



***BUDGET WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held
Wednesday, April 18, 2007, for the purpose of reviewing the Public Works sections of the
proposed FY 2008 budget.***

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 E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts, and Mayor Judith F. Davis. Mr. Putens was called away by his office at about 9:30 p.m.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael McLaughlin, City Manager; Jeff Williams, City Treasurer; Kenny Hall, Bill Phelan, Carolyn Clemens, Cindy Murray, and Karl Skaggs, Public Works Department; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Sheldon Goldberg, Advisory Planning Board; Derek Thompson, Windsor Green; Marc Siegel and Rachel McMullin, Park & Recreation Advisory Board; and Diane Oberg, Greenbelt News Review.

First, the department presented a slide presentation of photos of various events and items from the past year. Mr. Hall said their best news was that the expansion of the Public Works facility had finally gone out to bid. He said he was concerned, however, that so much time had passed that the cost would have substantially increased and that they might not be able to do what they had originally intended. Regarding staffing, he said that they have two "long timers" retiring next year, and two more may leave the following year.

A photo of the newly completed Frankfort playground generated discussion of the transition from wood fiber to rubber chips. Mr. Phelan said the wood fiber had required continual replacement, making it expensive to maintain. In addition, it damaged trees, presumably because it leaches alcohol, and compacts to a density that prohibits adequate air from reaching the roots.

There was mention of the contractual landscaping, which is going well this year, the tree replacement program, and the rain garden and barrels at the Youth Center, which Mr. Phelan recommended expanding in the future to other buildings in the Center area to counteract the paved surfaces. Mayor Davis said that Mayor Ortiz of Edmonston would like a tour of some of Greenbelt's green techniques when enough is ready to see.

Mr. Hall said everything is running well with the new street sweeper. It has had no breakdowns, and there have been no complaints about the new driver.

Mayor Davis asked Ms. Murray about the disposal of the small fluorescent bulbs that everyone is now being encouraged to use instead of incandescent bulbs, since they are not supposed to be thrown into the trash. Ms. Murray replied that to accept them, the City would have to be certified to accept hazardous waste, which she said is a very expensive and time-consuming process. She said the county takes them. She said she would look into it further.

Mr. Putens expressed concern about whether the companies that take recyclable materials from the City are really recycling them and asked whether, at a minimum, the City gets, or could get, some kind of written certification from the companies it uses, particularly for electronics recycling. Mr. Roberts asked if the state regulates solid waste and, if so, if there could be enforcement at that level. The question was raised of whether this issue should be suggested as a legislative initiative.

Council asked to be given a copy of the pie chart showing the distribution of types of recycling. Mr. Putens also asked if it would be possible to get something showing changes in these categories over time.

Following the slide presentation, Council went through the Public Works section of the budget page by page.

The Mayor said there were street lights that had been out for a long time at Hanover and 193. Mr. Hall said they would look into it, but some of the lights there belong to the state, not Pepco. The Mayor asked if the City was charging Berwyn Heights and College Park for helping put up banners, since this issue had been raised previously. Mr. McLaughlin said Mr. Hall had recommended against doing so, since it would affect working relationships. He said that since College Park brings other things to the table, no change had been implemented.

Regarding the passage of the Municipal Street Light Maintenance bill in the State Assembly, Mr. Hall said he thought taking some street lights over might make sense.

Mayor Davis said Council had previously had comparative refuse information for other cities, and she asked to have it updated. She also asked for an update of the 2004-2005 list of building contractors.

Under "Parks," the Mayor asked if anything could be done to keep so many tennis balls from going into the Lake. She also mentioned the Partners in Parks Program, which generated discussion of "adopt-a" programs for litter clearing and such in public areas.

The Mayor said there was perennial discussion of what sidewalks were the City's vs. GHI's for purposes of snow removal. She asked if the City had a map designating City sidewalks. Mr. Phelan said he could provide that but that it should be understood the City makes no claim to clearing all the City sidewalks. Mayor Davis said she understood that and that a walkway that had been mentioned was one running from Ridge to Westway. Mr. Phelan said that belongs to GHI. Various other snow issues were also discussed.

Mayor Davis asked Karl Skaggs if he wanted to raise anything. He said he wanted to note that many employees are concerned about the Collective Bargaining Agreement with the police. He said other classified employees want to be sure they will continue to be treated fairly. He said there was a good deal of misinformation circulating as well. Mr. Phelan reinforced what Mr. Skaggs had said and added that it was not just Public Works employees who were concerned.

Other Business

Several informational items were shared. Mr. Roberts suggested sending a letter to Governor O'Malley to express Greenbelt's objections to the Inter-County Connector. Council agreed this would be good to do, and Mr. McLaughlin said he would provide a draft next week.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kathleen Gallagher
City Clerk*