



WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Monday, August 27, 2007, for the purpose of holding a stakeholder meeting with representatives of the civic associations.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 8:05 p.m. It was held in the Council Room of the Municipal Building.

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; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Silke Pope, Belle Point HOA, Ruth Kastner, Boxwood Civic Association; Emmett Jordan, Greenbriar Community Association, Phase I; Gary Thomas, Greenbriar Community Association, Phase II; Angeline Butler, Greenbriar Community Association, Phase III; Barbara Smith, Greenbriar Community Association; Ed Putens, Greenbrook Estates HOA; Kay Moomey, Hunting Ridge Condominium Association; Marc Siegel, Lakeside Community Association; Sheldon Goldberg, Derek Thompson, and Judith Thompson, Windsor Green Homeowners Association; Jon Gardner, Woodland Hills Community Association; Marcus Ngbea, the Gazette, and several audience members.

Following introductions, Mayor Davis explained the stakeholder meeting process. She then introduced Frank DeBernardo, who gave a quick overview of the purposes of the Greener Greenbelt Initiative, its importance to non-GHI neighborhoods, and the charrette to be held September 28-30 at Greenbelt Elementary School.

Several topics were addressed that had been suggested in advance for the meeting:

Public Safety in the Spellman Overpass Area: *Ms. Smith said that although the Overpass created more problems for Greenbriar than people realized, it was safer for school children to cross the Overpass than to walk on Greenbelt Road; for that reason she did not think the Overpass should be closed. She said Greenbriar had a considerable number of vandalism problems and that she would have liked to have seen the police substation located there. Mr. Siegel said there should at least be a surveillance camera located at the Overpass and possibly increased police presence, though he would like to know where the police would be moved from in order to be there. He asked if the School Resource Officer could be at the Overpass at the end of the school day. He said there were reports of a confrontation among young people at the Overpass one night this week. When asked about this, Mr. McLaughlin said there had been no calls to the police about this matter and that he was skeptical that anything outside the ordinary had occurred. Mr. Jordan commented that with school back in session, there are so many kids about that when a large group assembles, as happens at the Overpass, there may be a*

misperception about what is going on. Laura Moore, 50 Court Crescent, asked if there was commitment to a camera. The Mayor explained that the Council had allocated \$20,000 toward any public safety improvements that might be recommended by the advisory committees who are reviewing the matter.

The Mayor asked if there were other public safety issues. Mr. Gardner suggested replacing the flashing yellow light with a flashing red light at the St. Hugh's crosswalk to make the point that cars must stop, not merely slow down. Mr. McLaughlin explained that it is hazardous to go from no light to red without interim yellow. Mr. Roberts suggested putting in a light like the one at Green Ridge House, which could be changed to yellow, then red, by a pedestrian. Others thought that was worth consideration as a solution.

Lastner Lane Traffic Concerns: *Ms. Kastner said that although there was some running of the stop sign at Ivy Lane, there was also speeding toward the top of the hill and running of the stop sign at Ridge Road. Mr. McLaughlin told her to call Planning & Community Development and request a traffic study of Lastner Lane.*

Speaking for Greenbrook Estates, Mr. Putens thanked the City for all the traffic-calming work on Ora Glen Drive.

Mr. Jordan commented that the intersection of Hanover Parkway and Greenbelt Road was becoming increasingly busy and complex, with increased traffic and more drivers cutting through side streets and driveways and making U-turns.

Ms. Pope said the blind curve in combination with the narrowness of the street, with parking on both sides, made Westway between Ridge and Lakeside a problem, particularly when Metro buses and school buses come through.

Changes in City Building and Parking Code; Encroachment on City Property: *Mr. McLaughlin summarized Code and policy changes being considered for PODS, dumpsters, encroachment on City property, and regulations for ticketing and booting parked cars. He said information would be sent out to the civic and homeowner associations when the changes were adopted by Council.*

The Mayor went around the table so everyone could bring up any remaining items or inform the group about things that were taking place in their neighborhood or association. Mr. Thomas said that newspaper vending boxes were still a concern, and the Mayor told him a meeting was coming up in September in Laurel about this issue. Mr. Siegel asked if anything short-term could be done to aid the condition of Greenbelt Lake, which he said at this point was of little use for fishing or other recreation. Mr. McLaughlin said he expected work to be budgeted for next fiscal year. Mr. Siegel also said sidewalks had still not been properly repaired from the work that had been done by the gas company. Ms. Pope questioned the distance from Belle Point to the high school, saying that with no school bus provided, the distance was too great for walking, especially in bad weather. She said from Belle Point, going through Old Greenbelt and using the Overpass was longer than using Greenbelt Road. Mr. Putens noted the ongoing problem with car dealerships in Greenbelt East and said the City will eventually need to deal with a large

number of dead trees on City property near Greenbrook Lake.

Council thanked everyone for coming.

Other Business

Visitors: Mr. McLaughlin announced that a group of officials from Luxembourg would be visiting the City and attending the Labor Day Parade.

Public Forums – Public Safety in Spellman Overpass Area: There was considerable discussion of whether police or Councilmembers should attend the open forums. Ms. Pope said it was the opinion of the Public Safety Advisory Committee that when police officers were present at a public safety forum, speakers tended to directly address the officers rather than the moderators and committee members, which affected the dynamic of the meeting as well as sometimes being awkward for the officer. She thought this to be less a problem with Councilmembers in the context of this type of forum. She said this was the committee's major concern, though it was also true that some people might be more inhibited about speaking in the presence of police officers. Mr. McLaughlin said that Kevin Hammett, chair of the Community Relations Advisory Board, did not have a strong opinion on this topic but was willing to support the request from PSAC. Eventually, Council agreed it would be appropriate for Councilmembers to attend, with the understanding that they were there solely to listen. Council specified to Ms. Pope that it should be announced at the beginning of each forum that the absence of the police was by request, not lack of interest on their part. Mayor Davis also said she wanted it to be made clear that the topic was not the Overpass per se; rather it was about public safety concerns about the area impacted by the Overpass in both Center City and Greenbelt East. It was also agreed that Council would either forward or send hard copies of e-mails they had received from people on this topic so they could be considered by the board and the committees.

School Board: The draft agenda for the Four Cities meeting with the School Board was reviewed and agreed to. Ms. Mach mentioned there would be a CIP meeting before the next Council meeting. It was agreed that she would attend and, if possible, the chair of ACE as well.

Condition of Overpass: The Mayor said she had walked the Overpass during the weekend and had found some items that need work. There is a light out on Gardenway on the second wooden pole from the Overpass. There are serious weeds in the concrete on the Overpass. There is also damage to the Park Service's fences. She said the path had not all been backfilled, and the trash receptacle on the Greenbriar side was broken. She asked why the path at Gardenway had been replaced but not the one at the Greenbriar end. Mr. McLaughlin said he had not been aware that the other path needed replacement but would look into it.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:07 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen Gallagher
City Clerk*