



St. Hugh's Sodality tea, p.4



Mishkan Torah Open House, p.7

Multiple Concerns Expressed In Worksession on Standpipe

by Carol Griffith

The entire Greenbelt City Council met with representatives of WSSC on May 20 in a second worksession concerning updates to the WSSC Standpipe Rehabilitation Project. Safety and environmental concerns dominated the discussion. The first worksession about the project took place on October 30, 2023 (see the November 16, 2023, issue).

The standpipe, commonly

called a water tower, is located at the corner of Ridge Road and Lastner Lane. Constructed in 1936, the standpipe is one of the highest points in Prince George's County. WSSC's standpipes serve as emergency sources of water and all are located in elevated areas throughout the county.

See **STANDPIPE**, page 7



PHOTO BY LESLEY KASH

The standpipe is visible behind the house at 241 Lastner Lane that WSSC purchased last year.

1938 Greenbelt High School Building Named Historic Site

by Erica Johns

The Prince George's County Historical Preservation Commission (HPC) unanimously agreed to designate the original 1938 Greenbelt High School, today's Dora Kennedy French Immersion (DKFI) School building, as a Prince George's County Historic Site. The historic site designation will be recorded as Greenbelt High School. This decision was triggered by the announcement that Prince George's County Public Schools (PGPCS) planned to

demolish the building.

The virtual meeting included the seven HPC commissioners and Prince George's County Planning Department Historic Preservation staff. PGCPS was represented by the Department of Capital Programs senior mechanical engineer Dawn Holton, and the City of Greenbelt by Terri Hruby, director of Planning and Community Development.

See **SCHOOL**, page 6



PHOTO COURTESY PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

The 1938 entrance to what was then Greenbelt High School, shown with Miss Stubb's 1943 GHS sophomore homeroom. It's clear that the building, now housing Dora Kennedy French Immersion, has retained its architectural integrity.

Memorial Day at American Legion Honors Those Who Defended Country

by Butch Hicks



PHOTO BY BUTCH HICKS

Mayor Emmett Jordan presents the Memorial Day Proclamation to officers of American Legion Post 136. Pictured from left: Greenbelt City Councilmembers Silke Pope, Jenni Pompei and Rodney Roberts; Jordan, Auxiliary Unit 136 Treasurer Sandi Dutton, Sons of the American Legion Squadron 136 Commander Lenny Wertz, Post 136 Commander Greg Gigliotti, State Senator Alonzo Washington, Delegates Anne Healey and Ashanti Martinez

American Legion Post 136 held Memorial Day services at its post, rather than at Greenbelt's War Memorial Park this year, to avoid predicted inclement weather. Even with the change in venue, Post 136 Commander Greg Gigliotti greeted more than 100 local participants coming to honor fallen veterans who gave the last full measure of devotion defending our country. Gigliotti said that during Memorial Day

services, we honor the more than one million men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice for our nation while serving in wars and missions since the American Revolution.

"Each story is unique," he said, "and each story represents heartbreak to the family and friends left to mourn." Gigliotti told the story of one hero. "There was Private Furman L. Smith, who served with the Army's

135th Infantry Regiment, 34th Infantry Division. Eighty years ago, his unit came under intense fire from German forces near Lanuvio, Italy. Severely outnumbered by the enemy, Private Smith tended to seriously wounded comrades, even as others withdrew. Smith emptied clip after clip of his M-1 Garand rifle and killed at least 10 enemy soldiers before he was

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City Seeks Input from Community On Outreach Methods, DEI Goals

by Melissa Sites

A group of about 30 people from around Greenbelt met at Springhill Lake Recreation Center on Sunday, May 26 to talk about "working for a connected and equitable Greenbelt."

Tyra Smith, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) officer for the City of Greenbelt, presented information about the city's DEI audit process. For Phase 1, the internal audit, city employees filled out anonymous surveys, and the results are available on the city website at [greenbeltmd.gov/government/diversity-equity-and-](http://greenbeltmd.gov/government/diversity-equity-and-inclusion)

inclusion. Smith conveyed that employees are happy and grateful that this process is bringing their experiences to light; she said they are eager to get involved and hopeful to see change.

Phase 2, the community phase of the audit, will start in August, and will provide a fuller picture of how Greenbelt can move forward to reach DEI goals. Smith also encouraged Greenbelt residents to take a pre-process survey

that will help shape how Phase 2 data gathering will occur, including finding convenient times and locations for town halls, focus groups and interviews. The pre-process survey can be found at forms.office.com/r/eWt3XN0LDZ, or contact Smith directly at 240-542-2034 or tsmith@greenbeltmd.gov.

The goal for Phase 2 of the

See **DEI**, page 8

What Goes On

Monday, June 3
7:30 p.m., City Council Meeting, Municipal Building
Wednesday, June 5
7:30 p.m., Council Worksession: Reparations Commission/Phase 2 JEDI Audit Process Presentation, Municipal Building

See the meetings calendar on page 5 or visit greenbeltmd.gov for more information.



PHOTO BY DEBRA WHITE

Greenbriar celebrated 50 years on May 25. See story on p.12.

SCHOOL continued from page 1

Historic Preservation staff recommended the designation, citing the building's design characteristic of the Greenbelt National Historic Landmark; its representation of political history, education and suburban growth; and as a rare example of Art Moderne/International architecture in Prince George's County. Their report included the building's role in the 1973 racial desegregation of Prince George's County Public Schools.

Commissioner Jane Carpenter-Rock asked Holton if historic site designation would hinder educational services, to which Holton said no. When HPC Chair John Peter Thompson asked if DKFI would stay in the building, Holton described its planned move to another location. Hruby said, "The city has growing concerns about the future of this site, particularly given recent announcements by PGCPS regarding relocation," and "We firmly believe the site does meet the criteria to be designated a Historic Site."

Building Condition, Next Steps

The building has been in poor condition since at least 2007, when occupied by Greenbelt Middle School (GMS). That led to constructing the new (2012) GMS building and plans to demolish the old building. In March 2024 PGCPS Director of Building Services Samuel Stefanelli warned the building could have a critical failure at any time. Reported challenges include water leakage, structural decay, non-working restrooms and rooms without air conditioning or heat. Last week the aftercare provider at the school said they were unable to continue to operate due to Maryland Department of Health and Safety requirements after air-conditioning failed in parts of the building used by aftercare. After the holiday weekend, parents were awaiting an inspection from the Office of Childcare and Licensing that would allow aftercare to reopen.

In January 2024 PGCPS leaders told Greenbelt City Council they planned to move DKFI out of the building in 2026 and move Springhill Lake Elementary School (SHLES) into the building while a new SHLES building is



The red border marks the 12.58 acres designated as a Prince George's County Historic Site. At its left from bottom to top are the PGCPS bus lot, playing fields and Greenbelt Middle School. Greenbelt Road is at the bottom.

constructed. On March 11, Shawn Matlock, PGCPS' Office of Alternative Infrastructure and Planning and Development director, said the building's "non-historic portions will be decommissioned and/or the building transferred to the City of Greenbelt," adding that PGCPS would demolish the building if not transferred to Greenbelt.

City Ownership Implications

If the city were to acquire access to some or all of the property, it could be used to provide recreational facilities and other services to Greenbelt West residents, a need often discussed but hampered by the city owning minimal land in Greenbelt West. In 2011 when PGCPS first planned to vacate the building, the city discussed its future use, but discussion ended when PGCPS decided to move the Robert Goddard French Immersion Program (later renamed Dora Kennedy) into the building, after a \$5.7M renovation.

DKFI, SHLES Concerns

Historic Site designation adds processes to protect the building and PGCPS decommissioning offers opportunities to serve Greenbelt West residents. These opportunities don't directly affect the challenges the DKFI and SHLES communities will face as current and future occupants of an old building for which minimal improvements are planned during their occupancy through 2028.

A Legacy and a Future

Board of Education Member for District 2 Jonathan Briggs said, "School buildings are not just the physical building, but the memories and experiences that so many in the community have been a part of. This building has

history and sentiment for the community as a whole. It's great news that the legacy of the building will live on."

By email, Greenbelt City Manager Josué Salmerón said he is "excited that the commission unanimously approved the Historic Site designation. It is an important piece of Greenbelt's history. I believe the school site can be a strategic location for enhancing services for our residents. While we haven't had any discussions about potential uses of the space ... the possibilities of how it can continue to serve our residents are endless. I am hopeful that once the school facility is decommissioned - and now with the historic designation - we will be intentional about repurposing the site for continued use as a community asset, similarly to how the Community Center is now a community asset."

Historical Perspective

The location for the school was chosen to serve both Greenbelt and Berwyn Heights, and Greenbelt students used the underpass under Edmonston Road to get to school before the Beltway was built.

A Building Timeline

- 1938-1951 Greenbelt High School
- 1951-1981 Greenbelt Junior High School
- 1981-2012 Greenbelt Middle School
- 2014-present Dora Kennedy French Immersion School



PHOTO COURTESY PRINCE GEORGES COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

GAC Offers Enhancements On Play's Opening Weekend

by Greg Young

This Friday, May 31, is the opening night for Fiveplay, a dramedy about polyamory and the modern family at the Greenbelt Arts Center (GAC). The play focuses on the ups and downs of the complex relationships between six characters who share a living situation called a "polycule." Opening night is always exciting for live theater shows. The actors and supporting backstage people are nervous with excitement and expectation. And the audience is often made up of committed locals who want to be the first to see the production. GAC will expand on opening night excitement by offering the theater audience several enhancements.

One enhancement is artwork by local artists displayed in the theater lobby. For this production paintings by local artist Alindwa Kamala will be on view and, in GAC's online art gallery, stained glass pieces by David Heintzelman (greenbeltartscenter.org/online-gallery-david-heintzelman).

Another bonus offering will be a Talkback on Sunday, June 2, at the conclusion of the 2 p.m. performance. The audience will have an opportunity to speak directly with writer Erica Smith and director Rocky Nunzio and to ask questions. Smith will discuss what motivated her to write the

play and Nunzio will share his experiences as director and as an actor in previous projects. The Talkback should be lively and interesting, and is included with the regular price of admission.

GAC also offers another type of enhancement to their productions. Out of concern for those who are reluctant to attend public events after the recent pandemic scares, GAC adds one performance where all supporting personnel are required to wear masks. All audience members are also required to wear masks. The goal is to have at least one show that is as safe as possible for those who want or need to limit their exposure to health risks. The mask-only event takes place Sunday, June 9 at 2 p.m.

Tickets are required for performances. Viewing art in the lobby is free. For more information go to greenbeltartscenter.org or email info@greenbeltartscenter.org.

Tickets can be purchased at the box office or online at greenbeltartscenter.org up to one hour prior to show time. The box office, run by volunteers, is open limited hours - emails are answered as quickly as possible. For more information, call Greenbelt Arts Center, 301-441-8770.

Greg Young is a volunteer with the Greenbelt Arts Center.



Actors rehearse for Fiveplay at GAC.

PHOTO BY ROCKY NUNZIO

Greenbelt Elementary School PTA

Labor Day Festival

Used Book Sale

Seeking a person or organization to coordinate and recruit volunteers for the sale.
Willing to pay \$1000 upon successful completion.
Contact BookSaleGESPTA@gmail.com for information.
To apply, send paragraph including relationship with GES and why position is sought.

New Listing
8000 Brett Place
4br, 3.5 ba | \$680,000

Open House Sunday June 2, 1:00-3:00

On the market for the 1st time in over 30 years, this gorgeous Colonial has new carpet, fresh paint, & newly refinished hardwood floors, all in fresh, warm tones. Is this the home you've been dreaming of?

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