*City of Greenbelt, Maryland*

***GREENBELT CITYLINK***

 **REGULAR MEETING OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held March 27, 2006.**

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 8:04 p.m.

ROLL CALL was answered by Councilmembers Konrad E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Rodney M. Roberts, and Mayor Judith F. Davis. Councilmember Edward V. J. Putens was recovering from surgery.

ALSO PRESENT were Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; David E. Moran, Assistant City Manager; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk. City Solicitor Robert A. Manzi arrived later during the meeting.

Mayor Davis asked that everyone observe a moment of silence for whatever purpose anyone wished. She then led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

CONSENT AGENDA: Mayor Davis asked to remove the minutes of the regular meeting of March 13, 2006, from the consent agenda. It was moved by Ms. Mach and seconded by Mr. Herling that the consent agenda be approved as amended. The motion passed 4-0.

Council thereby took the following actions:

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS
- Work Session, March 6, 2006
- Legislative Dinner, March 8, 2006
- Work Session, March 15, 2006
- Work Session, March 22, 2006
Approved as presented.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Board of Elections, Report #06-1 (Council Referrals): The City Council received this report and agreed to discuss it on the agenda of one of the April meetings.

Board of Elections, Report #06-2 (Revisions to Election Code): The City Council received this report and agreed to consider it on the agenda of a future meeting.

Park & Recreation Advisory Board, Report #06-4 (Boating Regulations at Greenbelt Lake): Council accepted this report and referred it to staff for further review and preparation for Council action.

Park & Recreation Advisory Board, Report #06-5 (Recognition Group Application for Greenbelt Community Fund): Council accepted this report and agreed to consider it on the agenda of the next meeting.

ADOPTION OF BOARD OF APPEALS RESOLUTION FOR VARIANCE #06-001-V: Council adopted Board of Appeals Resolution for Variance #06-001-V, thereby denying the appeal.

REAPPOINTMENT TO ADVISORY GROUP: The City Council appointed Alla Lake to a new three-year term on the Advisory Committee on Education.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Mr. Herling asked to add “Appointments to Advisory Groups” to the agenda as item #16. It was moved by Ms. Mach and seconded by Mr. Roberts that the agenda be approved as amended. The motion passed 4-0.

PRESENTATIONS

Week of the Young Child – Proclamation: Mayor Davis read a proclamation declaring April 2-8 to be the Week of the Young Child in Greenbelt. Nursery School Director Lisa Meyer, Board President Sieglinde Peterson, and other parents and children received the proclamation and thanked Council on behalf of the Nursery School and the other pre-schools in the City. The Mayor said she would be delivering copies of the proclamation to the Greenbelt Children’s Center and the Springhill Lake Head Start Program.

ORDER OF BUSINESS: Mayor Davis asked to reorder the agenda to take Petitions and Requests at this time.

PETITIONS AND REQUESTS: Resident David Lange spoke on behalf of a request that had been presented from the Greenbelt Elementary School Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) asking to be included as a stakeholder in future discussions regarding planning for a middle school. He referenced a letter dated March 14 that also included a listing of the PTA’s concerns. Mayor Davis said the City would forward it to the School Board with a cover letter. She also noted that the elementary schools that serve as feeders for the middle school have a vested interest in the matter and should be included. Mr. Lange asked if it was not possible to establish a process and priorities for addressing the schools issue and whether an official City position could be developed. Mayor Davis said the issue had just reached the point of consideration by the full School Board and that the more the stakeholders could join together, the better it would be for the purpose of impressing the School Board with the urgency of addressing the problem. Ms. Mach commented that Greenbelt Middle School had been on everyone’s agenda for many years but that the School Board until now had not given it the highest priority. She said County Councilmember Peters is giving it high priority and that pursuit through that route may be the way to get action. Mr. Herling said there was possibly greater agreement on this subject than any other that had been before the City Council and that Council had expressed its point of view. He added that perhaps a different format and vision were needed to express it even more strongly. Mayor Davis asked Mr. McLaughlin to send the PTA letter with a cover letter and to refer Mr. Lange’s concerns to the Advisory Committee on Education.

Proposed FY 2007 City Budget: City Manager Michael McLaughlin presented his proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2007. Overall, he said that while the structural problems that have been discussed over the last several budget cycles continue, the proposed budget covers existing services without a tax increase but with no new programs. He said the question of whether to continue to support all existing services is one that must continue to be asked. He said the proposed budget will be posted on the City’s Web site later this week, and copies of the budget will be available for the public with the beginning of budget work sessions next week. The Mayor thanked the City Manager and staff for their work, and Councilmembers encouraged the public to attend the budget work sessions and participate in the process.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS: The Mayor made two corrections to the draft minutes of the regular meeting of March 13, 2006. It was moved by Mr. Roberts and seconded by Mr. Herling that the minutes be accepted as revised. The motion passed 4-0.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

The following items and events were mentioned:

Mr. McLaughlin: Mr. Manzi would be arriving later, following the swearing-in of the new Laurel City Council; the upcoming Potomac Watershed Cleanup and City Earth Day activities, on April 8 and April 22 respectively, could be used for community service hours for students.

Mayor Davis: plans for the pawnshop proposed for Greenbelt Road near the Washington Post, which the homeowners’ association representing North College Park voted not to oppose and which should be received by Greenbelt soon; the tearing up of roads in Lakeside, which Mr. McLaughlin said was the result of the homeowners’ association requesting Washington Gas to evaluate natural gas smells in the neighborhood; the National League of Cities Congressional City Conference; referral of the identification of a “trash hot spot” to the Recycling & Environment Advisory Committee, in accord with the plans of the Potomac Watershed Trash Summit; international visitors from Japan and Estonia; and the deadlines for the “If I Were Mayor” contest and for PGCMA scholarship applications.

Ms. Mach: a suggestion from a citizen that closings at the Aquatic & Fitness Center, including lane closings at the pool, be posted on the City Web site.

Mr. Herling: meetings of the Utopia Film Fest Committee and the Prince George’s County Arts Council.

LEGISLATION

A Resolution to Negotiate the Purchase of Landscape and Mowing Services from TruGreen LandCare of Ashton, Maryland

Mayor Davis read the agenda comments. Mr. Roberts introduced the resolution for second reading and moved its adoption. Ms. Mach seconded the motion.

In response to a question from Ms. Mach, Mr. McLaughlin said that while adding Mandan Terrace to the list of what is included in the contract would increase the cost, the impact would be small, and the amount in the resolution is only an estimate. The actual cost will depend on the number of mowings. Sheldon Goldberg, 7848 Jacobs Drive, asked if this contract would replace the individual contracts with homeowners’ associations in Greenbelt East. Mr. McLaughlin said there was no overlap and that it benefited residents to have the associations arrange for both their own mowing and adjacent City property, since that way it is done at the same time and looks better.

ROLL CALL:
Mr. Herling - yes
Ms. Mach - yes
Mr. Roberts - yes
Mayor Davis - yes

The resolution was declared adopted (Resolution No. 1000, Book 8).

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) WITH ACADEMY THEATERS LLC REGARDING BELTWAY PLAZA THEATERS: Mayor Davis read the agenda comments and asked about the Greenbelt News Review editorial saying this tax rate change should be done by resolution. Mr. McLaughlin said the MOU would not change the tax rate. He said an ordinance would be introduced to make the change in time to notify the state by the required minimum of 60 days prior to the beginning of the budget year.

Marc (“Kap”) Kapastin, General Counsel representing Quantum Companies and Beltway Plaza, spoke to say that if the movie theaters closed, there would be a big detrimental effect on the other tenants at the mall, particularly Jeepers, which had already been affected by the closing of the first six theaters. In response to a question from Mr. Herling, he described other upgrades they were making right away and said the new operator, Paul Sánchez, was advertising in new publications and planning special matinees (e.g., for seniors and for children) they had never been able to persuade the former owner, AMC, to do. Mayor Davis suggested that they take a hard look at the outside of the mall at the theater entryways to do everything possible to make people feel secure coming and going. She suggested making security visible and increasing lighting at those parts of the parking lot.

It was moved by Mr. Herling and seconded by Mr. Roberts that the City Council approve the MOU and authorize the City Manager to sign it. The motion passed 4-0.

STATE LEGISLATION: In lieu of reading the agenda comments, the Mayor asked Mr. Moran to explain the bills.

Senate Bill 854 and House Bill 1260 – Building Excise Tax: Mr. Moran said the City of Rockville is strongly advocating for this enabling legislation and requested the City’s support. He said the MML Legislative Committee voted to support it. The bill would allow municipalities to impose a building excise tax on any building construction, the revenues from which would have to be used for capital and operating costs related to growth. He said HB 1260 had already passed in the House. Mayor Davis asked if this was an authority the City might actually use. Mr. Moran said possibly in Greenbelt West. Mr. Herling asked several questions to clarify the process. It was then moved by Mr. Roberts and seconded by Ms. Mach that Council support SB 854 and HB 1260. The motion carried 4-0.

Senate Bill 1092 and House Bill 1731 – Electric Aggregation: Mr. Moran said these bills contain everything the City had been seeking and would allow counties and municipalities to act as aggregators on an opt-out basis. He said that although similar bills have failed to pass the full General Assembly in the past, it is thought that recent announcements about drastic increases by BG&E and PEPCO may give these bills new life. It was moved by Ms. Mach and seconded by Mr. Roberts that Council support SB 1092 and HB 1731. The motion carried 4-0.

APPOINTMENTS TO ADVISORY GROUPS: Mr. Herling moved that Richard D. Ransom be appointed to the Community Relations Advisory Board and that Virginia Jones be appointed to the Senior Citizens Advisory Committee. Ms. Mach seconded the motion, which carried 4-0.

MEETINGS: Council reviewed the meeting schedule. Mayor Davis said she would like to have evaluation sheets back from Council by April 21.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. Mach and seconded by Mr. Herling. The motion carried 4-0. The Mayor adjourned the regular meeting of March 27, 2006, at 10:00 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 March 27, 2006."

Judith F. Davis
Mayor