



Jorgensen artwork, p.16



Council Talks Gun Disposal, Boxwood Water, Amazon

by Nora Eckert

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From law enforcement to infrastructure projects and so much more, councilmembers are called on to cover a wide array of topics. Its February 25 meeting was no exception, with council discussing police weapons disposal, Boxwood water line replacement, and the possibility of Amazon's second headquarters locating near Greenbelt.

There was heated discussion about how to handle replacement of weapons for the Greenbelt Police Department, with Lt. Timothy White informing council they have been in need of a replacement for about two years. The issue of what to do with the used weapons once replacements were purchased divided the council.

"Once weapons leave our hands we have no idea what

happens to them," said Councilmember Rodney Roberts, adding, "we should be setting an example and getting rid of these guns."

Councilmember Colin Byrd agreed in part. "I've seen guns end up in the wrong hands a lot, and I don't want to be a part of that at all," said Byrd.

However, he and four other councilmembers voted against Roberts' motion to destroy all weapons not being used by law enforcement. Greenbelt Police Chief Richard Bowers informed council that the only way to dispose of the weapons completely is to bring them to the trash incinerator in Baltimore. Instead, the police department is considering different companies that might purchase the supply of weapons.

Pipe Replacement

Council reviewed an update on the Boxwood water line replacement project that is scheduled

to start in March. April Wilt, technical contract manager with Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, provided the update.

The replacement project is estimated to take from March 15 until September 13, and will focus on 1,500 feet of new mains under Lastner Lane and Ridge Road. The existing mains under Lastner Lane were installed over 50 years ago. Replacement will ensure water services are dependable and a supply for emergency services is available.

Regular water service is set to continue during the project, with those exceptions being noted for those affected 48 hours in advance. "Any time water is interrupted for any purpose, we will notify," said Wilt.

Amazon to Greenbelt?

Byrd proposed a motion for council to draft a resolution opposing an Amazon headquarters

See **COUNCIL**, page 10

Foundation Presents Grant Check for CDCG Projects

by Aileen Kroll



PHOTO BY JOHN BUCK

Attendees pose at the BCIN meeting. Those in red shirts were the presenters for the evening.

On Tuesday, February 19, a check presentation ceremony was held at Mishkan Torah. Director Carol Shaw of the Greenbelt Community Foundation presented the ceremonial check to the Center for Dynamic Community Governance (CDCG) Co-director John Buck with support from Rabbi Saul Oresky.

CDCG supports and trains a number of community organizations throughout Greenbelt, including the Beloved Community Interfaith Network (BCIN), which meets at venues supporting interfaith social justice endeavors throughout Greenbelt

See **CDCG**, page 10

Del. Washington Addresses School Funding at Table Talk

by Jamal Williams

A table talk with Maryland State Delegate Alonzo Washington was held Saturday at the New Deal Café to update citizens on the Kirwan Commission's recommendations for Maryland school funding. According to Washington, a Kirwan Commission member from Prince George's County's 22nd District, preliminary recommendations made in January outline how to make Maryland's public schools more competitive by closing achievement gaps based on race, income, disability and other factors.



PHOTO BY JAMAL WILLIAMS

Maryland State Delegate Alonzo Washington holds his Table Talk at the New Deal Café.

The commission, chaired by William "Brit" Kirwan, a former president of the University of Maryland, made policy and funding recommendations for Fiscal Year 2020 that include:

- providing free pre-K education for 3- and 4-year-olds whose families fall 300 percent below the federal poverty line;
- raising teacher salaries to be competitive with other professions with similar education levels;
- improving college and career opportunities with advanced placement help and career and

technical education programs;

- providing increased funding to high-poverty schools for intensive services for students and families.

These recommendations, Washington said, would cost \$325 million in FY 2020, with \$64 million, or about 20 percent of the total, going toward Prince George's County public schools. Washington told the 20 or so attendees that investing in early childhood education will be a priority. He said he supported investing in full-day pre-K to 3- and 4-year-olds and making it a scaled-up approach.

The importance of early support for childhood education was a key point Washington expressed to Greenbelt residents. "It

is a best practice that we invest in early childhood education and in a child's life so that when they get to high school they are literate," Washington said. "We've looked at the best practices not only in the state or country but other jurisdictions around the

See **WASHINGTON**, page 10

What Goes On

Monday, March 11
8 p.m. City Council Meeting, Municipal Building
Thursday, March 14
7 p.m. Greenbelt Pedestrian & Bicycle Task Force, Community Center

Cast of 45 Is Homeward Bound; Story of Penelope and Odysseus

by Karen Yoho

Unscrupulous suitors. Conniving cannibals. A shape-shifting sea god. Showgirl sirens. Porcine ponderings. All of this and more can be found in the 2019 Greenbelt Youth Musical that opened with two performances last weekend at the Community Center.

The Greenbelt Youth Musical celebrates its 19th year by reprising a popular production from seven years ago, *Homeward Bound*. The book, music and lyrics by Christopher Cherry are based on *The Odyssey* by Homer. Homer's epic poem follows the long, perilous journey of Odysseus to get

"Humankind has been enchanted by *The Odyssey* for nearly 2,800 years because it's such a terrific story," explains Cherry. "The resourcefulness of Odysseus and Penelope as they battle adversity in their parallel storylines confirms for the audience that they are a perfect match, and we root for their reunion."

The role of Odysseus is played by Ezra Pitts, who has a strong voice and commanding stage presence. It is hard to believe that this is his first

See **MUSICAL**, page 11



PHOTO BY ERIC ZHANG

Ezra Pitts plays Odysseus and Erin Caldwell plays Penelope in *Homeward Bound*.

between.

CDCG continued from page 1

and Prince George's County. BCIN also held its monthly meeting at Mishkan Torah on February 19.

In recognition of CDCG's support of community groups and interconnections, the Foundation is sponsoring CDCG in a year-long project entitled Greenbelt's Bountiful Community Organizations: Growing Skills and Nurturing Talent. This program will offer confidential, one-on-one sessions providing professional analysis and follow-up of governance structures for Greenbelt-based community organizations and businesses, as well as group training sessions throughout the day. These sessions will be offered throughout Greenbelt over the course of the next several months. The first session will be held on Saturday, April 13, at the Community Center, Rooms 112 and 113. No pre-registration is required. Stop by any time between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. to participate



PHOTO BY VIJAY PARAMESHWARAN

Presenting the CDCG check, from left, are John Buck; Carol Shaw, director of GCF; and Rabbi Saul Oresky, Mishkan Torah.

in Earth Day projects, too. Children are welcome. For more information contact Aileen Kroll at aileen@dynamic-governance.org.

Aileen Kroll is the co-director/president of the Center for Dynamic Community Governance, Inc.

COUNCIL continued from page 1

being located in Greenbelt. This follows a change in the tech giant's original plans to locate part of their second headquarters in New York.

According to an article in the Washington Business Journal that Byrd brought to council's attention, David Iannucci, chief executive officer of the Prince George's County Economic Development Corp., pitched a College Park and Greenbelt property to Amazon for the new location.

Byrd said Greenbelt officials were never consulted on the matter.

"We have to send some kind of message that the county executive can't go around pitching

our city without talking with the people who lead the city or live in the city," he said.

Although councilmembers expressed their support for this sentiment, they had greater concerns about shutting down the option of welcoming any proposal from Amazon.

"I see no reason to put a roadblock up," said Mayor Pro Tem Judith Davis.

The hesitations about shutting down any future communications with Amazon outweighed concerns about Iannucci's move, and the motion to draft a resolution opposing bringing Amazon HQ2 to Greenbelt failed to pass, with a vote of 2-4.

Breaking up the tense discourse at the meeting, Robert Goldberg-Strassler passed out chocolates to councilmembers after they agreed to co-sponsor a March 31 event called HUG Walk. HUG, which stands for "Help Unite Greenbelt," is a free event where participants walk across Greenbelt to spread a message of unity.

"The purpose is to bring Greenbelt together," he said. "It's a grassroots movement of kindness."

Nora Eckert is a University of Maryland graduate student in journalism reporting for the News Review.

WASHINGTON continued from page 1

world and what they've come up with and what they've done."

Washington said attracting and retaining quality teachers is important. The commission recommended adding \$13 million in funds to raise salaries in Prince George's County in FY 2020. "We are paying our teachers 25 percent below any other profession," Washington said. He added that teachers should also have more time for collaboration, more time for training purposes and a reduced workload.

College and career resources

were another topic of discussion. Washington reiterated support for tutoring and other academic support programs to be in place by 10th grade so that students will have the support they need to pursue college and careers. Washington also hopes to establish a committee to oversee career and technical education that will lead students to obtain the necessary qualifications for high-paying jobs.

Washington's preliminary policies were met with overall approval by the Greenbelt residents

who attended the talk. Lois Rosado, member of the Greenbelt Equity Alliance, gained insight from the table talk and echoed Washington's stance on helping to support Prince George's County schools. "We all need to fight with him [Washington] to ensure that county schools are funded properly."

Jamal Williams is a University of Maryland graduate student in journalism reporting for the News Review.

Dine and Learn With MNCPPC

March is National Nutrition Month. Celebrate with Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), Department of Parks and Recreation, by coming to the free healthy cooking demonstrations the department has prepared. All ages are welcome, no registration is required.

On Thursday, March 14 from 6 to 7 p.m. the demonstration will be Cabbage Jambalaya with a Twist at the Vansville Community Center, 6813 Ammendale Road, Beltsville, and on Saturday, March 16 from 11 a.m. to noon at the Watkins Tennis Bubble, 301 Watkins Park Drive, Upper Marlboro. For more information on the Department of Parks and Recreation, visit pgparks.com.

ERHS Teacher Wins A Grant To Buy Research Equipment

The Society for Science and the Public announced the award of \$120,000 in grants to 35 science research teachers across the country to help them secure much-needed equipment and amenities for their classrooms. Sean Brady, a science teacher at Eleanor Roosevelt High School, has received a \$4,000 grant to purchase a shaker incubator for his classroom.

Brady leads his students in microbiology research projects, but currently they only have regular incubators. Without agitation, liquid cultures tend to form clumps, which skews experimental results. The shaker incubator permits much better homogenization of liquid cultures, leading to a much larger array of possible research projects. He hopes that this will better prepare them for research at the collegiate level and beyond.

"I am extremely grateful to re-

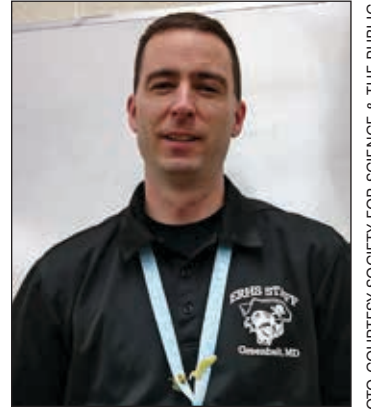


PHOTO COURTESY SOCIETY FOR SCIENCE & THE PUBLIC

Sean Brady, science teacher at ERHS, received a \$4,000 grant to purchase a shaker incubator.

ceive this grant," said Brady. "It will help purchase equipment to further the research capabilities of our students. Introducing students to independent research while still in high school will better enable them to pursue research at the collegiate level and beyond."



PHOTO BY BEN CLARKE

Greenbelt Middle School winning debaters, from left, Chloe Mshana, Isabel Ramirez, Christione Johnson and (front) Alexandra Clarke pose with their trophies. The team is coached by Cesar Fortuna.



PHOTO BY BJ KOWTHA

Members of the Bladerunners Robotics Team 6893 prepare for the D.C. district robotics competition to be held this Saturday, March 9, at Walt Whitman High School. They will be competing with a robot they built named Nancy, after NASA radioastronomer Nancy Grace Roman. (from left: Rahul Tikekar, Jaime Price, Greenbelter Briana Edwards, Mrs. Edwards, Vijay Kowtha and two other team members)



PHOTO BY YANJIE ZHANG

A beaver forages by the Lake.