



WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, July 16, 2003, for the purpose of meeting with the chairpersons of the City Council advisory boards and committees.

Mayor Davis started the meeting at 8:05 p.m. It was held in the Multipurpose Room of the Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Council members Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts, Thomas X. White, and Mayor Judith F. Davis. Councilmember Alan Turnbull arrived at 8:25 p.m.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager, and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Leta Mach, Advisory Committee on Education; Charles Jackman, Advisory Committee on Trees; Bill Wilkerson and Sheldon Goldberg, Advisory Planning Board; Mark Gitlis, Arts Advisory Board; Steven Skolnik, Board of Appeals; Judith Ott, Board of Elections; Joseph Griffith, Employee Relations Board (for Hugh Jascourt); Lola Skolnik, Park & Recreation Advisory Board; Edward Hickey, Public Safety Advisory Committee (for Silke Pope); and Jessica Mealey, Youth Advisory Committee. The Community Relations Advisory Board, the Recycling & Environment Advisory Committee, and the Senior Citizen Advisory Committee were not represented.

Following introductions, Mayor Davis first expressed Council's appreciation to the advisory groups for their work and for their advice to Council over the year. She said that in comparison with other cities, Greenbelt has "an amazing array of boards" that produce a great deal of work. She said Council not only makes referrals to the boards, but the boards initiate suggestions to Council. The boards also provide contacts and links to the community, both informally and also sometimes by holding public forums to hear citizen opinion (e.g., SCAC, YAC, AAB, and PSAC).

Update on Board and Committee Activities: The Mayor asked for any comment on activities or initiatives the chairs might want to share. BoE: Ms. Ott mentioned that the board was once again grappling with a decision on voting machines for the upcoming City election. PRAB: Ms. Skolnik said the board has begun to use subcommittees to look into questions in depth and bring information back to the full board. Another topic that has been discussed and may come forward to Council is consideration of structuring the City to have a Parks & Recreation Department instead of splitting the "park" function with Public Works. Later in the evening, Mr. Turnbull said another possibility was taking the "park" function from PRAB and combining it with the "land" aspects of REAC and ACT, leaving recreation and arts programming on the other side. Ms. Skolnik commented that the AAB had been formed at PRAB's suggestion, specifically because the board thought the City's arts programming demanded more focused expertise and interest. BoA: Mr. Skolnik said the board needs to meet only occasionally, since its scope is very narrowly defined. Mayor Davis noted that the City has been working

toward incremental planning and zoning authority and that if the next step, site plan review, is achieved, it could have serious impact on the agendas of the board. APB: Mr. Wilkerson said the board had not met much over the spring. He said he was talking with staff about increasing the frequency of meetings, looking more toward long-term issues. He asked the status of the City's vision statement . . . what its sense is of what it wants to look like in 20 years. The Mayor responded that perhaps it should be considered whether extending the community's role in the "visioning" process might be done under the aegis of the APB. Mr. Wilkerson said the board receives referrals from staff as well as from Council. He listed the historic district question, the Public Works facility, and the Greenbelt Lake study as current issues, as well as the ongoing planning for Greenbelt Station. ERB: Mr. Griffith noted that the work of the board was specifically defined and the board had no issues to bring forward to Council at this time; however, the board has been much busier than usual conducting a series of hearings on employee grievances from the compensation study. ACE: Ms. Mach described the tutor training program ACE initiated this past year, which is going very well. She said the committee is working jointly with the education committees of neighboring cities to hold a forum with the CEO of the public schools, Dr. André Hornsby, on August 13, and Greenbelt's ACE will give a presentation on the facilities needs at Greenbelt Middle School. ACT: Charles Jackman discussed the booklet the committee has put together on Greenbelt's champion trees and said they hope to conduct the previously postponed tree tour in conjunction with SchromFest in October. They are also looking at landscaping on Hanover Parkway, south of Greenbelt Road. They have also been asked by the City Manager to consider whether the City should develop policy on invasive species management; possibly they will do this in conjunction with REAC. The Mayor explained to the group that GHI is concerned that their work on land adjacent to City land will be for naught if the City does not implement a similar policy. Mr. Jackman responded that ACT has reservations about GHI's methods, since there is a fair probability that it is the invasives that will return most quickly, not the natives. YAC: Ms. Mealey said the committee would like to work on expanding and improving the Youth Forum, without taking away from existing activities like the food drive. Mr. Turnbull asked whether a different format should be considered for the forum, since getting the young people to talk seemed to be a bigger issue than getting them to show up. Ms. Mealey said they had instituted the box for written suggestions and questions in order to give people an alternative to taking the mic. Ms. Mach said she would suggest that ACE consult with YAC on the tutoring program. AAB: In response to a question from the Mayor, Mr. Gitlis said the dark room was not yet operative. He said the board would be holding a second public forum on the City's arts policy/mission statement as a follow-up to the first one. They have proposed changes to funding for arts contribution groups that the City will review. PSAC: Mr. Hickey said the committee was trying to take a more active role in being "advisory" and, to that end, had been holding a series of neighborhood forums to find out what residents identify as public safety concerns and needs. He said the major concerns seem to be traffic and pedestrian safety and noise issues. He said they expected to hear more concern about auto theft but had not.

Recruitment and Appointment Process: Mayor Davis said Council was pleased to be receiving more applications from Greenbelt East and would like to receive more from Springhill Lake. Mr. Putens also commented that very highly qualified people have been applying.

Roles of Council and Staff Liaisons: Mayor Davis stressed that the purpose of having a Council liaison was not that the Councilmember would necessarily attend meetings on a regular basis, since the advisory groups should have independent voices. Rather, a group's liaison would always be available if needed or as a contact to Council on issues.

Advisory Group Communications/Attendance: Mayor Davis said how valuable it was for Council to receive the minutes of meetings as a way of keeping informed. The staff liaison should send a copy to the City Clerk, who then distributes them to Council and the City Manager. The Mayor also stressed that if attendance of any group members was a problem, that information should also be relayed to Council or to the City Clerk, and Council would take it up.

Other Matters

Mayor Davis asked if there were other issues anyone wished to bring up. Ms. Mach said that ACE had recognized that continuing to offer the job fairs it had begun would necessitate getting help from another group. She had wondered if CRAB would consider it to be within their interest area. She also wanted to mention that the map posted at the wetlands educational facility at the Lake, which was prepared by the St. Hugh's students, is quite inaccurate in its location of cities.

Mr. Wilkerson introduced the topic of County Executive Johnson's interest in "Livable Communities." Mayor Davis said Mr. Johnson had publicly cited Greenbelt as an example of a livable community. Mr. White said the City Manager was soliciting suggestions for grant proposals under this rubric and encouraged any suggestions from the advisory groups. Mr. McLaughlin said he would see if there was literature he could send out to the advisory groups that would be useful.

Council encouraged cross-committee interests and activities and particularly suggested incorporating YAC where appropriate.

The meeting ended at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Gallagher
City Clerk