

REGULAR MEETING OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Monday, October 24, 2011.

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

ROLL CALL was answered by Councilmembers Konrad E. Herling, Emmett V. Jordan, Leta M. Mach, Silke I. Pope, Edward V.J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Judith F. Davis.

ALSO PRESENT were Michael McLaughlin, City Manager; David E. Moran, Assistant City Manager; Robert Manzi, City Solicitor; and Cindy Murray, City Clerk.

Mayor Davis asked for a moment of silence in memory of Greenbelt residents Dorothy Figlia and Dorothy Lauber, who was a former City Clerk and member of the Board of Elections, and former resident Dovie Jane Hollander Plaster. She then led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA: It was moved by Mr. Putens and seconded by Mr. Jordan that the consent agenda be approved. The motion passed 7-0.

Council thereby took the following actions:

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

- Work Session, January 12, 2011
- Work Session, February 9, 2011
- Interview, October 10, 2011
- Regular Meeting, October 10, 2011
Approved as presented.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Advisory Committee on Trees, Report #2011-2 (Bradford Pear Trees at Buddy Attick Park and on Crescent Road across from the Roosevelt Center): Council accepted the report and will consider it on the agenda of a future meeting.

REAPPOINTMENTS TO ADVISORY GROUPS: Council reappointed the following individuals to new terms on their current advisory group:

Keith Chernikoff – Advisory Planning Board
Herbert Wyche – Public Safety Advisory Committee

RESIGNATION FROM ADVISORY GROUP: Council accepted the resignation of John Winfrey from the Park and Recreation Advisory Board.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Mayor Davis said it was traditional at the last regular meeting of an outgoing City Council to provide time for any farewells or comments anyone wished to make on the prior term. She advised including that as part of agenda item #13, Other Reports. It was then moved by Mr. Putens and seconded by Mr. Jordan that the agenda be approved as presented. The motion passed 7-0.

PRESENTATIONS

American Legion Post #136 – Veterans Day Program: Mayor Davis introduced José Morales, Commander of Greenbelt American Legion Post #136, who said this was the first time since 1976 that he would have to give his address as College Park rather than Greenbelt. He invited Council and the community to attend the Veterans Day Program at Roosevelt Center at 10 a.m. on Friday, November 11. Mayor Davis thanked him and said that most of Council would be out of town at the National League of Cities meeting on that day, but there would be Council representation at the ceremony.

Prince George’s County Beautification Awards: At the County Beautification Awards Ceremony on September 28, a number of awards were made for Greenbelt sites. Mayor Davis and Council presented the awards received by the City for landscaping at the Greenbelt Aquatic and Fitness Center and Roosevelt Center to Brian Townsend and Michael Jawer, respectively, of the Public Works Department. Awards for residential sites were made to Sally Davies, 157 Research Road, Joyce Gladstone, 7623 Greenbrook Drive, and Pravina Matoo, 7101 Lake Drive.

America Recycles Month - Proclamation: Mayor Davis read a proclamation declaring that America Recycles Day will be celebrated on Tuesday, November 15 in Greenbelt. John Lippert, chair of the Greenbelt Advisory Committee on Environmental Sustainability, accepted the proclamation. At the mayor’s request, he also provided an update on the committee’s activities, describing in particular the successful effort to improve recycling behaviors at this year’s Labor Day Festival.

Economic Development Week - Proclamation: Mayor Davis read a proclamation declaring that the State of Maryland’s first-ever Economic Development Week will be celebrated October 24-28 in Greenbelt to highlight the importance of economic development in retaining and attracting jobs and to encourage investment in the City and throughout the State. She presented it to Marc (“Kap”) Kapastin, General Counsel for Quantum and Beltway Plaza, and Ken Smondrowski, Director of Leasing for Mack-Cali.

Local Government Insurance Trust: Mayor Davis announced that the city was the recipient of a plaque from the Local Government Insurance Trust in recognition of its 20 years of membership in LGIT. Mr. McLaughlin accepted the plaque on behalf of the City.

PETITIONS AND REQUESTS: John Drago, 46 Crescent Road, made a complaint to the Council regarding his treatment by three staff members of the City’s Department of Planning and Community Development in a matter involving a ticket he received about a year-and-a-half ago and has been attempting to resolve since. He determined that he had received the ticket because the State had suspended his vehicle registration due to the expiration of his vehicle emissions certification. He said because he had not been notified, the state pulled his ticket once the vehicle was in compliance. His complaint to the City Council involves what he represents as inappropriate treatment by staff and the failure of the code enforcement office to follow through in court. Mayor Davis told him that his request would be reviewed but that matters involving personnel would typically not be discussed in public meetings.

Bill Orleans asked that there be a sign posted at the Youth Center directing the public to the new meeting location at the Community Center for the quarterly transit work session at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 27. Mayor Davis thanked him for pointing out this change and asked staff to post such a sign.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mr. McLaughlin announced that the City's annual health fair would be held on Thursday, October 27, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. He said a variety of services, including flu and pneumonia shots, would be available. Mayor Davis added that from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, October 29, a Medication Take-Back Event would be held at the University of Maryland Police Headquarters Building at the intersection of Baltimore Avenue and Rossborough Lane in College Park. She said on Monday, October 31, from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., free flu shots would be given at the Community Center.

Regarding a report that the lights were being left on at Braden Field over the weekends before Halloween, Mr. Roberts asked Mr. McLaughlin if there has been vandalism in that area that justified the cost of using the lights. Mr. McLaughlin said there had been no problems in recent years but that the lights have been on. He said he would get an estimate on the cost of running the lights.

Ms. Mach said residents have been asking her about the leaf pick-up schedule, since leaves are already being raked to the curb. Mr. McLaughlin said he would talk with Public Works and let Council know. He said it is usually around November 1 but the leaves seem to be falling early this year.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Ms. Mach attended the Greenbelt Sector Plan meeting, together with Mayor Davis and Councilmembers Jordan, Putens, and Herling. She also attended Fall Fest and a meeting of Prince George's Elected Municipal Women. She noted that the Empty Bowls event, which was sold out, was hosted by the Community Church and raised more than \$4,000 for the alleviation of hunger. Mayor Davis and Councilmembers Roberts and Jordan also attended.

Mr. Herling attended a meeting of Envision Prince George's Executive Coordinating Committee and that Crystal Prater, public affairs specialist for M-NCPPC, who has done such good work with the group, has been reassigned to other projects. He said Kwasi Holman had volunteered to help until someone else was found. He also announced that the Utopia Film Festival would be held during the upcoming weekend at a variety of venues. He said there were still difficulties in attempting to schedule use of the Greenbelt Theater.

Mr. Putens attended the Forest Preserve sign dedication, as well as the recent meeting of the Prince George's Municipal Association (PGCMA) held in Greenbelt. Mr. Jordan, Mr. Herling and Mayor Davis also attended the PGCMA meeting. Mayor Davis added that all members of Council had attended the sign dedication, and she thanked the Forest Preserve Advisory Committee and Public Works staff.

Mr. Jordan said he wanted to draw everyone's attention to the opening of early voting last weekend and absentee voting the prior week. Brief instructions for how to participate were given.

Mayor Davis expressed thanks to: Mr. Jordan for attending the COG Board of Directors meeting for

her on brief notice; all those who contributed to Fall Fest; the staff of the City Manager's office for assistance with the PGCMA meeting held in Greenbelt; and Green Ridge House for hosting a candidate forum. She attended several Maryland Municipal League committee meetings, She and Mr. Jordan attended a Greenbelt Elementary School fundraising event. She noted the Fall Harvest celebration held in Roosevelt Center sponsored by the Chesapeake Education, Arts, and Research Society.

LEGISLATION: None

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT APPLICATION – PROGRAM YEAR 38 (FY 2013): Mayor Davis read the agenda comments. Two projects were proposed by staff. “Springhill Lake Recreation Center Renovation-Phase II” would be the City’s top priority and would permit continuation of the renovations at the facility, including roof and window replacement. Staff suggested seeking \$100,000 or more for this project. The other project, “Accessible Greenbelt Program,” would provide a one-time grant for home modifications to low-income seniors and disabled adults for such items as portable ramps, chair lifts, adaptable equipment, minor bathroom modifications, and widening of doorways. Staff proposed a \$40,000-\$50,000 application for that component.

Mr. Jordan asked Mr. Moran, who had attended the County’s workshop for the this year’s program, if funding for this program was at risk. Mr. Moran replied that the program had been cut 16% last year and that, a minimum, there was little hope of getting that back. He said CDBG is one of the programs that is always on the block.

Ms. Mach moved Council approval of the submission of the PY 38 application as outlined in the staff recommendation. Mr. Herling seconded. Ms. Mach then asked about the “partnership” language in the guidelines and asked if this proposal was sufficiently in that vein. Mr. Moran said he thought that language was primarily aimed at nonprofits rather than municipalities but also enumerated a number of partnership aspects of the proposal.

Mayor Davis asked if the upgrading of Franklin Park and tighter financial terms for renters could potentially result in the City’s losing eligibility even in Greenbelt West for income-based CDBG funding. Mr. Moran said that even if there were to be a significant increase in income levels in Greenbelt West, it would be quite a while before that became a factor since he believes the County still uses the decennial census figures for determining income eligibility. He added that even in the unlikely event that the City would have no neighborhoods left where income is low enough to make the whole census tract eligible, programs like “Accessible Greenbelt” could still be proposed that would allow for individual household eligibility across the City based on income.

When Mayor Davis called for the vote, the motion to submit the PY 38 application as proposed in the staff recommendation passed 7-0.

OTHER COUNCIL REPORTS:

Mayor Davis reported on a September 28 meeting of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government’s (COG) Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee. She also said COG is forming a tree canopy work group and suggested Lesley Riddle as a possibility to represent the City.

Mayor Davis then asked that any Councilmembers who wished to speak on the occasion of the ending of the last regular meeting of the 38th City Council do so.

Ms. Pope said her first two years on Council had gone very quickly. She commented on what a challenge and learning experience her first term on Council had proved to be, and she thanked the residents for the opportunity and trust they had given her.

Ms. Mach thanked the City Manager, the staff, and her colleagues on Council. She said she thought the expansion to seven members with this Council had also expanded its perspective. Looking back over the last two years, she cited the groundbreaking for the new middle school, the initiation of the Greenhill-Hillside stream restoration project, and the improvements at Franklin Park under new ownership as some of the significant occurrences of the term. As to the economy, she said she was glad they had managed with no staff layoffs and asked everyone to keep in mind that Greenbelt itself was born of the Great Depression but turned into a great opportunity.

Mr. Herling cited transportation as a big challenge of the term and said that Council and the community had worked together in dealing with changes to The Bus and Metrobus routes and schedules. He said he was gratified that some steps were being taken in the direction of planning economic development. He said the potential widening of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway would be an ongoing challenge and that the City needed to continue to work on public safety. He thanked the residents and his colleagues and said it was an honor to serve.

Mr. Putens said he thought the economy was the dominant factor of the last two years and that he thought Greenbelt was managing well so far. He recognized staff as having accomplished a great deal by working to keep costs down. He said he did not want to sacrifice any of the City's programs and services but was aware that staff was having to work hard to maintain that. He said there might be times when response times would be slow but he would prefer that to having to drop programs or reduce quality. He encouraged everyone to vote.

Mr. Roberts said that over his 20 years on the Council he has had the opportunity to work with many different people, groups, and colleagues. He said he cherishes the opportunity he has had to affect what happens to his City. He thanked the citizens who have supported him and his goals.

Mr. Jordan commented on what a privilege it is to serve on the City Council and how seriously he takes the responsibility. He said it was a big decision for the prior Council to expand the number of Council seats to seven, but he believes the larger Council has worked well together.

Noting that some Councilmembers have been accused of being "professional politicians," Mayor Davis said she is not sure where that came from, since it cannot be based on longevity or salary level. She said she believes everyone serving on Council is doing so out of a love for the City. She thanked her colleagues for their support in what have been a stressful two years for her. She said this Council has struck her as being greater than just the sum of its parts. She thanked the City employees for keeping the City going and said she wished the budget would allow for more tangible thanks. She thanked the City's many volunteers, especially its advisory boards and committees. Lastly, she thanked the residents for having elected her as mayor.

MEETINGS: Council reviewed the upcoming meeting schedule.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn the last regular meeting of the 38th Greenbelt City Council was made by Ms. Mach and seconded by Mr. Putens. The motion passed 7-0.

Mayor Davis adjourned the regular meeting of Monday, October 24, 2011, at 10:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Murray
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 October 24, 2011."

Judith F. Davis
Mayor