



***WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held
Wednesday, March 4, 2009, for the purpose of
discussing renovations to the Greenbelt Theater.***

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 8:04p.m. It was held in the Senior Classroom of the Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Konrad E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Judith F. Davis.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael McLaughlin, City Manager; Celia Craze, Director of Planning & Community Development; and David Moran, Assistant City Manager.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Paul Sanchez, Theater Operator; Barbara Simon and Susan Jones residents; Melissa Cohen, GTM Architects; and Carol Griffin, News Review

Mr. McLaughlin began by indicating that the good news was that the architects work was completed and that the City has received permits for this project. The bad news was that the cost estimate exceeded the available funds.

Several Council members expressed concern about closing the theater for six months to complete the renovations. Mr. McLaughlin responded that staff had looked at several options to keep the theater open and perform the necessary work. However, given the extent of the work required, closing the theater was necessary. Ms. Craze also stressed that it was necessary to close the theater to perform the needed renovation work. Council suggested if the theater was closed then a marketing plan was needed when it reopens. Mayor Davis expressed concern that other businesses might have financial difficulty if the theater were closed for six months.

Ms. Cohen made a presentation on the proposed renovations. Ms. Craze noted that the City was still 3-4 months away from starting this project.

Mr. Putens suggested a mix of historic lighting and newer lighting. Mr. Sanchez suggested carpeting the lobby instead of restoring the terrazzo floor. Ms. Craze stressed that the City was receiving State grant funds and was required to perform certain historic renovations as a condition of the grant funding. Mr. Roberts believed the historic renovation items were important and were part of the attraction of the theater and the Center. Mr. Sanchez stressed the need to replace the auditorium doors.

Mayor Davis asked if green features had been considered. Mr. McLaughlin responded that staff would look at energy efficient HVAC systems, fluorescent lighting, etc to incorporate green elements.

Ms. Mach asked how the City would address the funding shortfall. Mr. McLaughlin responded that he didn't have an exact financing recommendation at this time. He noted that Council had a number of significant capital projects that could be financed through a bond referendum. He indicated that another option was to identify funds this year that could be transferred to the 2001 Bond Fund.

Mayor Davis hoped the construction time could be reduced to perhaps 4 months. Ms. Jones relayed a request from Ms. Simon that the City not close the theater during the Utopia Film Festival. Ms. Mach asked when the slowest time occurred. Mr. Sanchez responded that the summer was the slowest time at the theater. Ms. Craze noted that if the City waited until summer, 2010, the permits would expire.

Ms. Craze asked for additional direction from Council about next steps. Mayor Davis wanted the project to progress. Mr. Roberts believed Council needed to provide some direction to staff about total cost and scope of project. Mr. McLaughlin suggested that the City proceed with prequalifying vendors and identifying funding and return to Council in 3-4 months.

Information Items

Mayor Davis announced the Women's History luncheon. Mr. Putens reported on a recent visit to TGI Friday's restaurant.

The meeting ended at 10:10p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*David Moran,
Assistant City Manager*