



BUDGET WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Thursday, April 8, 2004, for the purpose of reviewing the Planning and Community Development and Capital Projects sections of the FY 2005 budget.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m. It was held in the Senior Classroom of the Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Konrad E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Rodney M. Roberts, and Mayor Judith F. Davis.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: David E. Moran, Assistant to the City Manager; Celia W. Craze, Director, Planning and Community Development; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Commander James L. Miles, Jr., Disabled American Veterans; Sheldon Goldberg, Greenbelt East Advisory Committee; and Thomas X. White, Greenbelt News Review.

Seed Money for Jaycees' Clubhouse – Capital Projects

Commander Miles first addressed Council to request that the \$10,000 in seed money for renovating the building known as the Jaycees' Club House be put back into the Capital Projects budget. Ms. Craze explained that staff had been working with Cmdr. Miles for several months on entering a partnership to enable the Greenbelt chapter of the Disabled American Veterans to use the building as a meeting place. She said she was also requesting authorization for staff to work with the DAV to pursue a full evaluation of the structure.

Cmdr. Miles described the chapter as very active, currently meeting at the Legion but in need of its own space. Mr. Roberts sought assurance that the chapter was aware that alcohol was not permitted on City property. Cmdr. Miles said although it was not their intention to seek a liquor license or to serve liquor, at this point he could not say categorically that no one would attempt to bring their own beverages to picnics or other events. He said he could not promise to "baby-sit" that situation. He added that at this time, they were merely seeking to determine the structural possibilities of the building. It was also noted that the property is adjacent to a school.

In response to a query from Mr. Herling, Ms. Craze said she thought that given the building had continued to decline, she suspected the renovation costs would be on the order of \$50,000. At this point, she said, they wanted to evaluate whether this was doable at all and determine the allocation of costs; negotiating terms of usage would follow.

In response to a question from Mayor Davis, Cmdr. Miles said the funding would primarily be raised by the Greenbelt chapter—from their own funds and special fund-raising.

Council thanked him for his presentation, and Mayor Davis said the City would be in touch with him in late May or early June.

Planning and Community Development

Ms. Craze gave a slide presentation on the department's accomplishments and plans. In response to questions, she said a report was forthcoming to Council on the crosswalk study and that she believed stakes were being used to demarcate the City property line around the Lake. The Mayor noted that, so far, more City incursions into private property had been found than vice-versa.

There was discussion of whether there had been a previous City Master Plan before. Mr. White commented that the first Advisory Planning Board had produced one in the late 1960s.

Regarding zoning enforcement, Ms. Craze said Council needed to authorize staff to pursue it but that she would like to discuss the ramifications, including staffing, with Council first. It was agreed that eventually a work session should be held. Ms. Craze said it would have to wait until after Terri Hruby had returned from maternity leave.

Regarding staffing needs in the department, Mayor Davis asked the costs of adding a full-time inspector, a half-time office assistant, and a half-time animal control officer. Ms. Craze said about \$40,000, \$15,000 and \$20,000 respectively. The Mayor asked about volunteers to help in animal control. Ms. Craze replied that the real problem was the need for 24/7 response to calls, not the types of tasks volunteers could undertake.

Ms. Mach noted that revenues in Community Development seemed to exceed costs. Ms. Craze said this did not reflect the cost of the work of the planning staff in Community Development areas; moreover, the revenues go into the General Fund not to the department.

There was discussion of the memorandum from the City Manager regarding increasing inspection fees. Mr. Moran clarified that no increase was assumed in the proposed budget. Ms. Craze said she would prefer to make any increase all at once, rather than phasing it in over three to six years as suggested in the memo, since that provokes agony every year instead of once. Mr. Roberts expressed some concern with increasing the fees while reducing the number of inspections. Ms. Craze said the point was to cover costs and that the fees had not been increased since 1999. She said the program should be self-supporting, but that revenue held at \$463,000 in 1999 and 2005, while costs were approximately \$289,000 and \$523,000 respectively. She said these were the longest-standing fees, with others having been increased over the years.

In concluding, Ms. Craze mentioned her concern with the proposal in the budget to cut the leave buy-back program in half. She said unlike other kinds of cuts, this one would target one class of employees.

Capital Projects

Mayor Davis said she liked to have the list of unfunded projects. Mr. Moran said it had been eliminated beginning in FY04, because there was not even enough funding to cover the list of prioritized projects, but that the list could be included again. The Mayor said there was no need to incorporate it into the budget book, but she would like to continue to receive it for reference.

Mr. Roberts said he wanted clarification on where City-owned roadway stopped near Ridge Road and Ivy Lane and whether the City could require needed improvements north of Ivy.

Council reviewed the list of projects. Mr. Roberts asked if the state funding for the Community Center window renovations was safe or needed to be drawn down soon. Mr. Moran said staff was sensitive to this issue and would pursue it.

Mayor Davis asked if there was funding in the budget for the urn wall that had been discussed for the cemetery. Mr. Moran said there was not, since the project had not reached the point of being specifically planned and priced. It was decided to add this item to the "unprogrammed" list on page CF-7.

Mr. Moran announced the City had received approval to reprogram this year's CDBG money for use on Cherrywood Lane.

Other Business

It was announced that the Public Safety Budget Work Session could not be rescheduled to Thursday, April 15, because several Councilmembers wished to attend the PGCMA meeting.

Mayor Davis distributed a letter dated September 26, 2003, from the Washington Area Housing Trust Fund requesting a donation. She said she would raise this topic later.

Mayor Davis reminded everyone to submit their MML Convention registrations by April 16 in order to get the early rate. She volunteered to be the flag-bearer for the Convention parade.

She announced that there would be an event to celebrate North Brentwood's 80th anniversary on June 11 and asked if anyone could attend.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Gallagher

City Clerk