

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held September 23, 2009, for the purpose of meeting with the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center.

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

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Leta M. Mach, Edward V.J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Judith F. Davis. Konrad E. Herling arrived at 8:15 p.m.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: John Spence, Director of Beltsville Agricultural Research Center; Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; Cindy Murray, City Clerk; Barbara Hopkins, Greenbelt News Review; Gwen Vaccaro, Pleasant Touch; and Emmett Jordan.

Mayor Davis welcomed Mr. Spence and asked for an update on the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC).

Mr. Spence discussed BARC's financial situation, noting that their budget had been flat for the past few years and he expected it to remain so for the next several years. He noted that some programs had intentionally been cut to allow efforts to be concentrated in high profile programs utilizing BARC's unique services and equipment. Mr. Spence noted one of the new areas of focus was urban farming. He also mentioned that the new insect quarantine facility will be in operation soon.

Mr. Spence said there were over 500 buildings in varying condition on the property and a large number of the buildings were occupied by BARC's 1,000 federal employees and 260 non-federal scientists. He said efforts were being made to identify the buildings in the best operating conditions on the property and relocating employees into these buildings. Mr. Spence said resources can then be directed into maintaining a smaller number of buildings. He added that a number of buildings in poor condition have been leveled, but noted that many of the older buildings area are historically protected. There was discussion regarding the leasing of buildings to other agencies.

Ms. Vaccaro, representing the Roosevelt Center Merchants Association (RCMA), said the association would like to advertise their services to employees at BARC. Mr. Spence advised Ms. Vaccaro to forward the information to his office for posting on the BARC employee bulletin board and distribution.

Mr. Herling asked if many BARC employees use public transportation daily. Mr. Spence said the government runs shuttle service between BARC and the Greenbelt Metro but said only a small percentage of the work force utilizes this service.

There was discussion regarding the interest of the City of College Park annexing BARC last year in an effort to protect the property. Mr. Spence said BARC made it clear to College Park they were adequately protected by federal legislation and were not interested in being annexed. Mayor Davis stressed that Greenbelt would be interested in annexing BARC if it ever felt it needed protection. Mr. Spence said BARC was getting positive feedback from the new

administration and did not feel they were a target at this time.

Mr. Putens asked about the deer population on the property. Mr. Spence said both the deer and geese populations are on-going problems. He noted that the public deer hunt has been successful and he anticipates the hunt will continue indefinitely.

Mr. Spence noted BARC's opposition to the proposed widening of Kenilworth Avenue. He said the project would impact several BARC fields which provide valuable agricultural data.

Mr. McLaughlin asked about the proposal to move the connector road through the south farm area. Mr. Spence said there had been no movement on this issue.

Mayor Davis thanked Mr. Spence for coming and noted the importance to BARC to the City.

Informational Items

Ms. Mach provided information from the Maryland Municipal League's Communications Committee meeting and the Council of Government's Air Quality Meeting.

The meeting ended at 9:36 p.m

Respectfully submitted,

*Cindy Murray
City Clerk*