



WORK SESSION of the Greenbelt City Council held on Monday, September 17, 2007, for the purpose of holding a stakeholder meeting with representatives of the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC) and of providing an update on the Public Works facility addition.

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

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers 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.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Dr. Phyllis Johnson, Director-BARC; Sheldon Goldberg; Bill Orleans; and Barbara Hopkins, Greenbelt News Review

There were introductions. Mayor Davis welcomed Dr. Johnson and asked for an update on BARC.

Dr. Johnson reported that BARC had not been chosen as the location for a proposed BioDefense Research Facility. She gave a powerpoint presentation which summarized some of the current research at BARC and its positive impact on the community. She also provided an update on BARC's fiscal situation. It was noted that BARC's annual budget was essentially flat and, as expenses have increased, the total full-time equivalents, particularly science personnel, have decreased.

Mayor Davis asked if there were new programs. Dr. Johnson responded that without new money it was difficult to start new programs. Dr. Johnson stated that BARC had not received any capital funding for the last several years.

Mr. Roberts asked if BARC was doing any research regarding drought. Dr. Johnson responded that BARC was doing a lot of research on global warming.

Council asked about BARC's "enhanced use lease authority." Dr. Johnson responded that USDA does not currently have this authority. She reported that if BARC were to get this authority, leases would be restricted to activities that supported BARC's mission.

Dr. Johnson expressed appreciation for the work of the National Agricultural Research Alliance-Beltsville and noted its support was heartening. Mayor Davis noted that residents sometimes hear gunshots and asked about hunting on BARC property. Dr. Johnson responded that BARC does allow tightly controlled hunting in certain areas of the campus.

Public Works Facility

Mr. McLaughlin noted that only one bid had been received for the Public Works facility and, per City Code, it was returned to the vendor. He indicated that staff had been discussing the project with Gardiner & Gardiner and now recommended this firm for the project.

Mr. McLaughlin reported that the cost estimate for the project as specified came in at \$5 million. He noted that there was only \$2.5 million in the 2001 Bond Fund for the project. Mr. McLaughlin indicated that staff believed the project cost could be brought to the \$4-4.5 million dollar range. He discussed staff recommendations for modifying the scope of the project and outlined the additional revenue options for funding it.

Mayor Davis expressed concern about using the funds allocated for the theater project towards the public works project.

Mr. Roberts asked about the dredging project and if the materials dredged would be removed or stored at Northway. Mr. McLaughlin responded that the project as proposed would take the dredged material off-site.

Mayor Davis questioned the removal of Building 3 from the project scope. Mr. Hall responded that the building could be built later, but he did not see it being done in the near future. Mr. McLaughlin characterized Building 3 as a “nice to have.”

Ms. Mach expressed concern about jeopardizing the theater project by using those funds.

Council expressed some concern about removing the “ecopavers.” They also expressed opposition to using the theater money.

Mr. McLaughlin summarized the feedback from Council as consensus to proceed on the project with a not to exceed price of \$4.5 million. Council stressed the need to retain the green elements and not diminish the value of the project. Mr. McLaughlin indicated a Resolution for Negotiated Purchase would be placed on the upcoming Council agenda.

Information Items

Mayor Davis discussed a number of information items.

The meeting ended at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

David E. Moran
Assistant City Manager