. On February 1 near 9158 Springhill Court, officers discovered gang-related graffiti on a generator box.

On February 2 at 1:21 a.m. near 9158 Springhill Court, someone discharged a firearm in a building hallway. The bullet struck the apartment hallway ceiling and was recovered; no one was injured.

**Vehicle Crimes Stolen Vehicles**

On January 27 near 9114 Edmonston Court, a white 2021 Toyota Tacoma (Md. 6EX4189) was stolen; near 5902 Cherrywood Terrace, a 2024 Kia Niro rental car was stolen (Md.

7GD7013); the driver had an outstanding warrant with the Sheriff’s Office and was arrested.

On February 2 near 5809 Cherrywood Lane, a light blue 2000 Honda Civic (Md. 6GJ9851) was stolen.

**Theft from Auto**

Wheels were stolen February 1 from a 2025 Honda Civic near 9100 Springhill Lane and from a Toyota Camry near 7511 Mandan Road; and from a Toyota Corolla February 2 near 6400 Cherrywood Lane.

On February 1 near 9268 Edmonston Road, a 2012 Dodge Ram pickup truck had a window broken and items stolen.

**Vandalism to Auto**

Vehicle windows were broken January 27 near 9240 Springhill Lane on a 2018 Toyota RAV4; January 28 near 9011 Breezewood Terrace on a 2015 Chevrolet; and February 2 near 6460 Capitol Drive on a 2024 Buick, a 2011 Honda Pilot and a 2011 Dodge.

On February 2 near 9168 Edmonston Road, the windshield was broken on a 2003 Toyota Highlander.

♡♡♡♡♡♡♡♡♡♡♡♡♡♡♡♡

You’ve been married for what seems like ages  
You don’t have a penchant for rhyme.  
So, just say from the heart that you’ll never part.  
And continue to have a good time.

31 words = MegaSweetie 12

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## COUNCIL continued from page 1

immigration enforcement by enacting municipal legislation, in addition to the existing police general orders.

Robert Goldberg-Strassler asked that council support state legislation seeking to protect those who are in peril these days. The Protecting Sensitive Locations Act would restrict the reach of immigration raids in places such as schools, places of worship and hospitals.

City Manager Josué Salmerón reported that city staff are working on a series of actions to inform the public of their rights and what level of protection they have in schools and places of worship, including the Know Your Rights page mentioned above. The city sent this information out through its digital channels and sent an email to 14,000 subscribers. Salmerón said they are also working with CASA of Maryland to organize Know Your Rights information sessions. However, he said, they want to be discreet, and the events will not be advertised as a town hall.

**Recognitions**

Mayor Emmett Jordan issued a proclamation to members of the Black American History Committee proclaiming February to be Black History Month

in Greenbelt. He also recognized Goldberg-Strassler, who noted that January 27 is International Holocaust Remembrance Day, commemorating the day that the Auschwitz death camp was liberated by the Soviet army in 1945. His grandparents, he said, were exterminated there 80 years ago. He offered a Hebrew prayer in commemoration.

**Admin Reports**

Salmerón reported that Animal Control will be back in full operation on February 3. The city has also secured a \$9,000 grant to help residents obtain spay/neuter services. Salmerón noted that \$9,000 will not cover all such needs, and funding will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.

He also gave an update on the efforts to restore heat to two apartment complexes in Greenbelt Center. This issue was covered in detail in the January 30 News Review.



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Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Text (Please Print Legibly) \_\_\_\_\_

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(See Love Note examples in this issue)

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(See Love Note examples in this issue)

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USAID continued from page 8

from the Congo due to Ebola. "And that's an accompanied post so there are people with school-aged children," she notes, "whose access has been terminated in the middle of an evacuation. So they're stranded ... in Brazzaville, so not even in their homes. I don't know how they're paying for accommodations. We're taking away their government resources and not flying them back home. It's in everybody's contract. You can't strand somebody like that but nobody's getting any responses," she said.

Melissa also said shutting down USAID is costing lives and dismantling systems that can't easily be brought back. She gave the example of the program FEWSNet, a famine early warning system: "There's not been a significant famine in any country where it reports data. And it's gone, we're not funding it anymore, just on a whim and it saves probably millions of lives. Every year it saves lives." Tracking of diseases will be impacted, too. One of the people they just froze as a PSC was the deputy in charge of the Ebola response that's ongoing right now, she says. "There's going to be a lot of hardship as a result. "It creates gaps. ... China is actively trying to move into this space and we're creating a huge vacuum and opportunity for that. And [stopping] a lot of the work we do in Eastern Europe or Central Asia, that's creating opportunities for Russia, as well. ... There are places where we've been actively competing with Iran," says Melissa. "You know, USAID is a national security agency and that's not just for show. The work that we do makes America more safe and when we pull out, it creates more unstable environments there. Are



Protesters showed up outside USAID's headquarters on Monday, February 3. A woman in the foreground wears a USAID jacket.

PHOTO BY JASON ANDREW

we going to wind up needing to send military in at some point?" she asks. "We're a cheap option for security. ... This is less than one percent of the U.S. budget and we have a huge impact."

In the fall David was in Israel working on the Gaza response. "Talk about walking away from people in need," he said Monday. He also worried about the ripple effect on nongovernmental organizations who won't be able to pay employees, including some who live in Greenbelt, without USAID support. David, Melissa and Stephanie all believe dismantling USAID is a test case. "I'm sorry for the United States," says David, "because if they're doing this to us today, you know, NASA's going to be next. ... I think it's just starting."

Melissa also worries about the information being handed over to a private citizen, "a private citizen with known strong ties to China and Russia," she notes. "There's already been irreparable damage done," she says of the information and data in Musk's hands.

**Personal Outlook**

David says he'll be okay. He

was paid on the weekend, but there's a week lag, so he's completed a week into his next pay period and he's still working, without email, because he hasn't been told not to. He has over 220 hours of accrued vacation time. "I'm not crossing my fingers. ... I've been shut out of the time and attendance system," he said.

Melissa, a single mother, is the sole provider for her infant, who also relies on her health insurance. "I assume I'm going to be let go. I don't know when. We're not expecting to get notice, and we're not expecting due process to be followed. I'm pretty worried about that," she said Monday night. Early that morning she received a text message that personnel should remain off site unless individually contacted by senior leadership. The messages don't sound like federal communication,

with different tone and language, she said. "I'm hoping that we'll get some congressional action to stop some of this or at least slow it down," she said Monday, noting Democratic members of Congress were at a press conference outside the USAID headquarters that day but were denied access to the federal building.

On Tuesday evening, Stephanie was placed on administrative leave. She received an email along with everyone else from her D.C. office. They were then locked out of USAID systems.

Hours later, Melissa received an email from internalcomms@subscribe.usaid.gov. "On Friday, February 7, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. (EST) all direct hire personnel will be placed on administrative leave globally, with the exception of designated personnel responsible for mission-critical functions, core leadership and specially designated programs," it read. Essential personnel expected to continue working would be informed by 3 p.m. on Thursday, February 6, it stated. For those posted abroad, the Department of State is preparing a plan "with all applicable requirements and laws" to arrange and pay for return travel within 30 days and "provide for the termination of PSC and ISC contracts that are not determined to be essential," it continued. Exceptions would be considered on a case-by-case basis, said the email. "Thank you for your service," it concluded. It was unsigned.

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## Black American History Month

# Young, Bold and Brilliant: Celebrating Black Artists

by Diya Shah

The Greenbelt community came together to celebrate young artists of color at the reception for the Citywide Art Exhibit on Sunday, February 2. Held at the New Deal Café, the event featured a vibrant collection of visual art, a live monologue performance and a welcoming space where attendees could sit, eat, talk, mingle and engage in meaningful conversations that honored Black history and artistic expression.

Organized by the Greenbelt Black History & Culture Committee and curated by Shaymar Higgs, the executive director of The SPACE: Free Art for All, the exhibit highlights the power of art as a form of resistance, healing and cultural preservation. Among the art pieces from young Black DMV creatives was featured artist Songu Mbriwa, a 33-year-old painter from Sierra Leone who traveled to the U.S. to share his work and advocate for greater recognition of African artists.

“Whenever I’m painting, it’s like a therapy for me – I’m in my happy place,” said Mbriwa, a completely self-taught artist. His pieces, ranging from biblical themes to depictions of everyday life and people, captivated attendees with their incredible realism and bold colors. One of his standout works was a striking portrait of a chimp named Romio, inspired by a real-life encounter in his home country.

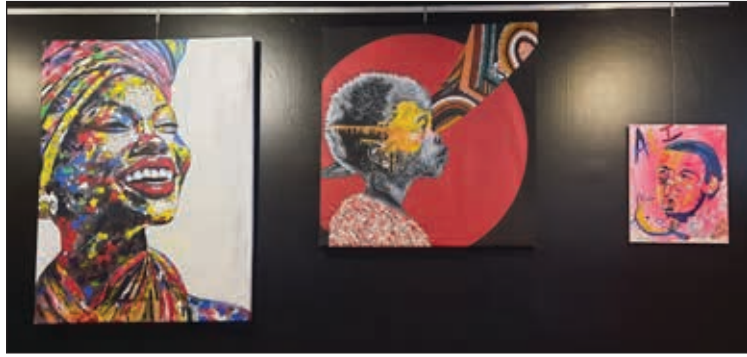
Mbriwa spoke about the limited opportunities for art and artists in Sierra Leone, where access to materials is scarce, art galleries are nonexistent and society doesn’t value art as a career. When he was younger, Mbriwa used dust and charcoal and created wherever possible. “Art is my calling,” he explained. “I just want to keep [art] alive and just keep going.”

In addition to the visual art on display, the reception featured a powerful performance by Tar’El Barnes, a 16-year-old student at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts. He performed a monologue from *Blacktop Sky* by Christina Anderson, a play that is geared toward the Black community, but that Barnes says, “has a universal message that can be used within any community.”

Higgs also took time to talk about the work his arts nonprofit does to empower emerging artists and the power of community. “I love that everyone’s here right now,” Higgs said. “Show up for the people, the younger ones especially.”

Following the speeches, attendees were encouraged to eat, drink and connect with one another. The remainder of the event was filled with lively conversations, laughter and the exchange of ideas – a true reflection of community building in action.

Diya Shah is a student at the Philip Merrill College of Journalism interning at the News Review.



Colorful artwork hangs on the walls at the New Deal Café.

PHOTO BY ANNE GARDNER



Several of the pieces are by Songu Mbriwa, a 33-year-old painter from Sierra Leone.

PHOTO BY ANNE GARDNER



PHOTO BY DIYA SHAH



PHOTO BY DIYA SHAH



## GAFC continued from page 1

The fitness wing and locker rooms will remain open, with normal hours.

Varda, Phelan and Parks each stressed their hopes that the outdoor pool will open earlier in the season than usual, with longer hours each day, but that depends on yet-to-be-made Prince George’s County Health Department decisions.

Resident Tom LeaMond asked about the usable life of the planned construction. Kim replied that these project repairs should last 15 to 20 years.

### Community Spirit

Pools and recreation have been at the center of community-building since Greenbelt’s beginning, as gathering places where residents can meet and play. Many residents use the pools daily and seasonally, for health, therapy, fitness, learning, sport, relaxation and fun.

Varda stated, “We know how important the pool is to the community – many different users.” The project planners are strategizing to offer “something for everyone – what they like or need to do best.”

Parents, coaches and former swim team members credited the swim team ethos for nurturing community connections and civic engagement in the young folks whose lives it touches.

Current city leadership respon-

sible for planning this project emphasized a spirit of cooperation in this period of transition. Christine Nickel, GMST treasurer, added, “We want to work with you guys, we’re not trying to say swim team members are the only people who have a stake in this – we just need to know how to help you.”

Salmerón referred to the uncertainty of the current status at this point in the project. “I’m sure it has been inducing anxiety.” The planners have been “exploring options – and considering, finding a balance – where we can figure out a way to work” for all the community stakeholders.

Pointing to the complexity of that balancing act – serving all the members of the pool community, strategizing safety, liability and sharing space – Varda assured the audience, “You’re not going to lose the pool. We’re going to figure it out, we’re just not sure what that looks like at the moment. We’re going to be resilient.”

After listening to questions and answers, LeaMond pointed to the “good synergy – expressing needs and working to meet needs” between the planning team and the user groups of the pool.

### Passholders, Admissions

Daily fees will not rise seasonally this summer. Year-long and summer passes continue to

## Black American History Month

# Museum Hosts Lecture Feb. 20 On Norfolk Botanical Garden

In celebration of Black History Month, the Greenbelt Museum is hosting a free talk at 7 p.m. on Thursday, February 20 by Martha M. Williams, who will dive into the rich history of Norfolk Botanical Garden, Virginia’s largest public garden. Hear the untold story of how, through Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Works Progress Administration, 20 African American women and 20 African American men worked to clear swampland and transform it into the botanical garden. Learn also how a group of local middle schoolers helped identify many of the original gardeners whose legacy was unknown. From there Nathaniel Cody will describe the garden of today – one full of nationally recognized collections that continues to grow and bring people from all walks of life closer to nature. This is a virtual event to be held via Zoom, and advance registration is required eventbrite.com/e/breaking-ground-the-wpa-original-gardeners-tickets-1207662814989. An email with a Zoom link will be sent prior to the date of talk. The event is sponsored by the Friends of the Greenbelt Museum and the City of Greenbelt.

### Speaker Bios

Martha M. Williams is a retired educator, who grew up on the family farm in Southampton County. Family farming gave her a deep appreciation for working the land. She enjoys both beautiful farms and all types of gardens. During her career as an educator she served on many community service projects including leadership on various boards. Serving on the Norfolk Botanical Garden board of directors provided her with an opportunity to participate in the unfolding history of the garden.

After hours of collaboration and research, she published *WPA Original Gardeners* in May 2016. In January 2023, she published *First Gardeners* for young children.

Nathaniel Cody is a longtime resident of Hampton Roads who attended Menchville High School and Virginia Commonwealth University, where he received a bachelor’s degree in sculpture and extended media, with a minor in mass communications. While attending college, he managed two senior art shows for Virginia Commonwealth University, curating and managing over 200 student artworks while fundraising for all operation costs. He is currently the digital content creator for the Norfolk Botanical Garden. Since college he has explored different occupations and brings expertise in many areas of nonprofit operations, marketing, corporate relations, social media, curating, community relations, project management and interdepartmental relations. Cody still finds time to be actively involved in the community and served on multiple boards: Stonewall Sports Norfolk (chaired) and Hampton Roads Pride (chaired). He is on the Garden’s President’s Council on Inclusion and Diversity.

Information in this story came from a press release from Greenbelt Museum.

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## City Notes

Public Safety, CARES and Constituent Services attended meetings about Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) with nonprofits, county and congressional representatives. CARES is offering information, education and counseling.

Public Safety, Public Works, Recreation, Public Information and Economic Development participated in a town hall meeting about indoor pool deck repairs.

At Parkway Gardens and Crescent Pointe, 54 apartment units remain without adequate heat. Dreyfuss Property Management delivered an update on boiler repairs and Code Enforcement continues issuing citations.

PEPCO electricity rates and billing changes prompted meetings of city, county and community leaders and churches and Franklin Park management. The Grant Coordinator monitored consequences of the federal grant freeze.

Economic Development and Public Information attended the State of the County Breakfast.

Human Resources and Finance met with Paycor representatives, then launched the first payroll using the new Paycor system.

Environmental/Sustainability Coordinators built a new kayak trailer with Park Rangers.

Arts presented an Artful Afternoon for Black History Month, and the Museum’s new Valentine’s Display includes recent donations.

