



WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, February 20, 2008, for the purpose of meeting with the chairpersons of City Council advisory groups.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 8:05 p.m. It was held in the Multipurpose Room of the Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Konrad Herling, Leta Mach, Edward Putens, Rodney Roberts, and Mayor Judith Davis.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael McLaughlin, City Manager; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Debra Payne (for Jeffrey Morisette), Advisory Committee on Education; Charles Jackman, Advisory Committee on Trees; Keith Chernikoff (for George Branyan), Advisory Planning Board; Steven Skolnik, Board of Appeals; Coleen Chernikoff, Employee Relations Board; Kevin Hammett, Community Relations Advisory Board; Ginny Mudrock (representing the new board), Forest Preserve Advisory Board; Lola Skolnik, Park & Recreation Advisory Board; Silke Pope, Public Safety Advisory Committee; John Lippert, Recycling & Environment Advisory Committee; and Leah Warner, Senior Citizens Advisory Committee. Bill Holland, coordinator of the CERT Team, was also present, as was Bill Orleans. No one attended from the Arts Advisory Board, the Board of Elections, or the Youth Advisory Committee.

Following introductions, at the Mayor's request, each person gave brief information about the purpose and recent activities of his/her advisory group. Mr. Holland also provided information on CERT. Mayor Davis first expressed Council's appreciation to the advisory groups for their work and for their advice to Council over the year. She added that the boards and committees cover a great deal of ground that Council could not cover alone and that it would be difficult for Council to function without them.

The Mayor asked if the chairs perceived any problems or issues that needed to be addressed.

Ms. Skolnik said PRAB had enjoyed having a representative from the Youth Advisory Committee on the board for a short time last year. The Mayor explained that most of the members of YAC had graduated last year and that the group had only a few members at the moment and was not highly functional. There was discussion of various aspects of this issue. Ms. Pope also mentioned that the schools were changing the way in which they allowed volunteer service credit, such that the organization offering the work had to take the initiative to have the activity approved in advance with the school.

There was discussion of the fact that advisory groups are still not always being kept in the loop or receiving adequate response on the status of reports and other communications to Council.

Ms. Gallagher said she would try to find ways to improve this situation. It was suggested that the chair and the staff liaison both be notified of update information. Chairs were also encouraged to have their staff liaison make inquiries at any time when they wanted an update if information had not been forthcoming. Mr. Chernikoff added that as a citizen he had made a request at a Council meeting that had been referred to advisory committees and on which he had still not received a response.

Ms. Skolnik said that receiving advance copies of Council agendas by e-mail was helpful to her in being aware of any items of potential PRAB interest that might be coming up. Ms. Gallagher thanked her for mentioning this and invited any of the chairs to let her know if they wanted to be included on the email to receive agendas and/or or minutes from regular City Council meetings.

Mr. Chernikoff said it was becoming increasingly difficult to find meeting space in the Community Center, especially on Wednesday nights. Ms. Skolnik said that PRAB is aware of this issue because it reviews applications from groups seeking Recognition or Contribution Group status in order to avail themselves of free meeting space. The Mayor said to keep in mind that there were multipurpose rooms at the Police Department and the Youth Center that might be available, too. Mr. McLaughlin noted that for meetings related to Planning Department staff, there was a benefit to meeting in the Community Center.

The Mayor spoke briefly about the roles of the staff and Council liaisons.

Mayor Davis mentioned that if attendance on the part of any member was a problem that the chair or staff liaison could not resolve, Ms. Gallagher should be informed to pursue it. Ms. Gallagher added that it is easiest to resolve these situations at the time a member's term is expiring and that one of the reasons the chair and staff liaison are copied on the letter asking if the member wishes to be reappointed is to give them an opportunity to speak up if there are reasons why the person should not be reappointed. She added that it is even better if she is aware of the problem before the letter goes out, however.

Mr. Putens raised the issue of whether some type of incentive would help with recruitment to advisory boards and committees. He mentioned eligibility for the staff rate at the Aquatic & Fitness Center. Another possibility was support to attend conferences or training sessions. Mr. Skolnik asked how big a problem recruitment was. The Mayor said there were ebbs and flows with different groups but at the moment the only group with a large number of vacancies (besides the Youth Advisory Committee) was the Arts Advisory Board. Mr. Chernikoff said that when he was on PRAB, he had appreciated the opportunity to attend the annual Maryland Recreation and Parks Association Conference, and Ms. Skolnik agreed that she considered this to be a benefit, too. There was further discussion of various professional meetings, conferences, or training sessions, many of which were local, that had been attended by members of ACT, APB, and REAC whose schedules allowed. Ms. Mach added that the National League of Cities was undertaking some education-related activities that might be of interest to ACE. Mayor Davis suggested that chairs bring this topic up with their groups and ask if there are any other suggestions. Ms. Pope said she liked the idea of the reduced G AFC rate. In response to a query from Mr. Chernikoff, Mr. McLaughlin said that if groups were aware of opportunities they wished to take advantage of that would involve costs to the City, it would be very helpful if

information could be provided to staff by January for the upcoming fiscal year.

Mayor Davis commented on the recent Community Visioning sessions that had been held in the three segments of town and thanked the chairs for their response to the request asking them to facilitate the sessions. She said they had been very successful in making people comfortable about participating and speaking and that Council was appreciative for the role that the chairs and some additional board and committee members had played.

The Mayor thanked everyone for coming.

Other Business

Verizon: There was discussion of the problems being created by the FIOS cable installation. Mr. Putens said one resident's Comcast cable had been cut, and there was disagreement about who was liable. Mr. Jackson said his understanding was that Verizon had said they were responsible for the cost or repair of any cut cable or lines.

Hanover Parkway Roundabouts: Mr. Herling asked about the status of the complaint he had conveyed about performance at the roundabouts. Mr. McLaughlin said it had been received and that staff would look into it and get back to Council but that it would take a while.

Charlestowne Village: Ms. Mach said she had attended one of their condo association meetings.

Upcoming Events: Mayor Davis said tomorrow night's PGCMA meeting would be in Capitol Heights and the Fire Department's Award Banquet would be on March 15 at 6 p.m.

Security at Meetings: Mayor Davis noted material that had been sent out by Mr. McLaughlin regarding security at Council meetings, following the Kirkwood incident. She said she would like to discuss this at a work session or part of a work session.

Charlestowne North: There was discussion of the meeting held with Charlestowne North ownership and management. Mr. Putens asked to be sure that all commitments that had been made would be recorded, specifically: that another meeting would be held in September or October to talk about what would happen next year; that a market study would be presented; and that a community letter would go out to all residents telling them what would occur, not just selected residents. Mayor Davis said she thought they had agreed to recognize the tenants' association.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kathleen Gallagher
City Clerk*