CITY OF GREENBELT, MARYLAND

DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION

99 CENTERWAY, GREENBELT, MARYLAND 20770

Julianna J. McHale
Director

TO: Mayor Davis and the Greenbelt City Council

FROM: Senior Citizens Advisory Committee

RE: Open Forum of September 15, 2012

DATE: November 28, 2012

Mayor Davis and Greenbelt City Council:

Attached is the Senior Citizens Advisory Committee's Report from the Senior Citizen Open Forum held September 15, 2012.

We felt the 2012 Open Forum went well. *Transportation and Recreation Department* issues were the major topics. As you will see in the attached report, these primary areas of interest are identified with the specific issues under each heading.

The SCAC feels that it is unnecessary to hold a work session this year, but some follow-up response in regards to the report recommendations would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Henry D. Haslinger

Henry Haslinger
Senior Citizen's Advisory Committee Chair, November, 2011 - October 2012

Senior Citizens Advisory Committee

ANNUAL OPEN FORUM REPORT TO COUNCIL
Held September 15, 2012
Attendance 24

POSITIVE COMMENTS:

- Glad I live in Greenbelt. Activities are terrific in this city.
- Landscaping is wonderful.
- 75th Anniversary Events
- Active Aging Week
- Free Exercise class: Holy Cross Senior Fit is terrific
- Connection seems to be working well.
- University of Maryland Shuttle: $10 per person for one year can be purchased at Aquatic Center and Youth Center.

The above positive comments were made during the Annual Senior Citizens' Open Forum on September 15, 2012. During the Forum announcements from GAIL, the City Council and the Recreation Department were made. The issues below were raised and discussed. From these issues, the Senior Citizens Advisory Committee identified three categories: 1) Transportation; 2) Recreation Department; 3) Other concerns. These categories are listed below with the issues raised at the forum listed underneath each item. Addendum A has follow up emails regarding some of the issues.

TRANSPORTATION:

1. New traffic circle by metro is confusing.
    a. Circle size is due to location/position. Striping is not complete. When it is complete it will be better. Vehicles in circle have right of way.
2. Why not a traffic light at the new circle?
    a. Circles slow traffic better; it is the preferred traffic calming system.
3. Can we get Greenbelt Connection on a circuit run and get better dispatching so individuals do not have to make reservations 24 hours in advance?
4. Is the Connection for special needs only?
    a. No. Anyone can use it, seniors and those with special needs pay $1.00 each way.

RECREATION DEPARTMENT:

1. Daily admission fees at Greenbelt Aquatic and Fitness Center (GAFC) for senior citizens is printed as $3.25 yet was charged $3.50. Why? This is a good deal for seniors, but $2.50/day would be better.
    a. $3.50 is the summer rate for senior daily admission; $3.25 is rate for fall daily admission.

2. Meals at the Community Center are much better now. Why does Laurel-Beltsville Senior Activity Center not have to pay?
    a. The County requests donations. The donations paid help offset the cost of all the meals. Each center's donation requests differ.
3. Maybe an article needs to be written about the lunch program and where the funds come from to subsidize it.
4. No one on staff at the GAFC understands physics and engineering. Equipment at GAFC needs fixing. There is one piece of equipment with 2 cables broken and this is unsafe. The unit needs to be repaired before anyone else uses it to avoid injury.

OTHER:

1. The cost of the 75th Dinner Dance is too high.
2. Grants that the city receives and how they are used needs to be made available.
    a. Grants are listed in the budget which is online.
    b. The grant information is available online, residents need to read it.
3. There are more signs in Greenbelt.
    a. This is probably due to all the 75th Anniversary events.
4. The bands at the Labor Day Festival are too loud.

The Senior Citizen's Advisory Committee does not require a work session with council to discuss this report but our recommendations are below.

SCAC Recommendations:

1. In the City's quarterly newsletter publicize the guidelines for the Greenbelt Connection and other transportation systems that are available as found in the Greenbelt Bus Transit Guide distributed by the Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation.
2. Investigate and advertise the County policies for donations at the Senior Nutrition Program.
3. The City needs to enforce the ordinances on noise at public events.

ADDENDUM A

After the issue was raised about a piece of equipment not working properly at the GAFC many emails transpired. Below is a response from Stephen Parks, Aquatics Supervisor, an email to the individual who made the request and a response from the citizen.

Sent Thu 9/20/2012 4:04 PM
Karen,

I spoke with Cheryl and Jim Marley neither of them is aware of any machines that have loose or frayed wires on them. I personally inspected the universal gym and couldn't find any either.

If whomever made the comments give me specifics (date, time, and possible staff they conversed with) it may help figure out what machine they are referring to.

~ Stephen

On Fri, Sep 21, 2012 at 5:00 PM, Karen Haseley <khaseley@greenbeltmd.gov> wrote:

Hi Bill,
At the Senior Citizen Open Forum last Sunday, you mentioned a piece of equipment at the GAFC needs repair.
Which piece of equipment is it?
When did you notice this?
Who did you speak to at the Aquatic Center?

The staff would like to know the answers to these questions so we can figure out what happened and make sure the right piece of equipment is investigated.

Thank you,

Karen Haseley,CTRS

From: Bill Norwood
Sent: Monday, September 24, 2012 9:11 AM
To: Karen Haseley
Subject: Re: Exercise equipment

Hi Karen,
-I am grateful for your interest in this.
-This happened over a year ago, and I made a major fuss at the time, and encountered such density and incompetence relating to the discussion of a mechanical thing, that I just stopped going to the facility. I just did not want my life to become once again one of activism on this type of problem.
-Roughly 15 years earlier when I lived in Springhill Lake, it was the same problem - dangerous weight lifting machines with no one in sight who had any idea about the forces, wear and stress on the machine.

-At one point at the SHL gym there was a pull-away basketball board which showed "promise" of falling off the wall, and I could not get any action. I got the mayor to look, and she could not identify what the problem must be, but that's ok since engineering is not her background.
-Back to the GFAC, It was easy for me to avoid this lifting machine, but I could not avoid my own anxiety and alarm about it and about the possible that I would witness someone being seriously injured.
-It was a machine with a horizontal bar attached to a cable attached to a stack of weights. The lifter could pull the bar down in front of his chest, or behind his head in order to strengthen lateral muscles. (I have read warnings about pulling this down behind one's head, I suspect, because if a cable were to let go it could lead to a high-force collision between the bar and the top of the spine.)
-Staff and hierarchy have no incentive to remember this incident because of a potential tie to liability, so I judge that they will not "remember it" to you.
-As I stated at the meeting, facility staff needs to include persons with mechanical engineering backgrounds, or at least be using students who are mechanical engineering majors. Alternate to this would be to insist, for recreation majors, that certain physics and engineering courses be included in their curricula.

Best, Bill Norwood

From: Michael McLaughlin
Sent: Monday, September 24, 2012 10:47 AM
To: Karen Haseley; Steve Parks (sparks@greenbeltmd.gov)
Cc: Julie McHale (jmchale@greenbeltmd.gov); Cindy Murray; David Moran; Edward Putens; Emmett Jordan; Judith Davis; Konrad Herling; Leta Mach; Putens fda; Rodney Roberts; Silke Pope
Subject: RE: Exercise equipment

Karen – thanks very much.

Stephen – please have an inspection done of the equipment this week and let me know the results.

Thanks,
Mike

Please refer to Stephen's comments above (first email sent) regarding the equipment being checked on 9/20/12.