



REGULAR MEETING OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Monday, May 10, 2004.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m.

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

ALSO PRESENT were Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; John. F. Shay, Jr., City Solicitor; David E. Moran, Assistant to the City Manager; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk.

Mayor Davis asked for a moment of silence in memory of resident Manuel Pereira. She then led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

CONSENT AGENDA: It was moved by Mr. Herling and seconded by Ms. Mach that the consent agenda be approved as presented. The motion carried 5-0.

Council thereby took the following actions:

MINUTES

- Work Session, April 21, 2004
- Regular Meeting, April 26, 2004
- Work Session, April 28, 2004
- Work Session, May 3, 2004

Approved as presented.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT INSURANCE TRUST (LGIT) BOARD OF TRUSTEES BALLOT: Council authorized the City Clerk to return the ballot on Council=s behalf with an Aagree@ vote for the recommended candidates.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: It was moved by Mr. Putens and seconded by Mr. Herling that the agenda be approved as presented. The motion carried 5-0.

PRESENTATIONS

ACE Student Awards: Mayor Davis introduced Eva Griffin, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Education (ACE), who provided introductory remarks to ACE=s 10th Annual Student Awards Program. State Senator Paul Pinsky, Delegates Anne Healey,

Tawanna Gaines, and Justin Ross, and County Councilmember Douglas Peters joined the City Council in greeting the award recipients. Each student received certificates from ACE, the City Council, the County Council, and the State Senate and House, as well as a small gift. Scholarships were announced for the high school students. The award winners were all present to receive their awards:

Timothy Mullaney and Fatou Mambouray Greenbelt Elementary School

Corey Richmond and Christie Ben-Carew Springhill Lake Elementary School

Jonathan Sandoval and Katherine Keyes-Ruiz Magnolia Elementary School

Nicholas Viktor and Kirsten Green St. Hugh=s School

Luis Cruz and Ellise Saunders Greenbelt Middle School

Omar Jackson and Jessica Mealey Eleanor Roosevelt High School

Delegate Healey also presented a Maryland State Delegate Award, a \$500 scholarship, to Eleanor Roosevelt High School student Joshua Attick.

Legislative Wrap-Up – 22nd District Delegation: Senator Pinsky and Delegates Healey, Gaines, and Ross provided a summary of the 2004 General Assembly Session. Senator Pinsky distributed a list of accomplishments of the session and funding directed to Prince George’s County. He said the slot machine proposition dominated the session, together with the structural budget problem, which, he said, would not have been solved by slot machines even if they had moved forward. He said although the budget had been balanced for FY 2005, next year’s prospects look “daunting.” He listed funding for higher education as another big issue, saying legislation had passed the Assembly to require the Governor to fund the public colleges at a level that would allow restricting tuition increases to 5%. He said the Thornton schools funding is now on the books in language that mandates it. He also commented on legislation affecting Chesapeake Bay restoration, transportation, and assault weapons. Last, he commented on the bills introduced to provide a voter-verified paper trail for the state’s Diebold voting machines. He observed that in solving one problem subsequent to the problems in Florida in 2000, other problems had been created, but that there was not agreement on how to resolve them.

Mayor Davis commented that although Program Open Space was cut, it was not eliminated, and that since that was one of the City’s priority areas, she wanted to thank the delegation. Senator Pinsky added that he was glad the City’s request for funding for the Sunrise property had been approved by the Board of Public Works.

Mr. Roberts thanked Senator Pinsky and asked him to hold his ground on gambling for next year.

Delegate Healey said the budget had largely dominated the session for the last two years. She said while it is important that funding for Thornton was mandated, the down side is that the revenues have not been identified. If there must be cuts in other

necessary programs to fund Thornton, it will not be the boon Thornton was intended to be. Mayor Davis thanked Delegate Healey for the scholarship for Joshua Attick.

Delegate Gaines said she had spent a great deal of time this session working on health care issues. She commented that with all the focus on the problems at Prince George's Hospital Center, little public attention had been paid to the closing of Crownsville, which will also affect residents in this county. She commented on her disappointment with the legislation for Planning and Zoning authority, which she said she had thought would at least get out of the delegation this year. She said she was upset with some of the tactics that had been used and that a great deal of work was still needed to educate the smaller municipalities about these issues. The Mayor thanked Delegate Gaines for all her efforts on this issue.

Delegate Ross added that he had worked with Senator Pinsky to try to close some of the tax loopholes the administration wants to retain. He discussed his bill on alternative school construction to allow private-public partnerships in appropriate situations. Mayor Davis thanked Delegate Ross for his work in attempting to institute fees that would provide additional revenues to municipalities to compensate for some of the reduced funding, even though these efforts ultimately were not successful.

Councilmembers Roberts, Mach, Herling, and Putens joined the Mayor in thanking the delegation.

National Police Week and Police Memorial Day - Proclamation: May 15 is Police Memorial Day, and May 9-15 is National Police Week. Mayor Davis read a proclamation in honor of these occasions, which was accepted by Lt. Thomas Kemp on behalf of the Police Department. Lt. Kemp said members of the Greenbelt police will be participating in the ceremonies in Washington, D.C., and he also talked about the vehicular death by a drunk driver over the weekend of State Trooper Anthony Jones, who will added to the rolls next year.

Public Works Week - Proclamation: May 18-24 is Public Works Week. Mayor Davis read a proclamation to mark the occasion, and Bill Phelan, Assistant Director, Public Works, received the proclamation on behalf of the department.

PETITIONS AND REQUESTS: There were none.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mr. McLaughlin reported on the "It's Municipal Government" competition of April 30, which Magnolia won again. He thanked Beverly Palau, Master of Ceremonies Joe McNeal, the Recreation Department, and David Moran for their work. He also commented on the successful Pet Expo of May 8, thanking the Public Works and the Planning and Community Development Departments and, most particularly, Animal Control Officer Suzie Hall. He also drew Council's attention to an e-mail from Recycling Coordinator Cindy Murray, reporting statistics on the City Clean-up activities of May 1. Mayor Davis also thanked staff for Pet Expo and added that the April 24 electronics recycling netted 7,000 pounds of equipment.

Ms. Mach announced that LaShelle Ferguson, a member of the Advisory Committee on Education, had received a Christa McAuliffe teaching award from the county.

Mr. Putens described the success of the Greenspring II annual yard sale and picnic.

Mr. Herling noted that a successful fundraising event had been held at Mishkan Torah in support of the roof-raising.

Mr. Putens also announced the upcoming Hubcaps at Blob Park fundraising event on Friday, May 14, for the Greenbelt Volunteer Fire Department's Engine 35 Restoration Project.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: There were none.

LEGISLATION

A Resolution to Repeal Resolution 960 and to Establish Admission Fees and Pass Rates for the Greenbelt Aquatic and Fitness Center, Effective May 29, 2004

Mayor Davis read the agenda comments. Mr. Putens introduced the resolution for first reading.

PLAN FOR GREENBELT POSTAL FACILITY: The Mayor read the agenda comments. Dorrie Bates, chair of the board of the Greenbelt Consumer Cooperative, Inc. (Coop), introduced the other board members in the audience (Joe Timer, Mimi Noorani, and Tom Moran), presented a letter and spoke briefly to say the board's position was that removing the retail post office at Roosevelt Center is an added threat to the health of the Center. She said they believe that it is consistent with the original planning and ethos of Greenbelt to maintain essential services at the center of the City. Mayor Davis asked if the board believed these services could be provided by a Contract Postal Unit (CPU), as described at the last meeting by Mr. Haney of the Postal Service. Ms. Bates said in their opinion Mr. Haney had not been very forthcoming about the terms of such a contract, which made it difficult to judge what the Postal Service would provide and how attractive the arrangement would be. Mr. Roberts said he had spoken with the proprietor of the Variety Store, who was possibly interested in the CPU. Ms. Bates said some people believe the City has a "social contract" to keep services in Roosevelt Center; she added that the loss of the availability of post office boxes would be important to some people.

Sheldon Goldberg, 7848 Jacobs Drive, said he wished to reiterate that Windsor Green and the other neighborhoods of Greenbelt East very much want a full-service post office at the Hanover and Ora Glen site. He said because the facility at Roosevelt Center is "overcrowded and inadequate," the Postal Service will inevitably leave that site eventually. He said having the CPU at the Center would provide a "win-win" situation. Later in the meeting, he pointed out that the departure of the distribution facility would benefit the Center by freeing up about 30 parking places.

Don Comis, 3G Laurel Hill Road, said it would be a "historical loss" if the Postal Service leaves the Center. He said while a CPU might provide the majority of services, it would

not have the permanence implied by an actual post office, since a merchant could go out of business or move away. He said the only way the situation could be described as "win-win" would be if there were a guaranty that the CPU would be present at the Center for at least as long as the postal service remains at the Greenbelt East facility.

Alan Huff, 133 Hedgewood Drive and proprietor of Greenbelt Video, said he had no doubt that if more information were available, many more merchants would express interest.

Ms. Noorani said she was speaking for herself, not the Coop board, but that when she moved to Greenbelt, the Center was "falling apart" and that she did not want to see a reversal of the progress that had since been made. She described the situation at the Center as still "fragile." She said the post office brings people into the Center who would not otherwise come there and that people who move to Center City often do so because they expect to be able to walk to basic services. In contrast, she pointed out that the post office site at Hanover and Ora Glen is not adjacent to other stores or destinations, which will encourage people to drive to it rather than walking or taking public transportation.

Mr. Putens said he thought it was important to remember that originally the Postal Service indicated that it intended to move out of Greenbelt and build in Glenn Dale; had this happened, there would be no post office in Greenbelt at all.

William Orleans, 2A Gardenway, said it was typical for cities to have a post office in what was considered their "downtown" area. He asked why the CPU could not be placed in Greenbelt East, which he remarked had been "woods" when he previously lived in Greenbelt years ago.

Gwen Vacarro, 8D Hillside and proprietor of the Pleasant Touch, said she uses the Roosevelt Center post office on an almost daily basis. She said she would prefer to retain the retail facility in the Center and move the other operations to Greenbelt East, but she thought the CPU could work as a less desirable option.

Mr. Herling said at first he had been concerned about the loss to the Center but that he realized that the Postal Service has to function as a business today. Regarding Mr. Comis's concern about the permanence of a CPU, he said he thought so many people would want to maintain it that the City would work to keep it. He said there would need to be an effective level of public transportation to make a facility in Greenbelt East accessible.

Mr. Roberts observed that another factor that held sway with him was that any number of undesirable uses for the Hanover and Ora Glen site had been proposed and that the postal facility would be a far superior use of the location. He said he thought there was potential for the CPU contract to reinvigorate a business in the Center while providing most of the former retail services to residents. He said he felt confident of being able to continue to walk to the Center to conduct postal business.

Ms. Mach said she was concerned that if the Greenbelt East facility were to be only a distribution center, without the retail function, it might slip into being a second-class,

warehouse type of facility. She said she agreed with Mr. Roberts that a CPU could provide a boost to whatever business took it on at the Center.

Mayor Davis said Council has gone on record many times in protection of the Center and its businesses and that the main issue was to keep a post office facility in the City.

Mr. Roberts made a motion that Council convey to the Postal Service its support for placing a full-service facility at Hanover Parkway and Ora Glen Drive, while strongly urging the Postal Service to find a Contract Postal Unit operator for Roosevelt Center. Mr. Putens seconded the motion and added that he wished to thank the City's federal elected representatives, who had assisted in getting funding for the post office to remain in Greenbelt. The motion passed 5-0.

PROPOSED COUNTY LEGISLATION ON WOODLAND CONSERVATION AND TREE PRESERVATION: Mayor Davis read the agenda comments. Ms. Mach noted there was a discrepancy between the draft bill and the staff comments on whether the threshold for prohibition of tree removal by individuals was a 1" or 2" diameter. It was moved by Mr. Putens that the City respond to Councilmember Peters conveying appreciation for the intent of the draft bill in placing restrictions on tree-clearing by individuals but saying further that the bill does not accomplish the City's goal of making developers more accountable for vigorously following the steps for woodland preservation that are outlined in the Policy Document before they are allowed to perform lesser methods of tree conservation. Mr. Roberts seconded the motion but added he did not think the bill would accomplish much in this form. The motion passed 5-0.

MML 2005 LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES - ACTION REQUEST: Mayor Davis read the agenda comments. Mr. Goldberg expressed support for the electricity aggregation initiative and commented that there were significant price increases coming from Pepco with no competition in sight. Mr. Putens moved that the City submit "Municipal Electricity Aggregation" and, if justified by further staff investigation, "Increases in Workers' Compensation Premiums" to MML as legislative initiatives. Mr. Herling seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.

MEETINGS: Council reviewed the list of meetings. It was moved by Mr. Putens and seconded by Ms. Mach that the July regular meeting be held on July 19 rather than July 12. The motion passed 5-0. Mr. Putens and Mayor Davis asked to add a work session with AIMCO to be scheduled as early in July as possible.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Mach and seconded by Mr. Putens. The motion carried 5-0. The Mayor adjourned the regular meeting of May 10, 2004, at 10:40 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 May 10, 2004.
Judith F. Davis
Mayor