*City of Greenbelt, Maryland*

***GREENBELT CITYLINK***

 REGULAR MEETING OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held April 10, 2006.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m.

**ROLL CAL**L was answered by Councilmembers Konrad E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts, and Mayor Judith F. Davis.

**ALSO PRESENT** were David E. Moran, Assistant City Manager; John F. Shay, Jr., City Solicitor; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk.

Mayor Davis asked that everyone observe a moment of silence in honor of Pamela Iris Pinkney, a former resident who had worked at the Greenbelt Post Office since 1979. She then led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

**CONSENT AGENDA:** It was moved by Mr. Putens and seconded by Ms. Mach that the consent agenda be approved as presented. The motion passed 5-0.

Council thereby took the following actions:

**MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS**

- Interview, March 27, 2006
- Regular Meeting, March 27, 2006
- Work Session, March 29, 2006
- Work Session, April 3, 2006

Approved as presented.

**RECOGNITION GROUP APPLICATION - GREENBELT COMMUNITY FUND:** Council approved the application of the Greenbelt Community Fund for Recognition Group status.

**RESIGNATION FROM ADVISORY GROUP:** Council accepted with regret the resignation of Jeri Holloway from the Arts Advisory Board.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** It was moved by Mr. Putens and seconded by Ms. Mach that the agenda be approved as presented. The motion passed 5-0.

**PRESENTATIONS**

Arbor Day – Proclamation: In keeping with its designation as a “ Tree City USA,” Greenbelt issues a proclamation annually in recognition of Arbor Day. Robert Trumbule accepted the proclamation on behalf of the Advisory Committee on Trees (ACT) and described the activities planned for April 22. He said after various covers had been planted in the morning at the Hillside Underpass area for Earth Day, there would be Arbor Day tree plantings at noon, followed by a tree tour. He added that at some point, ACT would also be planting seven additional cypress trees at Greenbelt Lake, since some of those planted last year had failed. The Mayor thanked him and asked him to extend Council’s appreciation to the rest of the committee and to staff liaison Bill Phelan.

Introduction of CERT Graduates: Two groups of Greenbelters have completed the Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) training program offered by the Prince George’s County Volunteer Center and Office of Emergency Management. Council recognized the following people who completed the classes: Bill Holland, who also coordinated the program on behalf of the City’s Public Safety Advisory Committee, David Alexander, Larry and Rena Hull, Ginny Jones, Clement Lau, Jack Patterson, Leonie Penney, and Ken Silberman. Mr. Holland said that about 30 Greenbelters had completed training and were meeting monthly to organize. Some have received further specialized training subsequent to the CERT program. Meetings are on third Thursdays at the police station, and anyone who is interested is welcome to attend.

National Public Safety Telecommunications Week – Proclamation: Communications Supervisor Alicia Covile, Jessica Houle, Shaniya Lashley-Mullen, and Quashema Lucus received a proclamation from the Mayor honoring the Police Department’s Communications Specialists on the occasion of National Public Safety Telecommunications Week (April 9-15). Sgt. David Buerger described the communications specialists as the “unsung heroes” of the department and said he particularly wanted to recognize Ms. Houle and Ms. Lashley-Mullen for their professionalism and long-term work in their positions. In addition, he presented a certificate of appreciation from the Police Department to Ms. Covile on behalf of Chief Craze.

Maryland Chiefs’ Challenge – Proclamation: Sgt. David Buerger received a proclamation from the Mayor designating the two months from April 6 to June 6 for the Maryland Chiefs = Challenge Campaign. He said the program focuses on seat belt safety and aggressive driving, but he emphasized that it was about education, not just enforcement.

Municipal Government Month – Proclamation: Beverly Palau, the City =s Public Information and Communications Coordinator, accepted from Mayor Davis a proclamation designating April as Municipal Government Month. Ms. Palau mentioned a number of the activities taking place in the City over the time period, including the “It’s Municipal Government” competition for the school, which is to be held on Friday, May 12, at 6:30 p.m. Mayor Davis thanked Ms. Palau for her work with the program.

**PETITIONS AND REQUESTS:** None.

**ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

The following items and events were mentioned:

Mr. Moran: Today is Sine Die in the General Assembly. He will report further to Council on other matters later, but the major news for the City is that bills to allow the reprogramming of the $300,000 from the bond bill to the Community Center windows passed both houses.

Mr. Putens: Thanked everyone who sent him good wishes during his recovery from surgery. He asked Mr. Moran to look into a road problem in University Square that WSSC had previously repaired and a grading issue on the southeast corner of the new post office property on Ora Glen Drive.

Mr. Herling: Noted problems with a damaged tree on the post office property and an unattended alarm in the early morning hours last week. Following extensive practice, he and Ms. Mach threw successful opening pitches at the Little League game.

Ms. Mach: She and Mayor Davis attended a meeting of the Prince George’s County Elected Municipal Women in Seat Pleasant. This group is offering a $500 college scholarship for the first time this year.

Mayor Davis: Attended a second COG meeting on day-laborer issues; with Mr. Herling, Neal Barnett, Cindy Murray, and William Smith, participated in the Potomac Watershed Clean-Up; announced again that the deadline for the PGCMA scholarship is April 28; congratulated Greenbelt Middle School student Hung Tran, who moved to Greenbelt from New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina, on his victory in the countywide spelling bee.

**LEGISLATION**

An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 19, “Taxation,” of the Greenbelt City Code in Order to Revise Article III, “Admissions and Amusement Tax” for the Purpose of Permitting the Establishment of the Tax Rate by Ordinance or Resolution

Mayor Davis read the agenda comments. Mr. Roberts introduced the ordinance for first reading. Mr. Herling asked what the loss in tax from the Old Greenbelt Theatre would be, since the reduced tax applies to all theaters. Mr. Moran said he did not have a figure at hand but that the bulk of the tax revenue had been generated by the 14 theaters as operated by AMC.

A Resolution to Establish Admissions and Amusement Tax Rates in the City of Greenbelt, Maryland , to Take Effect July 1, 2006

Mayor Davis read the agenda comments. Mr. Putens introduced the resolution for first reading.

**ELECTION ISSUES:** Mayor Davis read the agenda comments on the following three issues, which had been referred to the Board of Elections. She recognized Judith Ott, chair of the Board of Elections.

The first question referred to the board was whether there should be any consideration of revising the Charter so that an election would not have to be held in the event that five or fewer candidates were running. Ms. Mach said she thought that the board had outlined well the reasons why an election should always be held. Other Councilmembers agreed, though Mr. Putens said he did not agree with the suggestion that consideration be given to cutting costs where possible if five or fewer candidates were on the ballot. It was agreed that this question was closed.

It was also agreed that, prior to the next election, staff would bring to Council a resolution to clarify that the requirements for holding a runoff election do not apply if fewer than six candidates are running. Resident Bill Orleans questioned this approach, suggesting that a new election be held instead.

There was considerable discussion of the third issue: whether groups or organizations campaigning for or against ballot issues should be required to file interim and final reports of contributions and expenditures, just as candidates are. The Mayor suggested limiting the change to organizations working to influence referendum questions, not working for or against candidates. Referencing the board’s recommendation that a high financial threshold should apply, Mr. Roberts said he thought there should be a high threshold on the number of people involved in the group as well. The board’s report had cited the requirement by other jurisdictions that groups of “two or more” be required to file, though individuals were excluded. Ms. Ott commented that it would be difficult to define or pin down the precise number of people in a group. Mr. Herling and Ms. Mach both said they thought the amount of money involved was more significant than the number of people in the group. Mr. Herling said it really came down to a question of how a group could wield influence in an election. Mr. Orleans raised a number of issues.

Mr. Roberts commented that if Council was going to look at this issue, it should perhaps also look at the City’s requirements for petitioning issues to the ballot in the first place.

It was moved by Mr. Putens and seconded by Mr. Herling that further development of the issue (including revisions that would be needed to the Code and documents, what parameters would need to be defined, and how other jurisdictions handle the various options) be referred back to staff and to the Board of Elections. It was understood that Council agreed to pursue the matter further but that no decision was being made about whether to implement a change. Staff was also directed to look into the question of petitions and bring that matter back to Council. The motion carried 5-0.

**MEETINGS:** Council reviewed the meeting schedule. It was agreed to start the Public Works Budget Work Session at 7:30 p.m. rather than 8:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 19. Mayor Davis suggested scheduling executive sessions on April 26 and May 31.

**ADJOURNMENT:** A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. Mach and seconded by Mr. Putens. The motion carried 5-0. The Mayor adjourned the regular meeting of April 10, 2006, at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Gallagher
City Clerk

"I hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and correct report of the regular meeting of the City Council of Greenbelt, Maryland, held April 10, 2006. "

Judith F. Davis
Mayor