



WORK SESSION of the Greenbelt City Council held Monday, November 19, 2007, for the purpose of discussing Council Goals/Community Visioning.

Mayor Davis started the meeting at 8:04p.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 P. McLaughlin, City Manager and David E. Moran, Assistant City Manager.

Mr. McLaughlin reviewed a November 16 memorandum with Council which outlined his thoughts about a City goals/visioning.

Mr. Herling reported on a session he attended at the NLC Conference on this topic and cited some examples that other cities have used.

Mr. Putens stressed the need to hear from Greenbelt residents in a “bottom up” method regarding their vision and goals for the City. He stated that residents were not aware of what the City can and cannot do.

Ms. Mach believed the process should start with visioning. From there, the Council could develop goals and then management could develop action steps.

Mr. Roberts wanted to keep it as simple as possible and more focused on goals. He wanted to revisit the existing goals and add to them.

Mayor Davis expressed support for visioning first and then a focus on goals. She stressed the need to hear from citizens. She raised the idea of using the internet to gain feedback from citizens during this process. Ms. Mach referenced a session that she attended which discussed e-governance.

Mr. McLaughlin stated that getting ideas from the community would be the easy part. He noted the hard part would be reducing these ideas to a manageable workload.

Mr. Putens stressed the need to invite everyone to participate.

Mayor Davis believed there was consensus for a visioning process in each of the three neighborhoods. Mr. Roberts wanted a more focused approach. Several Council Members responded that they thought the visioning process could be focused.

Next Council discussed facilitation. Mayor Davis and Ms. Mach referenced a process used by M-NCPPC where participants were assigned to small groups. Mr. Putens stressed the need to tell people what the City did and didn't have control over.

Mr. Roberts expressed concern about the amount of staff time involved. Mr. Putens responded that these would be the citizen's goals, not the Council's. Mayor Davis stressed the need to involve the citizens so they don't become detached.

Mr. McLaughlin discussed the need to frame the issues. He suggested that maybe breaking into groups that would discuss the six or seven functional areas of the City. These groups could be led by a Council Member and/or maybe a Department Head. Participants would spend time at one functional area and then move to another functional area.

Mayor Davis liked the concept outlined by Mr. McLaughlin. Mr. Herling noted that some of the functional areas overlapped. Council members believed that this would come out while synthesizing the feedback. Mr. Roberts expressed concern about using Council members as facilitators. Council members expressed the desire to move from group to group rather than be tied to a specific group. Mr. McLaughlin suggested using appropriate advisory group members as facilitators.

There was Council consensus not to do staff presentations. Council favored broad community participation including advisory groups, homeowner associations, civic organizations, businesses and the general citizenry.

Ms. Mach wanted to get an announcement into the Springhill Lake newsletter and perhaps on their website. She favored use of personal invitations.

There was consensus to promote visioning via: a mailer to each household in Greenbelt, a letter to City organizations and associations, announcements in the News Review and on cable channel 71, as well as some individual efforts by Council Members to get the notice out in the community.

Council agreed that 3-4 hours per session was a good time frame. Mr. McLaughlin suggested dates of January 12, 26 and February 2.

Information Items

Mr. McLaughlin asked if anyone was available to testify on CB-38. Mr. Roberts agreed to testify. Mr. McLaughlin reported on the COG Gala. Mayor Davis noted the appearance of five temporary buildings at Eleanor Roosevelt High School.

The meeting ended at 9:35p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
David E. Moran
Assistant City Manager*