

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, September 21, 2011, for the purpose of meeting with Greenbelt Farmers Market.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 8:02 p.m. It was held in the MultiPurpose Room of the Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: 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.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael McLaughlin, City Manager; Terri Hruby, Assistant Director of Planning; and Cindy Murray, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Jennifer Errick, Jonathan Gordy and Joseph Gareri, Greenbelt Farmers Market; and Bob Cecil, Elk Run Vineyards.

Jonathan Gordy and Joseph Gareri thanked Council and residents for their support of the Greenbelt Farmers Market (GFM). Mr. Gareri reported the original goals of the GFM when it began four years ago were to support small scale family farms in Maryland, provide quality shopping for Greenbelt residents and bring more traffic into Roosevelt Center. He said they were pleased to report all these goals have been met.

Mr. Gareri said the State has made a big push in recent years to support the State wine industry. He said GFM hopes to expand and include Maryland vineyards as vendors. Mr. Gareri said a poll taken on a recent market day indicated 83 of 85 respondents supported both wine sampling and sales. He explained the GFM is looking for City support to allow wine sales and perhaps at a later time, explore the possibility of allowing wine sampling at the market.

Bob Cecil, Elk Run Vineyards, reported that Maryland now has 50 wineries throughout the state but most of the wineries are not large enough to obtain shelf space in stores. He said that he and other winery owners have been offering their wines for sale and offering samplings at farmers markets in Cheverly, Riverdale Park, Rockville, Gaithersburg and Takoma Park. Mr. Cecil said they had not experienced any problems, such as customers becoming intoxicated, at any of these markets.

Council questioned the specifics of the City Code regarding alcohol sales or tastings at the GFM. Terri Hruby, Assistant Director of Planning, referred to Section 12-48 of the Code which states:

The use of any alcoholic beverage in the parks, playgrounds or public parking areas shall be prohibited. The possession of any opened or partially consumed container of any alcoholic beverage, either on the person or in a parked vehicle, shall be considered as a violation.

After discussion, Ms. Hruby noted it appears the sale of wine would not be a violation of the City Code, but allowing wine tastings would be a violation of the Code as currently written.

Mr. Roberts said he supports Maryland agriculture but does not support wine sales or tastings at the GFM.

Ms. Mach, Mr. Putens and Ms. Pope said they were not opposed to the sale of wine. Ms. Mach questioned the value of allowing wine sales that purchasers could not sample first and suggested wine tastings of the products be offered at the Greenbelt Consumers Cooperative. Mr. Cecil reported they will only allow tastings of wines provided by their distributors.

Mr. Cecil explained the application process for obtaining a permit for wine sales from the County. Mr. Gareri said only one wine vendor at a time would be allowed to come to the market each week.

Mayor Davis asked about the GFM's rules regarding which wine vendors would be allowed to participate. Mr. Gareri said they would have to comply with the same requirements as other vendors, such as producing grapes themselves.

Mayor Davis said that if Council approved wine sales, the GFM should require a photo identification from all individuals purchasing wine. Mr. Gareri said the GFM would strictly comply with the law regarding alcohol sales. He added that State law also requires a number of GFM members obtain alcohol awareness training certification.

After further discussion, Council requested staff determine the policies in place in Cheverly, Rockville, College Park and Riverdale Park, and requested the GFM request for wine sales be included on the agenda for the October 10th meeting.

Council thanked the representatives for attending and said they were very pleased with the success of the GFM.

Informational Items

Several items of information were discussed.

The meeting ended at 9:22 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

*Cindy Murray
City Clerk*