

*WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Monday, July 25,2011, for the purpose of discussing the Greenbelt Middle School Task Force Report.*

*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: Council members Konrad E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Silke I. Pope, Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Judith F. Davis. Emmett Jordan arrived at 8:10 pm.*

*STAFF PRESENT WERE: Joe McNeal, Assistant Director of Recreation and Michael McLaughlin, City Manager.*

*ALSO PRESENT WERE: Dave Whaples and Barbara Simon of the Greenbelt Middle School Task Force, Tom White of the Greenbelt News Review, Bill Orleans, Chris Shuman, Don Comis of Greenbelt Patch, Drew Rosman of Prince George's Sentinel, and Molly Lester.*

*The purpose of the meeting was to review the report of the Greenbelt Middle School Task Force (GMSTF). Mayor Davis offered that in her view there are 7 options for the building, including the two options identified by the Task Force, not pursuing obtaining the building, pursue obtaining the entirety of the building, and 3 modifications on the Task Force's recommendation. Mayor Davis began a process to see which options were acceptable to Council members. In these discussions, Council members expressed concern about the city's ability to afford the renovation and future operation of the building, while also noting the potential and opportunity which the building presented in terms of providing programs and services, and preserving a part of Greenbelt's history. There was a desire to keep options open at this time, including the possibility of using it for office or residential space which would generate revenue.*

*Mr. Chris Shuman and Ms. Molly Lester raised their concern about the financial burden the building would likely create and noted the current difficult economic realities facing the city and nation. Mr. Shuman added that he believed the city has some maintenance issues that were already not being addressed, noting that the city should not take on more until it was able to address these issues.*

*Mr. Whaples noted that as an architect he sees value in retaining a useable building, but added that his neighbors don't think city should take on this financial burden. Ms. Simon mentioned that people have told her the city has not figured out how to finance theater project, so it should not take on more. However, the building has good useable space and it would be horrible to lose what is a historic wonderful space.*

*Council reviewed a memo from the City Manager related to the Middle School. The memo noted the city could use its Program Open Space (POS) funds for capital costs, though Mr. Roberts felt the city should use POS only for the acquisition of green space. Other council members were not willing to rule it out. There was also some willingness to explore shifting the staffing/programming from the Springhill Lake Recreation Center to the Middle School.*

*After additional discussion, there was agreement there was a need for more information and to consider the situation, including gathering input from the Greenbelt citizenry. It was agreed to send a letter to the School system restating the city's interest in the future of the Middle School building, requesting additional time, and raising a number of questions. The questions would include what will happen if the city does not take the building, can the School system's design/planning process proceed without a specific city plan, and whether the bus lot can be moved. Council also asked that School system representatives be invited to a work session.*

*The meeting ended at 10:30 pm.*

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Michael McLaughlin,  
City Manager*