

Almost, Maine review, p.12



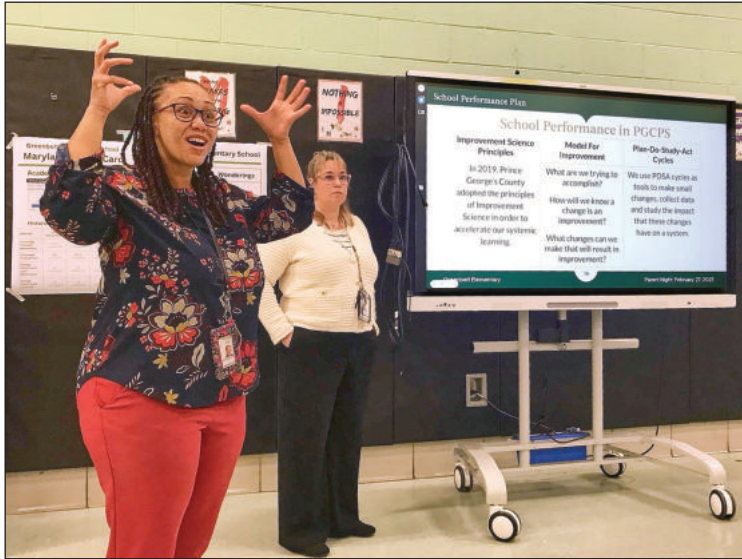
Happy Pi Day, March 14

## Greenbelt Elementary Briefs Parents on School's ATSI Status

by Daniel M. Thies

On February 27, over 50 parents, educators, city officials and concerned residents met in Greenbelt Elementary School's (GES) gymnasium to learn about why the school has been designated as an Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) School, and the work that's needed to raise its performance.

Assistant Principal Tynetta Dempsey, stepping in for Principal Joel Nelson who was sick that day, began by thanking everyone for coming in such high numbers. Monica Blundell – the school testing coordinator, data coach and school improvement liaison – then walked the attendees through how the state evaluates schools.



Assistant Principal Tynetta Dempsey (foreground) and School Improvement Liaison Monica Blundell brief the audience on how Greenbelt Elementary hopes to correct course.

### School Report Card

Every year, Maryland's Department of Education evaluates schools in a School Report Card, which is broken into four accountability data categories: Academic Achievement, Aca-

ademic Progress, Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency, and School Quality and Student Success. Based on those categories, every public school in the state is rated from five stars to one star. GES has been rated as a three-star school since 2023, although it was previously four stars.

Since the Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015, the state also designates a school as needing ATSI every three years when one or more of the school's student groups performs in the lowest 5 percent of Title I schools (schools that receive extra funding to help students from low-income families) in the state. GES currently performs considerably worse, particularly with its Students with Disabilities (SWD); whereas the school as a whole scored 19.4 percent proficient in math and 41.2 percent in English and Language Arts (ELA) in 2024, SWD students only scored 4 and 10.7 percent proficient, respectively.

### Chronic Absences

An additional pain point for GES metrics is the amount of its student population who are Chronically Absent by missing more than 18 days of school, or more than two days of a school month on average. Although less than 20 percent of GES students were chronically absent prior to the pandemic, since the school report cards resumed publishing in 2022, roughly 30 percent of its students

See **SCHOOL**, page 6

## City Ponders Solid Waste Fees; Analyzes Composting Strategy

by Oliver Gaycken

The Greenbelt City Council held a worksession on March 3 to discuss two topics. First was the question of modifying the city's solid waste rates. Second was a consideration of the future of the city's pilot program for food scrap composting. Action will be taken after further consideration.

City Environmental Coordinator Kevin Carpenter-Driscoll and Sustainability Specialist Luisa Robles, Ph.D. (whose doctorate is in environmental sciences and economics), gave presentations on

both issues. They were joined by Dan Israel, the senior vice president for sales and marketing of Compost Crew, a locally-owned business that has been offering curbside compost services in Greenbelt since 2022.

### Cost Considerations

Carpenter-Driscoll started the worksession with an overview of the solid waste program's finances. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2024, the program operated at an almost \$270,000 deficit, which

See **SOLID WASTE**, page 11



Green ACES member Tom Taylor, left, and Luisa Robles, holding one of the composting containers, stand in front of a table advertising the Advisory Committee on Environmental Sustainability (Green ACES) on March 1.

### What Goes On

- Monday, March 17**  
7:10 p.m., Charter Review Taskforce Interviews, Municipal Building
- Wednesday, March 19**  
7:10 p.m., Charter Review Taskforce Interviews
- 7:30 p.m., City Council Worksession: City Employees' Retirement Plan, Municipal Building

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

## Utility Bills Town Hall Skirts Soaring Energy Cost Woes

by Cathie Meetre

At the Utilities Town Hall meeting on February 18, companies got a much easier ride than expected with no voluble residents challenging utility costs. An article in the February 20 issue of the News Review described how local families are struggling with huge utility bills this winter, but didn't cover the town hall, which took place too close to press time.

About 15 residents attended the meeting, outnumbered by city and utility staff. Pepco sent Senior External Affairs Specialist Ronni McTier, the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development sent Business Development Manager Linette Harley, the Maryland Energy Administration sent Director of

See **UTILITY BILLS**, page 8

### Pepco Electricity Bill (584 kWh)

Delivery (*Flat Fee, <sup>1</sup> Mandatory Tax at %)	
<b>Customer Charge*</b>	<b>17.74</b>
<b>Energy Charge</b>	<b>25.74</b>
Revenue Deferral Recove	1.07
Franchise Tax <sup>1</sup>	0.36
<b>Universal Service Charge</b>	<b>0.32</b>
MD Env. Surcharge	0.09
<b>EmPOWER MD Charge</b>	<b>8.06</b>
Gross Receipts Tax <sup>1</sup>	1.09
PG County Energy Tax <sup>1</sup>	7.45
Administrative credit	-0.64
Supply	
<b>Energy Charge</b>	<b>11.55</b>
Gross receipts Tax <sup>1</sup>	0.24
<b>On-Peak energy</b>	<b>13.04</b>
<b>Mid-Peak energy</b>	<b>14.75</b>
<b>Off-peak energy</b>	<b>34.01</b>
Procurement adjustment	-1.81

*Unless otherwise stated, rate multiplier is kWh.  
EAP=Energy Assistance Program, Actual energy Cost)*

Data above from recent Pepco bill.

A breakdown of Pepco charges, showing that about 14 percent of the total goes to state and local authorities. The biggest surcharge by far goes to the State of Maryland for its EmPOWER program. See explanation on page 8.

## Probationary Federal Workers Among First Hit by Mass Firings

by Anna Bedford-Dillow

Greenbelt is a city brimming with federal workers and government contractors, who are feeling the impact of the Trump administration's onslaught of executive orders and Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) cuts targeting them. While many federal workers in Greenbelt are now uncertain of their job security, those who were probationary workers – one or two years into their current position – were the first to be hit by mass firings. So far tens of thousands of probationary employees across agencies have been fired. The American Federation of Government Employees has called the terminations illegal and for them to be rescinded. On February 27, a federal judge agreed, saying the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) doesn't have authority to fire the staff of other agencies and ordered a temporary halt. It's now the subject of several lawsuits. But while those play out,

the impact on those fired, without severance or notice, is immediate.

Chelly Tavss has lived in GHI for four years. She recently had a baby she'd wanted for years. She had been working at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in College Park for just over one year. She had a good performance review in October, was promoted in late January and had recently earned a security clearance. "I was all ready to have a great 2025," she said. Then in February she was fired, effective immediately, while she was on maternity leave. The reason cited was reduction in force (RIF). She received no advance notice or severance pay but was told she will have her vacation time paid out to her. She was able to keep her insurance for her and her baby for 31 days.

Tavss' daughter is three months old. She's a single mother

See **FIRINGS**, page 7

# Letters to the Editor

## Magnolia ES Matters

Regarding the March 6 story on Council's worksession with PGCPs Administration, why wasn't there any mention of Magnolia Elementary School? Magnolia's catchment area includes all of Greenbelt East south of Greenbelt Road, so surely many Greenbelt kids attend that school.

Alex Barnes

*Editor's Note:* At the recent worksession, PGCPs administrators gave a presentation that included only the five schools located within the City of Greenbelt. Council informed the PGCPs administration of their interest in Magnolia Elementary, in addition to the other Greenbelt schools, but it was not included in the data shared nor other discussions during that session.

## Who We Are

Greenbelt has always had a significant proportion of federal workers. The original 1937 Utopian town had quotas from the various government agencies and the subsequent 1,000 "defense homes" were entirely for federal workers. They, as much as the Army and the Navy, helped win

the war against the dictators and "bandit nations," as FDR called them. They were then and still are highly intelligent, dedicated, hardworking people that help keep America functioning.

Under the guise of "efficiency" and cost cutting they are now terrorized and many illegally fired. My NASA rocket scientist neighbor and friend Derrick calculates the savings for all these firings amount to about \$12 billion. Never mind that some agencies like USAID, one of the best things this government did in foreign affairs, have been virtually eliminated.

Subsidies in the U.S. for fossil fuels, according to the International Monetary Fund, amounted to \$757 billion in 2022. The world's largest oil company, Exxon Mobil, that year had profits of \$58 billion in addition to a big chunk of those subsidies.

\$12 billion saved by letting children starve and hurting the poorest of the poor while giving \$757 billion in handouts to the richest of the rich, accelerating global warming to the tipping point and planning to cut Social Security, Medicare,

See **LETTERS**, page 11



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Member kids are always FREE!

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All shows before 5 PM:  
Adults \$7, Kids \$5

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

**SHOWTIMES:**  
**MARCH 14th - 20th**

**Black Bag (R) (CC)**  
(DVS) (2025) (93 mins)  
**Screen 1 - Main Auditorium**  
Fri. 5:15 PM, 7:45 PM  
Sun. 2:45 PM (OC), 5:15 PM  
Wed. 8:00 PM  
**Screen 2 - The Screening Room**  
Sat. 5:15 PM, 7:45 PM  
Mon. 2:15 PM, 5:15 PM  
Thurs. 8:15 PM

**Anora (R) (CC)**  
(DVS) (2024) (139 mins)  
**Screen 1 - Main Auditorium**  
Sat. 7:30 PM  
Mon. 2:00 PM (OC)  
**Screen 2 - The Screening Room**  
Fri. 7:30 PM, Sun. 5:00 PM  
Tues. 8:00 PM, Wed. 7:00 PM  
Thurs. 5:15 PM

**No Other Land**  
(NR) (2024) (95 mins)  
Arabic with English subtitles  
**Screen 1 - Main Auditorium**  
Sat. 5:00 PM, Mon. 5:00 PM  
Wed. 5:45 PM, Thurs. 5:00 PM  
**Screen 2 - The Screening Room**  
Fri. 5:00 PM  
Sun. 2:30 PM  
Tues. 5:45 PM

**Cowboy Bebop: The Movie**  
(R) (2001) (115 mins)  
Cinema Pop! Dubbed  
**Screen 1 - Main Auditorium**  
Sat. 1:00 PM

**Storytime on Screen - Free!**  
**Screen 1 - Main Auditorium**  
Mon. 10:30 AM - 11:15 AM

**Films for One to Eight Projectors (NR) (75 mins) - Free!** 16mm multi-projector performance by Roger Beebe  
**Screen 1 - Main Auditorium**  
Tues. 7:30 PM

**Dirty Dancing**  
(PG-13) (1987) (100 mins)  
Cult Classic Free trivia at 7pm.  
Hosted by @TheScreenBliss  
Thank you to Meredith Hendrickson & Mike Kemper for sponsoring this screening!  
**Screen 1 - Main Auditorium**  
Thurs. 8:00 PM



PHOTO BY ANNE GARDNER

Crocuses are blooming all over Greenbelt.

## 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

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

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CIRCULATION Circulation Coordinator: circ@greenbeltnewsreview.com  
HOA information at: www.greenbeltnewsreview.com/contact-us/distribution

Published weekly since 1937 by the Greenbelt Cooperative Publishing Association, Inc.

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### PUBLICATION DEADLINES:

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

MAIL SUBSCRIPTION: \$55/year

Greenbelt Community Center at 15 Crescent Rd.  
OFFICE HOURS: Monday 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.

## On Screen at Greenbelt Cinema

### Black Bag

The film is a gripping spy drama about legendary intelligence agents George Woodhouse (Michael Fassbender) and his beloved wife Kathryn (Cate Blanchett). When she is suspected of betraying the nation, George faces the ultimate test – loyalty to his marriage or his country.

### Anora

This multiple Oscar-winning film from director Sean Baker is an audacious, thrilling and comedic variation on a modern-day Cinderella story. Best Actress winner Mikey Madison captivates as Ani, a young sex worker from Brooklyn whose life takes an unexpected turn when she meets and impulsively marries Vanya, the impetuous son of a Russian billionaire. However, when Vanya's parents catch wind of the union, they send their henchmen to annul the marriage, setting off a wild chase through the streets of New York. Flipping fairy tale lore upside down, Anora, like its titular anti-princess, may make you laugh and still break your heart.

### No Other Land

For half a decade, Basel Adra, a Palestinian activist, films his community of Masafer Yatta being destroyed by Israel's occupation, as he builds an unlikely alliance with a journalist from the other side, Israeli Yuval Abraham, who joins his fight. An elegantly assembled diary of the Palestinian experience, the film is a harrowing document that leaves traces of hope for a better future. The film garnered a win for Best Documentary at this year's Oscars in spite of not being distributed to theaters in the U.S.

### Cowboy Bebop: The Movie

In this animated feature based on the Japanese anime television series that aired from 1998 to 1999, a slacker (Koichi Yamadera) and a former policeman (Unshō Ishizuka) lead a gang of bounty hunters to find a terrorist who detonated a bomb.

### Films for One to Eight Projectors

Roger Beebe's performances, using up to eight projectors at once, combine found educational and industrial films, camera-less abstraction and original 16 mm footage into dense collages that take on such varied subjects as the history of sound recording and humanity's expeditions into outer space. Beebe is a filmmaker whose work since 2006 consists primarily of multiple-projector performances and essayistic videos that explore the world of found images and the "found" landscapes of late capitalism.

### Dirty Dancing

Baby (Jennifer Grey) is one listless summer away from the Peace Corps. Hoping to enjoy her youth while it lasts, she's disappointed when her summer plans deposit her at a sleepy resort in the Catskills with her parents. Her luck turns around, however, when the resort's dance instructor, Johnny (Patrick Swayze), enlists Baby as his new partner, and the two fall in love. Baby's father forbids her from seeing Johnny, but she's determined to help him perform the last big dance of the summer.

# Community Events

## At the Library

Greenbelt 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.

### Pre-K Story Hour/Hora de Cuentos de Prekinder

Friday, March 14, 10:30 a.m., ages newborn to 5, at the Springhill Lake Recreation Center. Enjoy the wonderful world of storytelling. Friends and family welcome. Ven y disfruta del maravilloso mundo de contar cuentos. Amigos y familiares son bienvenidos. Hosted by Greenbelt Library staff and Random Unselfish Acts of Kindness (RUAK). Register at [pgcmls.info/event/12773807](http://pgcmls.info/event/12773807).

### Storytimes

Friday, March 14, 11:15 a.m., ages 2 to 3. Register at [pgcmls.info/event/12797068](http://pgcmls.info/event/12797068).

Wednesday, March 19, 12:15 p.m., ages 3 to 5. Register at [pgcmls.info/event/12797037](http://pgcmls.info/event/12797037).

Thursday, March 20, 10:15 a.m., ages newborn to 2. Register at [pgcmls.info/event/12796944](http://pgcmls.info/event/12796944).

### Bibliobop Dance Party

Saturday, March 15, 10:30 a.m., ages newborn to 5. Bust a move and shake the sillies out. Bring parents or caregivers and prepare to boogie and bop. Register at [pgcmls.info/event/12796871](http://pgcmls.info/event/12796871).

### Storytime on Screen

Monday, March 17, 10:30 a.m., ages 1 to 5, at the Greenbelt Cinema. In partnership with PGCMLS, Greenbelt Cinema is offering a free program of stories, songs and a short film. This program is best suited for children ages 1 to 5 and their caregivers. No unaccompanied children or adults. Register at [pgcmls.info/event/12773089](http://pgcmls.info/event/12773089).

### STEM for Families

Tuesday, March 18, 4:30 p.m., ages 5 to 12. Explore science, technology, engineering and math. Drop in for hands-on activities featuring characters from classic fairytales. Register at [pgcmls.info/event/12784973](http://pgcmls.info/event/12784973).

### Passport Services

Greenbelt Library serves as a U.S. Passport Acceptance Facility. Applications are accepted by appointment only; schedule a 30-minute appointment by calling 240-455-5451 or visiting [pgcmls.info/passport-services](http://pgcmls.info/passport-services).

## Writers Group Meets March 21

The Greenbelt Writers Group will meet on Friday, March 21 at 7 p.m. in the Community Center. Participants are invited to read a submission if they choose. The group enjoys hearing what fellow writers are working on. Everyone is welcome.



## Golden Age Club

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

The Golden Age Club Anniversary Luncheon will be held on April 16 at the Holiday Inn College Park, 10000 Baltimore Avenue, starting at noon. There will be entertainment by the musicians of TGIF group, playing favorites from the 1950s and beyond. For more information, call Suzanne Sligh at 301-477-3077.

Here are the next meetings:

March 19, Celebration of club members with birthdays in March.

March 26, Bingo.

## Life Line 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 Wednesday, 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.

## Favor's Table Giveaway

On Saturday, March 22 at 4 p.m. at Mowatt Memorial Methodist Church, 40 Ridge Road, there will be a giveaway of food, new shoes, clothes, diapers, bras, underwear, socks, sanitary pads and household items. Items are new and gently used. Kids must be present to receive toys and shoes. To receive diapers, bring baby's birth certificate and health insurance card. Come with bags to hold items. The event will be held at the parking lot behind the church.

## Coffee in the Garden

Enjoy getting out and helping with a garden cleanup on Saturday, March 15 from 10 a.m. to noon at CHEARS Three Sisters Garden behind the Community Center. Learn about what's happening in the garden and discover volunteer opportunities. Coffee and nibbles provided. Questions? Email [ghadamsrn@gmail.com](mailto:ghadamsrn@gmail.com).



## Ethiopian Vegan Dinner

On Wednesday, March 19 from 6 to 8 p.m. join CHEARS and partners for a Great Food Transition Dinner in the Community Center Kitchen/Dining Room. Jenna (osha) Norwood, an award-winning health coach, will demonstrate Ethiopian style vegan cooking. Watch her documentary film Supercharge Me! 30 Days Raw on osha.love. Feel free to bring a bowl and utensils. No charge. Donations accepted and/or cleanup help appreciated. Register at [lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/pcmuh6](http://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/pcmuh6) to reserve a seat. For more information, email [ghadamsrn@gmail.com](mailto:ghadamsrn@gmail.com).

## Lenten Agape Meals At Community Church

Greenbelt Community Church, United Church of Christ, will be hosting its annual series of Agape Meals on Wednesdays at 6 p.m. through April 9. The event is free and open to the public. A free-will offering will be donated to the missions of the church.

Agape meals are a Lenten tradition for the church and named using the Greek word for the unconditional, unearned love that God has for all. Each simple meal of soup, bread and salad is preceded by a short devotional lesson. These events are a celebration of Lent and intended to promote spiritual reflection while providing an opportunity for fellowship. This year's theme is Unraveling Lent.

The church is located at 1 Hillside Road and is an open and affirming congregation, welcoming to all.

## Pi Day Party Friday At The SPACE

Join The SPACE Crew on Friday, March 14, 7 to 9:30 p.m., for a Pi Day party in the Upper SPACE at Beltway Plaza (former Big Lots location, above Joann Fabrics). This is a fundraiser for The SPACE with real homemade pie, hands-on art activities for all ages, and community celebrations. Visit [freecartforall.org](http://freecartforall.org) for more information and to RSVP.



## Greenbelt Recreation Spring Registration

The Greenbelt Recreation Spring Activity Guide is available at [greenbeltmd.gov/activityguide](http://greenbeltmd.gov/activityguide). Spring session registration is now open for all.

Greenbelt Recreation classes range from preschool art to senior ceramics, karate to ballroom dance. Registration instructions and contact information for inquiries are located in the Activity Guide.

## Ride and Read At the Library

Thursday, March 20, 11 a.m., ages 16+. Sign up for an hour ride on a stationary bike with free apps from the Library like Libby, Kanopy and Hoopla to enjoy while working out. Participants must be 16 or older, sign a waiver before beginning to ride and be wearing loose-fitting clothing and closed-toed shoes. Register at [pgcmls.info/event/12833349](http://pgcmls.info/event/12833349).

## Greenbriar Community Board of Directors

Greenbriar Phase I had their annual meeting on March 4, and the results of the election are as follows: Lawrence Noda, president; LaVerne Smith, vice president; Missy Dodd, secretary; Evelyn Kenley, treasurer; and Rhonda Furmanski, director.

## GHI Bicycle Com. Spring Bicycle Social

Spring back into bicycling. Meet fellow cyclists in the Greenbelt community, join in the discussion and let the GHI Bicycle Committee know what they can do to help.

The social will take place on Saturday, April 19 from 1 to 3 p.m. at the GHI grounds on Hamilton Place (inside the GHI building if it rains).

Topics to be covered include E-Bikes: Introduction & Maintenance, Safety Tips and a Gear Swap (out with the old gear, in with the new-to-you).

Snacks and refreshments will be provided.

## Chess Club Meets Tuesday

The Greenbelt Chess Club will meet Tuesday, March 18, 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, visit [tinyurl.com/ycy2nz4m](http://tinyurl.com/ycy2nz4m) and complete the brief form. Email questions to [greenbeltchessclub@gmail.com](mailto:greenbeltchessclub@gmail.com).

More Community Events are located throughout the paper.

## This Week at the New Deal Café

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

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113 Centerway, Roosevelt Center, Greenbelt, MD  
**Monday, 9am-9pm; Tuesday—Thursday, 9am - 10pm; Friday/Saturday, 9am – 12midnight; Sunday, 9am – 9pm**

TH 3/13	FRI 3/14	SAT 3/15	SUN 3/16
FRENCH CONVERSATION, 5:30p - 6:30pm <b>The Pilgrims of Deep Run</b> 7 - 9pm Get Your Green On Early!	<b>Honey Sol</b> 8 - 11pm Power trio from Annapolis bringing their funk, soul and RnR	PRIVATE EVENT-BACK ROOM CLOSED, 10a-6p <b>The Paulverizers</b> 8 - 11pm Hard-driving blues with some of the DMV's best musicians	CLOTHING SWAP W/ MUSIC BY DAN HOVEY, 11am - 2pm <b>Grateful Sunday</b> featuring Colleen 'n Crew 6 - 8pm Roots-rock delivering Grateful Dead covers
MON 3/17	TUES 3/18	WED 3/19	TH 3/20
<b>ST.PATRICK'S DAY CELEBRATION W/ CORNED BEEF HASH</b> 7 - 9pm Renowned local trio featuring Irish jigs and reels	<b>NDC Open Mic Joey Campfire</b> 7 - 9:30pm Sign-ups at 6:30pm <b>SHOW US YOUR TALENTS!</b>	<b>PUB QUIZ</b> 7- 9 pm Come out and test your knowledge	FRENCH CONVERSATION, 5:30p - 6:30pm <b>The Classic Jam w/ The Low Rent Quartet</b> 6:30 - 9:30pm All skill levels welcomed

\*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.

## SPRING CLASSES ~ & ~ WORKSHOPS

**DIGITAL ANIMATION**  
 With Mr. Geo  
 Tuesdays, April 1st - June 3rd  
 5pm - 7pm  
 Ages 11+

**STOP MOTION ANIMATION STORYTELLING**  
 With Ali  
 Mondays, March 25th - May 6th  
 5:30pm - 7pm  
 Ages 8 - 15

**SMARTPHONE FILMMAKING WORKSHOP**  
 With Sheila  
 Friday, April 4th  
 5:30pm - 8:30pm  
 Ages 16+

**SIGN UP TODAY!**  
 Visit [Greenbelt Recreation's Website](http://GreenbeltRecreation.com) to Sign Up!

# A Community Resilience Task Force: Response to Recent Federal Actions

by Matthew Arbach

A community-driven task force is being developed to aid in Greenbelt's recovery response against the recent federal layoffs and funding freezes. It is dubbed Greenbelt CORES (Collaborative Opportunities for Resilient and Enduring Solutions) and is being led by resident Melissa Ehrenreich, with city council support in facilitation and advertising. According to Ehrenreich, the mission is to "create some kind of glide path through the federal disruptions we will face on jobs, health, food, energy and housing," in addition to any other challenges that arise. She sees the "approach will be a coordinating team to help organize all the enthusiasm and figure out which ideas can be bundled, connected and resourced to support pathways to implementation at the scale we need to meet anticipated workforce disruptions."

The coordinating team is envisioned to have 10 to 12 members, with broad subject matter expertise, skills and ability to engage constituencies, such as communities, faith institutions, local businesses and schools. The strategies developed will be addressed through "organizing, workforce development, policy, technology and communication." The team plans to deliberate for 90 days and hopes to present 100 solutions, both small and large, resulting, says Ehrenreich, in "a blueprint of real solutions that can inform resident efforts" as well as ones requiring city, county and state partnerships. Ehrenreich hopes this project will reinvigorate volunteerism and connect people across Greenbelt in action-oriented ways.

Ehrenreich said that a paid volunteer coordinator position, privately funded philanthropically, will likely be required to engage as many volunteers as possible and to connect them to exist-

ing groups coordinating across Greenbelt.

A volunteer recruitment form, in both English and Spanish, is available to self-identify interest areas. Residents can access these through the following links: for English, [tinyurl.com/ycxbx65a](http://tinyurl.com/ycxbx65a); for Spanish, [forms.office.com/r/Txcz8imG5f](http://forms.office.com/r/Txcz8imG5f).

Any residents interested in volunteering for the effort should respond as soon as possible, and those who want to be part of the coordinating team can email Ehrenreich directly at [melissaehrenreich@gmail.com](mailto:melissaehrenreich@gmail.com).

Ehrenreich expects the selection process for the coordinating team, conducted by her and a few other residents, to last about a week. The effort is to be less structured and speedier than a city-run process to best counter the sudden changes happening at the federal level. Said Ehrenreich, "We are not powerless. We have energy and infrastructure to build from. We can come together to collaborate and create solutions that care for our community."

# PGCPS Increases Flu Prevention Following Death of Two Students

by Anna Bedford-Dillow

Two Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) elementary students have died from the flu. The students attended Chesapeake Math and Information Technology North Elementary School in Laurel and John Bayne Elementary School in Capitol Heights. A third student also died recently, though that death had not been confirmed as flu-related at press time.

"Our school communities are feeling the impact of a nationwide rise in flu cases, with increasing numbers across the county and outbreaks in several of our schools. Tragically, we have lost two students. Our hearts are with their families and loved ones during this difficult time," said PGCPS Superintendent Millard House II in an email sent to PGCPS families on Friday, March 7.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports high levels of emergency room visits for flu in Maryland, though they appear to be decreasing. Wastewater in Maryland shows high levels of

flu and Covid-19 (wastewater analysis indicates the presence of certain viruses even when people don't seek medical care or report illnesses). The Maryland Department of Health reports high respiratory illness activity.

"The health and safety of our students, staff and families remain our highest priority, and we need your help," read the message from House, who asked families to prevent the spread of flu by keeping sick children home. "If your child is experiencing symptoms such as fever, chills, cough or body aches, do not send them to school," he wrote. House has also called on parents to notify schools when their child tests positive for flu.

PGCPS is attempting to slow the spread of flu with enhanced cleaning of high-touch areas in schools and buses, ensuring ample soap, paper towels and hand sanitizer are available for hand washing and said they may

See FLU, page 6



Our condolences to Greenbelt News Review writer Matt Neufeld on the death of his mother, Shirley Yvonne Neufeld of Frederick, at the age of 97. Born in Paterson, N.J., Shirley loved to host family dinners and could make matzoh ball soup that no one could replicate. Shirley stayed active by swimming laps at the YMCA, visiting with friends and neighbors and going to local plays, shows and concerts. She was active in the Frederick City and County communities for many decades and was also a member of Hadassah and the National Council of Jewish Women. She leaves behind three sons, a daughter, many grandchildren and great-grandchildren, as well as other beloved relatives and good friends.


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



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**Obituaries**

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

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## FLU continued from page 4

require temporary masking if flu cases reach critical levels within a school. Extracurricular activities and large gatherings may be modified or postponed, said the superintendent's letter.

"We also encourage families to consider flu vaccinations, which can significantly reduce the severity of illness," said House in his letter on Friday. PGCPS is partnering with the county health department to provide flu vaccinations in affected schools.

According to the CDC, nationwide flu and Covid-19 vaccination coverage is low among both U.S. adults and children.

Greenbelt Co-op's Pharmacy Manager Amanda Ferouz says the Co-op still has flu and covid vaccinations available. Now, at

the end of the season, they are in the period when pharmacies are being asked to return their unused doses of vaccine. So far the Co-op's pharmacy has not, and in fact ordered more not long ago. Ferouz says they have the vaccine in stock and the ability to order more to meet demand while supplies last. In the last week the Co-op pharmacy has seen an increase in people coming in to get vaccinated, said Ferouz, not just for the flu but other vaccines, too. The Co-op pharmacy does not vaccinate children but nearby pharmacies, such as CVS, usually offer vaccines for children 3 years and older. Local pediatricians also still have vaccines available; one told the News Review they are seeing

a lot of flu at the moment. The CDC recommends that everyone six months and older get the flu shot each year.

Residents also may wish to ensure all vaccines are up to date. Other states are experiencing measles outbreaks, including a child in Texas who was the first to die from measles in a decade. On Sunday the first case of measles in Maryland this year was confirmed.

The Prince George's County Health Department offers flu vaccines at the Cheverly Health Center, Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Additional resources can be found at [pgcps.org/flu](http://pgcps.org/flu).

## SCHOOL continued from page 1

have been chronically absent.

### Details Displayed

The details of the school report card were shared in a Gallery Walk of the gymnasium, where each section of the state's evaluation for the school was printed out on poster-sized pages. Attendees took turns looking at the historical trends and student demographics – adding their own thoughts on a second poster for Noticings and Wonderings. General questions and thoughts attendees had were also collected in a Parking Lot section. Although all of these metrics can be found on the State Department of Education's website, [reportcard.msde.maryland.gov](http://reportcard.msde.maryland.gov), this helped those assembled to collectively process the data.

This close review clarified that the areas where GES is struggling are not new. In fact, the low academic achievement scores for its SWD demographic in 2024 are actually a minor improvement over their scores in 2023, which was itself a minor improvement from 2022 when SWD students scored 0 percent proficient in math and 4 percent proficient in ELA. Handouts made by the GES PTA also pointed out that SWD students are not the only demographics being underserved; in the 2024 School Report Card, only 8.1 percent of Black and African American students and 9.5 percent of Hispanic and Latino students are proficient in math.

### Other Issues

The decline in overall school performance also seems to correlate with the increase of students who are economically disadvantaged – from less than a quarter of the total student population in 2020 to over half in 2024. The impact of socioeconomic status on education has been a major

focus of educational research for years, as poverty seems to significantly impact activities like testing. Since GES was designated as a Title I school, it has received additional support from Prince George's County, but it is clear that the students and their families need support too.

### Addressing Deficiencies

Fortunately, similar to GES' Title I status, its designation as an ATSI school allows it to receive additional funding to address its deficiencies. GES has after-school programs for its SWD students on Tuesdays and Wednesdays to provide additional academic support. To address chronic absenteeism, the school is also taking proactive measures to address a student's missed days with their parent or guardian before their attendance crosses that threshold. As long as the school continues to make improvements without losing ground in any of the other report card indicators, the school will continue to receive that additional support.

Assistant Principal Dempsey emphasized that the underlying issues are much greater than the school can resolve on its own. "The teacher shortage is real," she noted, explaining that the comparatively low salary and benefits of an educator are attracting fewer people to become public school teachers. Special Education aides in particular are in short supply as they only receive \$15 dollars an hour (without benefits) in Prince George's County. Similarly, transportation is a major factor in children missing class. The great distance between different bus stops, some over a mile apart, forces some elementary students to walk a significant distance from their house to the nearest bus stop in

order to have a ride to school. A two-hour delay due to inclement weather also puts parents in a tough position making sure their children get to class at 10 a.m. even while their job starts at 9 a.m. Dempsey implored anyone who was willing and able to sign up as a Special Education aide or school bus driver.

### Extra Help Needed

A representative of the PTA spoke up, emphasizing that the group is able to provide help where it is needed, but that the school needs to ask the PTA for that help, and inform them of what is needed. Although many of the issues affecting GES are longstanding, some parents have only become aware of the school's shortcomings in the last month. Blundell recognized that the information gap is something that GES is working to correct, which is why it held this event. To further the discussion, the school will be collecting the questions and concerns put down by members during the Gallery Walk to respond to them in a future email for the families of GES students. The school's evaluation survey also asked parents who were interested to join the School Performance Team.

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## Council Discusses Federal Job Loss, Affordability, Resilience

by Matthew Arbach

At the February 24 Greenbelt City Council meeting resident Tom LeMond gave a sobering testimony regarding the recent, sudden loss of his position at USAID after 20 years. He related that this entire sector of employment has ceased to exist and that he fears for his associates in other federal agencies, like the Department of Agriculture. He is uncertain if he will be a Greenbelt resident in the coming year with this loss of income.

A serious issue discussed throughout the meeting was the steady rise in home-related fees, which could lead to a significant exodus from the city, a trend in opposition to Greenbelt's vision to be an affordable community. Several on council characterized the trend as unsustainable. The recent federal layoffs will only exacerbate the problem.

Resident Lore Rosenthal stressed that past hypothetical discussions about how the city would respond to a financial upheaval affecting things like income and food availability have "come full circle" and are now a pressing reality.

Councilmember Amy Knesel and resident Melissa Ehrenreich commenced a long discussion on creating a community-staffed rapid response task force that would address the great challenges brought on by the federal upheavals and propose helpful strategies. Council was very amenable to the idea and felt that it should be primarily community driven. A motion to provide meeting space, technical support and advertising by the city was voted for unanimously. See full article on page 4.

The plan is to get things underway immediately. Mayor Emmett Jordan, summing up the sentiment in the room, said that "it is all hands on deck" now. Ehrenreich stressed that "we are not helpless" and that "we have control over our own destiny." The task force is still in a conceptual phase with the selection of members being the next step. Participation is to be inclusive with there being a desire to attract some of the city's many experts on a wide range of areas.

### Nature Preservation

Resident Xavier Courouble, a member of the Advisory Committee on Trees, urged council to seek guidance from some of the city's experts on the necessary management of invasive species in the city's parks and natural areas. He pointed out later in the meeting that the city could

do more to address the recent drop in volunteerism at cleanup events, which the city was happy to do, with council indicating that the recent cold weather and competing events may have been contributing factors.

### Economic News

City Manager Josué Salmerón reported that the brokers for the defunct Chevy's restaurant site have listed the property for sale, with the property restricted to a full-service restaurant.

Salmerón said that the city will reach out to the county to help recoup \$600,000 in public safety surcharges from recent development in the city, with the funds to be used for vehicle replacements for the city's police department.

Salmerón explained that for Fiscal Year (FY) 2026, the city's projected deficit decreased from \$4.5M to \$2.7M, and incoming real estate tax revenue is projected to be over \$500,000, though this may likely change with recent federal firings.

### Other News

According to Salmerón, the city has hosted several Know Your Rights town halls dealing with immigration issues, including one for employees.

On other recent developments, Salmerón said that the city has received over 80 surveys on the city website redesign to help direct the process. Summer camp registrations are now open to nonresidents, with many camps already filled. There are still openings as well as a wait list.

Councilmember Silke Pope requested that the developers of the senior condos at 7010 Greenbelt Road present a brief overview to council on their progress, with Salmerón also suggesting a more detailed town hall as well.

Council voted unanimously to adopt an ordinance to repeal and replace Chapter 2, Article 4 Ethics Provision of the Greenbelt City Code. This would align the city's ethics laws with state law.


Council delivered a first reading of a proposed Charter Amendment which would codify their existing salaries, which was adjusted during FY 2024. It will be deliberated again at the next meeting.

The whole council voted in favor of supporting a number of state bills being considered, including: HB1222, or MD Values Bill, which echoes the current standing order of the Greenbelt Police Department mainly

See COUNCIL, page 11

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# Greenbelt Foundation Gets New Board Members, Awards Grants

by Wayne Williams and Kevin W. Parker

Last August, the Greenbelt Community Foundation (GCF) board meeting had just two attendees, the outgoing president and the incoming president. (There were two other board members at the time, but one had already announced that she wanted to step down as soon as she could be replaced. The other had just been voted in but was unable to attend.) The future of the GCF seemed bleak.

In near desperation, the incoming president reached out to the community in every way possible, asking for volunteer help through word of mouth, social media, GATe, the Greenbelt Cinema and especially the News Review. And the community responded.

GCF would like to welcome the following new board members and thank them for stepping up: Matthew Inzeo, Allison Adams, Wayne Williams, Brooke Kenny, Chris Stark, Pragati Godbole and Joy Jackson. Additional thanks go to Brice Bowrey for agreeing to manage the website and to Tim Murray, Jackson Tan and Ayreen Cadwallader for volunteering to support the GCF in other ways. And a special thank you goes to Debbie Cooley for agreeing to stay on as treasurer until a replacement can be found and trained.

The new board has been busy, approving eight grants from the fall 2024 cycle of requests. Each of the eight funded organizations received \$5,000 for their proposed programs.

### Fountain Club Team

The Fountain Club Team LLC will use its grant to carry out a proposed partnership program with the Greenbelt Recreation Department at the Springhill Lake Recreation Center. The name of the program is the Youth Strength and Conditioning Initiative and it will offer strength and conditioning exercises to Greenbelt youth between 10 and 14 years of age.

### Theatre Friends

Friends of Greenbelt Theatre will pilot five new programs under the project title Expanding Our Audience: Movies for All at Greenbelt Cinema, hoping to attract new groups of moviegoers and revitalize the theater's attendance to pre-pandemic levels. The five programs are Baby and Me screenings, Weekend Storytime on Screen, Sensory-friendly screenings, Book vs Movie and Advancing the Frame. Those interested may want to watch for any that appeal to their interests.

### Refugee Aid

The Greenbelt Refugee Aid Committee (GRACE) will house, here in Greenbelt, six (6) Ukrainian refugees (Housing Refugee Families in Greenbelt). Funds will be utilized to pay the cost of rent in apartments owned and operated by Greenbelt Homes, Inc. This is an ongoing successful program that will continue to help refugee families already situated in Greenbelt.

### Arts Center

In 2017, with support from GCF, the Greenbelt Arts Center successfully upgraded the power distribution system for their lighting. Now they need to purchase new lighting instruments to replace and augment older lighting instruments. Their

current instruments are outdated, frequently breaking and in some cases unsafe. They want to buy 12 identical lights and install them under the GAC Lighting Instruments Acquisition and Safety Upgrade project.

### Consumer Co-op

The Greenbelt Consumer Co-operative wishes to design and install a mural on the exterior of the Co-op building, the Greenbelt Co-op Mural. This will bring a unique, memorable and complementary piece of art to the Greenbelt community. The project will encompass a local or regional Call for Artists, art/design selection through a juried process and installation of the mural. This project is reminiscent of a huge mural once on the north wall of the Co-op, installed in the fall of 1977 and maintained for 10 or more years.

### Rotary Club

The Greenbelt Rotary Club is receiving funding for the Greenbelt Rotary Club Driver Education Program. Persons without a car or licensed driver available to them must pay driving schools for car/instructor time for the required practice driving hours (60 hours at over \$3,000 for those under 25; 14 hours at approximately \$700 for those 25 and over). This is a significant cost for families with a low income. The Rotary Club will use this grant to support a pilot program to fund these costs for Greenbelters at one Greenbelt driving school. The pilot length will be up to six months from the date the first student begins driving instructions using program funds.

### Higher Achievement

Higher Achievement's project, Bridging the Opportunity Gap for Middle School Scholars in Greenbelt, will encourage academic enrichment and provide social-emotional support to Greenbelt scholars during their critical middle school years. Through targeted academic support, small group mentoring and high school readiness preparation, the Higher Achievement staff works with

scholars and their families to reach short-term and long-term goals that impact student academic and personal trajectories in a positive way, by increasing achievement during middle school. Participants develop the academic and social-emotional skillsets that lead to success in high school and beyond. The grant supports two program elements, Afterschool Academy and High School Readiness.

### The SPACE

The SPACE: Free Art for All is promoting its Artrepreneurship Project which aims to equip young entrepreneurs with the skills and knowledge to turn creative ideas into successful businesses. The primary focus is to create income-generating opportunities using industry-standard software and equipment for residents of Greenbelt West, particularly young adults. Participants will have access to The SPACE's equipment to develop their own product lines, with marketing and sales support provided by the program. The project will help participants learn career-ready skills that can be integrated into their lives and schedules, enabling them to build sustainable income streams.

### About GCF

GCF seeks to support a thriving, engaged community that is socially responsible, environmentally conscious and supports education, the arts and sciences by helping to fund community projects that build upon the ideals of collaboration, cooperation and engagement through the generous participation of individuals and organizations.

Proposals are reviewed twice yearly, although GCF welcomes grant applications at any time. The next deadline, for the spring 2025 cycle, is April 15. For more information or to donate, visit [greenbeltfoundation.org](http://greenbeltfoundation.org).

Wayne Williams is chair of the Greenbelt Community Foundation communications committee. Kevin W. Parker is president of the Foundation.

## FIRINGS continued from page 1

by choice and the only parent providing for her child. She'd thought her position was a stable one for her family, with insurance, benefits and paid maternity leave. Like others, she doesn't believe the RIF was carried out legally.

Tavss is now applying for unemployment, which means she needs to prove she is applying to at least three jobs a week, and she has to manage to make those applications without childcare, which she now can't afford. She asked GHI if there was any help available – she noted her monthly co-op fees have increased considerably in the four years she's been in her home – but there are no funds to help, she was told, and GHI advised her to contact her mortgage company. She filed her taxes and plans to use her refund to live on for a month or two.

In stark contrast to the current portrayals of federal workers, perpetuated by the Trump administration as lazy or unproductive, prior to having her baby, Tavss has worked multiple part-time jobs in addition to her full-time position at NARA, to be in a good place financially to start her family and to pay for the fertility treatments, which were mostly out-of-pocket. Before working at NARA she was a librarian at Gallaudet, where she's continued to work part-time. Her supervisor there will welcome her back for 10 hours a week and has even said she can bring her baby with her. Some of the other part-time jobs she's done in the past won't be feasible now that she calculates in the cost of a babysitter, so it was a bright spot, Tavss said, though 10 hours a week won't pay the bills, she acknowledged. However, she has since

learned that she won't be able to receive unemployment benefits if she does work those 10 hours.

Yet, Tavss stresses how fortunate she is. "I live in a great village. We live in a great community," she said. Friends have watched her baby for a few hours while she applied for jobs and worked on unemployment applications. "I do realize that even as a single parent I'm probably better off than some," she said. "Again, great village, great support systems around me," acknowledges Tavss. But she's still dealing with the shock, she said.

Tavss' family is several states away but she has a sister in Maryland. If she can't afford to stay in her GHI home, she's contemplating trying to rent it out temporarily and moving in with her sister. However, her sister is also a federal employee concerned about her job. In addition, she's reluctant to leave Greenbelt and her friends and community here.

Tavss moved to the Washington, D.C. area during the pandemic. Though she ended up never starting the job she moved for (which was impacted by Covid shutdowns), she knew that this area would be her permanent home and felt settled and ready to raise her family in Greenbelt. There are lots of job opportunities for someone in her field in the D.C. area, she said, but not necessarily when thousands of people with similar credentials are also looking for jobs at the same time. "The irony of the situation is, as a single mom I now have to apply for all the assistance (Medicaid, WIC, food stamps, unemployment) that Trump and all the Republicans want to do away with," said Tavss.

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# UTILITY BILLS continued from page 1

Energy Programs Eric Coffman and WSSC sent Community Relations and Outreach Specialist Carlos Salazar.

### Pepco

Pepco's McTier acknowledged recent unexpectedly large bills and explained that Pepco's website hosts an Energy Assistance Tool which covers a set of programs for which an applicant may be eligible (including those offered by other organizations) and offers assistance to homeowners to reduce their energy consumption.

She did not explain (and was not asked) why Pepco's rates had escalated so much or account for the disparities among electricity rates among Maryland vendors.

### State of Maryland

Maryland's Harley spoke of the state's role in investing in neighborhoods. A Division of Energy audit program is available free to a family of four earning less than \$98,500 or about \$70K for individuals, including assistance in replacing appliances and performing ventilation and weatherization audits. Those earning more can use the program with a fee.

Harley also spoke of the Maryland Energy Program solar energy help available to consumers, including grants of \$7,500 and rebates for equipment like electric vehicle chargers.

### EmPOWER Fund and Grants

One resident pointed out that the state's EmPOWER is the largest surcharge on the Pepco bill and only slightly less than the combined state and local taxes. She questioned why she was subsidizing low-income renters to get improved appliances or heating and cooling equipment that then became the property of the landlord when the renter moved on, removing responsibility from the landlord and rewarding them with new equipment based on the poverty of their renter rather than their own financial situation. Harley countered that most of these grants were made in impoverished areas in Western Maryland where both landlords and tenants were financially challenged and landlords couldn't afford to retrofit their properties – an answer that didn't seem to satisfy the questioner.

### WSSC

WSSC's Salazar reported a difficult year with cold-related water breaks and noted that the utility has four programs to assist with water bills and pipes. A question by resident Steve Skolnik, former president of Greenbelt Homes, Inc. (GHI), about the disputed responsibility for water pipe maintenance within GHI, resulted in no clear answer.

Salazar reassured the meeting that WSSC's water was tested almost continuously and continued to hold a perfect record for potability.

### Bill Analysis and Power Rates

In the accompanying graphics, the News Review analyzed a recent local Pepco bill. The bill is annotated to show what each line means. Only about 15 percent of this property is heated by an electric mini-split; other heat and hot water is from natural gas.

Most surcharges are a percentage of electricity cost and several are mandated by state and local governments. The more energy used, the bigger the surcharges. Here, about 14 percent of the total goes to state and local au-

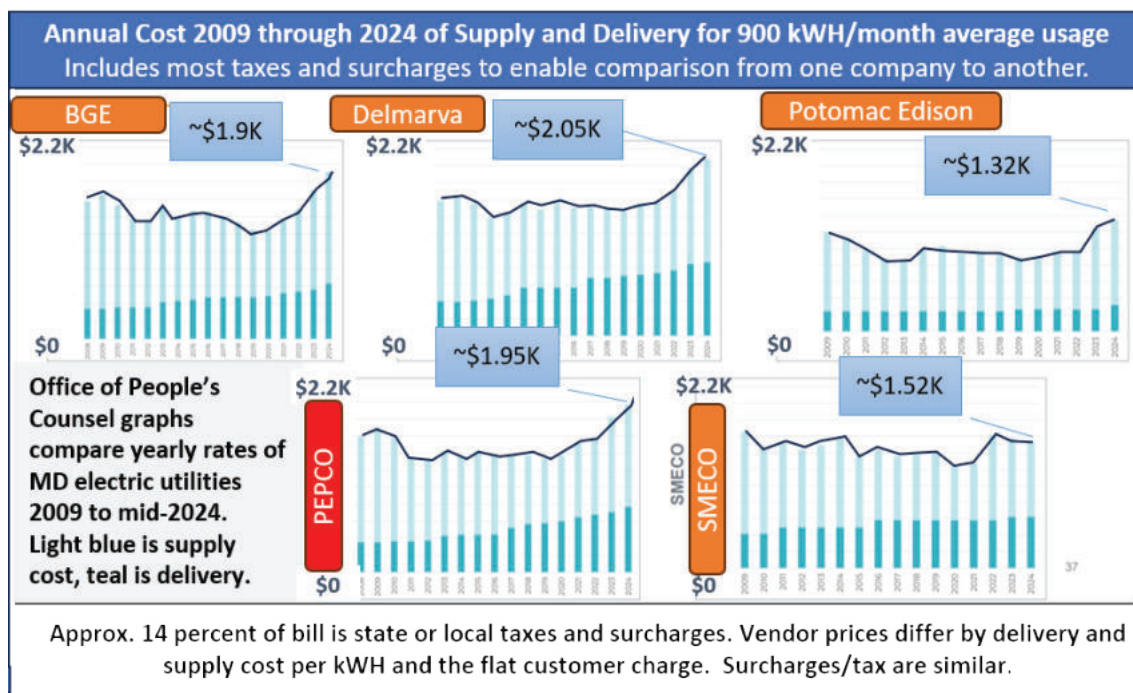


CHART BY CATHIE MEETRE

Pepco's costs for the consumer have risen in recent years and it's now the second most expensive of the electricity providers in the region.

### Absence of Choice

Maryland allows residents to choose their electricity suppliers but, in fact, with Pepco as the distributor of local power there appear to be no options. The company delivering the power is fixed by geography and for Greenbelt, that's Pepco. The Maryland Public Service Commission (MPSC) "choice" site at MDElectricChoice.com is where consumers can find out what alternative suppliers are associated with each zip code and distributor. Entering Pepco and 20770 gives one option: a company called MPower that purports to deliver 100 percent renewable energy – but their website is completely blank. Other searches also came up blank or were outdated when followed up.

A few years ago, renewables companies were actively recruiting here but (according to the MPSC website), "Senate Bill 1 of the 2024 Maryland General Assembly session enacted major reforms in the retail energy supply marketplace in an effort to strengthen oversight of this industry and provide greater protections for consumers. As a result of these changes, some retail suppliers have made the business decision to no longer offer supply to residential customers."

This means that renewables companies that formerly provided service, such as Direct Energy or Constellation Energy, are no longer options for Greenbelt customers.

thorities. The biggest surcharge by far goes to the State of Maryland for its EmPOWER program.

The graphs on the right of the graphic (using data through mid-2024) also show pricing for the five Maryland utility companies,

three of which are owned by Exelon: Pepco, BGE and Delmarva. As noted previously, Potomac Edison and SMECO are noticeably lower in cost. Exelon has closed down antiquated coal plants but not built new capac-



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# Police Blotter

Incidents reported here occurred March 3 to 9, 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@greenbeltdmd.gov](mailto:pd@greenbeltdmd.gov). Times provided are when the incidents were reported.

## Incident Summary

Greenbelt Police reported one death; four domestic incidents, one resulting in arrest and a person taken to the hospital, and another with vandalism to the glass door of the residence; a Child Protective Services case; and two mental health diversions, one involving suicide. Two cases were resolved regarding the same missing juvenile.

## Strong Arm Robbery

On March 6 at 12 p.m. near 7901 Mandan Road, a man was delivering a pizza when two men approached and asked for the pizza. One held his hand on the front of his pants as if he had a gun, and one said, "It's not worth getting shot over." They took the pizza and ran.

## Assault

On March 6 at 9:01 p.m. near 6216 Breezewood Drive, a resident opened the door after hearing someone knock, and three women attacked her. Another woman known to them was present and seemed to be with them. Police are investigating the known woman.

## Fight

On March 6 at 6:20 p.m. near 9138 Edmonston Court, officers broke up a fight between two brothers, one of whom was intoxicated. The other brother declined to press charges.

## Armed Person

On March 4 at 3:05 p.m. near 7601 Hanover Parkway, a high school student was detained for possessing an airsoft pistol (BB gun) on school grounds; school security and parents were notified.

On March 6 at 4:24 p.m. near 9100 Springhill Lane, a group of youngsters knocked on a resident's door, and when he opened it, one displayed a handgun. The man grabbed a kitchen knife for

protection and the youngsters ran.

## Threat Complaint

On March 4 at 7:41 a.m. near 7601 Hanover Parkway, a student posted a threatening message on social media. Police and school security detained him as a safety precaution. The boy said he did not know how the situation got blown up; he was venting and did not want to hurt anyone. A threat assessment determined there was no credible threat.

## DUI Arrest

On March 6 at 3:12 a.m. near Hanover Parkway and Hanover Drive, a vehicle struck mobile security cameras and also damaged the "Greenbelt Forest Preserve Sunrise Tract" sign. Police determined the driver was under the influence of alcohol; he was arrested and charged.

## Theft

On March 3 at 10:30 a.m. near 6152 Springhill Terrace, a man believed that maintenance workers stole his money when they came to make repairs.

On March 4 at 8:39 p.m. near 9173 Springhill Lane, while a woman was packing to move, someone stole her storage rack while she was inside.

On March 6 at 1:29 p.m. near 10 Parkway, a package was stolen.

## Dine and Dash

On March 8 at 5:19 p.m. near 7405 Greenbelt Road, two people ate and left the restaurant without paying. They were detained, and the restaurant wanted them banned from the location.

## Shoplifting

On March 5 at 6:40 p.m. near 6100 Greenbelt Road, a female was arrested for shoplifting after taking a shopping cart full of items past all points of sale; she was taken to the Greenbelt Police station for processing.

On March 5 at 12:11 p.m. near 5910 Greenbelt Road, a man stole several items and fled on foot.

On March 6 at 3:35 p.m. near 7583 Greenbelt Road, two men and a woman stole merchandise and fled in a silver Jeep Compass.

On March 7 at 12:30 p.m. near 6000 Greenbelt Road, two men stole several items before fleeing; one has been identified and is in the process of being charged under a warrant.

On March 7 at 5:19 p.m. near

7551 Greenbelt Road, two men and a woman stole several designer sunglasses.

## Fraud

On March 5 near 6406 Ivy Lane, someone fraudulently altered a company check and cashed it; the bank is investigating.

On March 7 near 7270 South Ora Court, someone made unauthorized purchases on a card.

## Vehicle Crimes Stolen Vehicles

On March 5 near 9114 Edmonston Court, a 2023 Honda CR-V (Md. 7FE9402) was stolen.

On March 9 near 7917 Mandan Road, a gray 2021 Dodge Charger (Del. 489660) was stolen.

## Theft from Auto

All four wheels were stolen from five vehicles: on March 5 near 157 Westway, from a 2020 Lexus IS 350, and near 5823 Cherrywood Lane, from a rented 2023 Toyota Camry; on March 8 near 7330 Morrison Drive, from a 2021 Toyota Camry, and near 201 Lakeside Drive, from a 2025 Toyota Camry; and on March 9 near 172 Westway, from a 2025 Toyota Camry.

Two rear license tags were stolen: on March 8 near 550 Crescent Road (Md. 9DR1874) and on March 9 near 227 Lakeside Drive.

On March 7 near 6460 Capitol Drive, a 2012 Nissan Rogue had a window broken and a purse stolen.

On March 8 near 6460 Capitol Drive, a 2008 BMW 328i was broken into and a laptop bag was taken.

On March 9 near 9003 Breezewood Terrace, a 2025 Toyota Camry had a window broken, and later, property was reported missing.

## Vandalism to Auto

On March 6 near 550 Crescent Road, a window was broken on a 2010 Honda Civic.

On March 7 near 7903 Mandan Road, a Honda Civic and a Toyota Corolla had holes in their front windshields.

## Child Injured by Gunshot

On the evening of Tuesday, March 11 a child suffered a gunshot wound while at his home on Edmonston Road. He was transported to the hospital and his injuries are non-life threatening. An investigation is underway.

# Barricade Situation in Franklin Park Ends in Peaceful Surrender

by Anna Bedford-Dillow

At approximately 9 a.m. on Saturday, March 8, Greenbelt Police responded to a 911 call from a Franklin Park apartment on Edmonston Road for a physical dispute in which a victim had been cut.

A man and woman who shared the apartment had been involved in an argument that turned physical and the woman was cut with a knife during the fight. When police arrived the man locked himself inside the apartment, alone, shutting police and the woman outside.

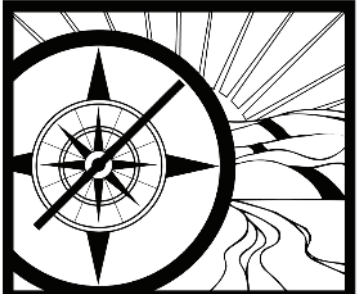
Contrary to some news reports over the weekend, there was no hostage situation, as no others were in the apartment. However, the man's act of shutting himself inside created a barricade situation and as such, Prince George's County Police Department and Berwyn Heights Police Department came to assist Greenbelt. After a short while the man was talked into coming out of the apartment unarmed and was taken into custody by police.

As a precautionary measure, the woman was transported to an area hospital to be treated for non-life-threatening injuries. No one else was injured.

A Greenbelt Police Department spokesperson expressed a huge

thanks to their partners in the Prince George's County Police Department and Berwyn Heights Police Department for their assistance throughout the incident.

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## City Notes

The City Manager submitted Greenbelt's 2025 earmark requests to Senators Chris Van Hollen and Angela Alsobrooks. Public Information participated in GES' Read Across America event. The city clerk, deputy clerk and DEI officer strategized about voter engagement.

Public Works installed raised crosswalks on Ridge Road using American Rescue Plan Act Pedestrian Improvement Project funding.


Community Center staff registered many residents for spring recreation programs. Recreation met with the assistant city manager to discuss payment of stipends to Learn2Earn interns.

Therapeutic Recreation provided intermission concession service for Secret Circus performances and presented talks about art history and composting.

The Museum's YouTube channel now offers a recording of its lecture on the Norfolk Botanical Garden. A spring display celebrating Easter and Passover is on view at the Museum House.

CARES met with the Employ Prince George's business services to identify programming useful to Greenbelt businesses and residents. CARES' director testified about youth services before the House Judiciary Committee of the Maryland General Assembly.

**PRELIMINARY AGENDA**  
Meetings of the GHI Board of Directors  
on March 20, 2025



**GHI Closed Meeting – starts at 7:00 p.m. – closed to members and visitors**

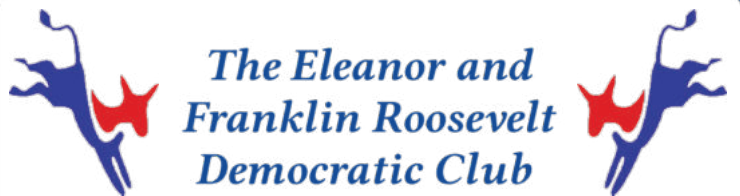
- Approve Minutes of the GHI Closed Meeting Held on February 20, 2025
- Legal Matters
- Member Matters

**GHI Open Meeting – starts after GHI Closed Meeting – open to members and visitors**

- Statement of Closed Meeting Held on March 20, 2025
- Approve Minutes of the GHI Open Meeting Held on February 20, 2025
- In-Person Board Meetings
- Proposed Bylaws Amendments 3-20-2025
- Motion to Hold a Closed Meeting on April 3, 2025

Members and visitors who wish to attend the Open meetings must register in advance via the following link:  
[https://us06web.zoom.us/joining/register/tZwtd-uqzoiG9XHGq9rswP\\_N9LZj33gbi9r](https://us06web.zoom.us/joining/register/tZwtd-uqzoiG9XHGq9rswP_N9LZj33gbi9r)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.




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**SOLID WASTE** continued from page 1

was filled by the city's General Fund. If rates remain unchanged, Carpenter-Driscoll explained, the deficit in FY 2026 will rise to almost \$280,000 due to increases in Prince George's County tipping fees from \$70 to \$85 per ton beginning on July 1, 2024 (another increase to \$90 per ton is slated for July 2026). The program has been operating at an increasingly large deficit since 2019.

**Likely Rate Increase**

The proposed solution to this situation is to increase the solid waste rates, which have not changed since 2016. Currently, single-family homes pay \$280 per year, as do some businesses; other businesses that generate more solid waste, primarily restaurants, pay \$814 per year and churches pay \$335 per year.

City staff proposed a 40 percent increase in rates that would eliminate the deficit. The increase would be phased in over two or three years, resulting in new yearly rates of \$392 for single-family homes and some businesses, \$1,140 for restaurants and \$469 for churches.

**Multiple Rate Scenarios**

During discussion, council went into the details of the proposed increase, which offers three options: 1) two years with equal 20 percent increases, 2) two years with a frontloaded increase of 25 percent followed by a 15 percent increase and 3) three years with increases of 15, 15 and 10 percent, respectively.

City Manager Josué Salmerón summarized the discussion by noting that both two-year versions of the proposal seemed to have support. Councilmember Amy Knesel, echoing a point made in the staff presentation, noted that the City of Greenbelt's solid waste program operates at prices below the average of neighboring jurisdictions while still delivering excellent service.

**Curbside Composting**

The second half of the work-session took up the issue of the city's pilot program for curbside composting, operated by Compost Crew. The program's current funding, provided by a USDA grant, expires in August. Robles set out the many environmental benefits of the composting project: composting diverts waste from landfills, minimizing generation of methane, a potent greenhouse gas. The compost generated by the program, which is distributed locally, replaces nutrients in the city's soil, which remains depleted from many gen-

erations of agriculture preceding the city's birth. This amending improves soil health and allows the reduction of fertilizer use. Robles characterized the entire process as "closing the organics loop."

**Compost Options**

City staff's proposal set out several scenarios under which the city could continue and perhaps expand the program. Currently 440 households participate in the compost program, and an expansion of up to 660 participants was envisioned. As Israel noted from his perspective as a business owner, more composting participants allow for a slight reduction in per unit costs. One scenario for the continuation of the program is that the city would assume the costs of around \$22 per month per bin. The cost would be offset in part by the diversion of approximately 200 tons of waste from the landfill, a savings of \$17,000.

**Alternative Strategies**

Under another scenario, the program could be partially subsidized, following the model of Alexandria and Falls Church, where participants pay \$5 and \$8 per month, respectively. A final aspect of the proposal envisioned temporary use of a portion of the recently acquired Armory property for curing piles, which would free up space at the Trinity Church location that could increase the project's overall capacity.

After further consideration, council will take budget action on staff proposals in a forthcoming council meeting.

**Senior Nutrition Program Luncheon**

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

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

**Letters cont'd from p.2**

Medicaid, SNAP and more? To quote attorney Joseph Welch, who challenged wicked Senator Joseph McCarthy of the House Un-American Activities Committee back in the 1950s: "Have you no sense of decency, sir, at long last? Have you left no sense of decency?"

Frank Gervasi

**Homeless Encampment**

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the growing homeless encampment in Greenbelt, which has become a significant issue in our community. As a resident of Greenbelt, I have observed firsthand the challenges that this encampment poses, both for the individuals living in it and the surrounding neighborhoods.

While I recognize the complexity of homelessness and the many factors that contribute to it, I believe it is important to address the immediate impact on both the homeless population and the larger community. The encampment is located in a highly visible area, which has raised concerns about public health, safety and the well-being of everyone involved. I walked the area yesterday and realized how bad it was.

The lack of adequate sanitation facilities and basic hygiene in the encampment has led to an increase in health risks. There

are growing concerns about the spread of infectious diseases, as well as the potential for fire hazards and other safety issues due to improvised shelters.

The encampment's presence has created a sense of unease among residents and local business owners. It is impacting the sense of security in the area, and some businesses are struggling to maintain a normal flow of customers due to the proximity of the encampment. There is an increase in thefts from many other businesses like CVS and Safeway.

While I understand that homelessness is a complex issue that requires long-term solutions, the current situation appears to lack sufficient resources and support services for those living in the encampment. Many individuals seem left without access to necessities such as food, healthcare and stable housing options.

As a concerned member of this community, I respectfully urge local officials and organizations to take immediate action to address this issue. I believe we can work together to find compassionate and effective solutions that prioritize both the needs of those experiencing homelessness and the well-being of the surrounding community.

Matthew Inzeo

*Editor's Note:* Location of encampment provided by reader is withheld due to safety concerns.

**COUNCIL** continued from page 6

regarding the requirement of a violent felony warrant in the detaining of an individual sought by Immigration and Customs Enforcement; SB893, which would introduce safeguards against unrestrained increases in home insurance fees; SB651, which requires a legal and legitimate reason for an eviction or termination of a lease; and SB820, which allows municipalities to raise infraction fees, for things like code enforcement infractions, from \$1,000 to \$5,000, making violations less likely to occur.

The final vote of the evening was to approve an amended meeting and worksession list regarding the upcoming budget process. The dates were mainly changed to accommodate some of the important gatherings that councilmembers attend for

organizations like the National League of Cities and the Maryland Municipal League.

Salmerón confirmed that city staff will present a budget for council deliberation on March 24.



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## A Review

# Almost, Maine, Is Whimsical Fantastical, Totally Entertaining

by Melissa Sites

A backdrop of snowy pine trees, a park bench and a tall door on wheels, under a starry sky that shimmers from time to time with the aurora borealis – one might think they had entered the enchanted woods of Narnia. But this is a semi-rural “unorganized area” known as Almost, Maine, the setting of the MAD (Goddard’s Music and Drama Club) Winter Show, directed by Aly Bayens and James Pildis.

This is a show about love, heartbreak, discovery, communication and paying attention. Fantastical elements – a woman’s heart is broken into 19 pieces of slate and carried around in a brown paper bag – collide with the mundane: a proposal of marriage is answered with a YES if only the one who proposed can be found.

The actors have a great time with their whimsical and spontaneous lines – similar to improvisational comedy, with fun repetition blooming into confusion and understanding by turns.

This play has been staged thousands of times since it was written in 2004 by John Cariani, perhaps because it presents a series of conversations between couples. Each scene introduces new characters and stands alone as a complete story, though the stories are tied together by the

relationships and happenings of small-town life.

Because the play is about romantic love, there is laughter, absurdity and a deep thread of pathos. The unpredictable love stories juxtapose new love, true love, fading love, betrayal and the search for closure. When two characters come together, the play contends, someone might instantly fall in love, or it might take a while, or they might literally fall to the ground and flop like fish. Clothing might be thrown off willy nilly, or someone might be reduced to tears of frustration over a lost shoe. Folks out for a beer at the Moose Paddy might be throwing a wild bachelorette party or reaching for a last goodbye.

The directors treat each story tenderly, with respect, but the audience is invited to laugh at the silliness and predicaments of the characters. What if someone returned your love – but literally carried it back to you in big red laundry bags? What if your affair resulted in someone getting a tattoo of the word VILLIAN – and the misspelling was secretly fortunate? There’s just enough sadness in the play to give a spicy depth to its humorous tone and make the spark of joy stand out.

The show is preceded by a cabaret of a dozen classic songs,

with doors opening at 7:15 p.m.

The play will run through March 22 at the Barney and Bea Recreation Center, Goddard Space Flight Center. Tickets are required for entry through the gate (off Good Luck Road). Visit [madtheater.org](http://madtheater.org) for tickets and more information.

**Directors James Pildis, left, and Aly Bayens also act in Almost, Maine.**

- Photos by Terry Nguyen



From left, Talon Bevan, Jack Glennon and Connor Burnett

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The Greenbelt Community Foundation  
has given out

# \$40,000

in grants from the Fall 2024 grant cycle

- Housing Ukrainian refugees
- New Cinema programs
- Youth exercise program
- Creative entrepreneur training
- Roosevelt Center mural
- Youth driver ed program
- Middle school mentoring
- New stage lighting

*(See article in this issue for more information about all of these.)*

As you can imagine, this has put a serious dent in our reserves. But that’s okay — that’s what people give us money to do. If you’d like to help replenish our reserves, you can do so online at [bit.ly/Donate2GCF](http://bit.ly/Donate2GCF) (or use the QR code). Or you can make a check payable to Greenbelt Community Foundation and send it to PO Box 234, Greenbelt MD 20768.

