



WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, March 19, 2003, for the purpose of holding a stakeholder meeting with representatives of the civic associations.

Mayor Davis started the meeting at 8:07 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.

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

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Raymond Peterson, Belle Point Home Owners Association; Arlene Shpiegelman, Greenbriar Community Association, Phase II; James Sturdivant, Greenbrook Estates Homeowners Association; Ari Goldberg-Strassler, Boxwood Civic Association; Larry Noda, Greenbriar Community Association, Phase I; Sheldon Goldberg, Greenbelt East Advisory Committee; and Mark Davis, Woodland Hills Community Association.

Planning

Mr. Peterson had requested information on long-term planning. Mr. McLaughlin explained that the county's master plan, which should be revised every six-to-eight years, has not been revised since 1989-90. He has discussed with the City's director of Planning and Community Development having the City go through this process on its own in order to focus its vision of the future, even though the City would have no authority to update the county's plan. This is a management objective for FY 2005. Mayor Davis said the master plan maps should be available to look at in the Planning Office. Mr. Roberts noted that a debate about seeking county historic district status for Center City is ongoing. Later in the meeting, Mr. White reviewed the history of the City's steps in attempting to achieve greater planning and zoning authority, and Mayor Davis described the active participation of Council, residents, and City planning staff in the planning and code enforcement process.

Cable Service

Mr. Davis asked how much influence the City had regarding cable services, commenting that the pricing was higher here than elsewhere. Mr. White replied that the City has no power to affect fees, which are regulated by the FCC. Brief discussion ensued on satellite dish service.

Fiscal Year 2004 City Budget

Saying Council is moving into the budget process, Mayor Davis asked for any comments on the upcoming budget. Mr. Noda stressed the ongoing need for a visible police presence, noting that Greenbriar now shares a private surveillance service with Glen Oaks. He said residents are concerned about car theft. Mr. Goldberg commented that Windsor Green has numerous patrols and a mobile watch but that car theft is nearly impossible to deter. Mr. Peterson expressed interest in having more information for his board on the City's "Officers as Agents" program.

Mr. Davis said he thought the City should stress the funding of core municipal responsibilities rather than "peripherals" like the movie theater and the museum, which could be supported privately. Mr. White responded that the theater is intrinsic to the economic stability of Roosevelt Center and the museum contributes to the quality of life in the City, helping to attract new residents and businesses to Greenbelt. The Mayor said Mr. Davis's comments were helpful and encouraged Mr. Davis and others to participate in budget work sessions. She added that there are a number of amenities that are not used by everyone that nonetheless are beneficial to the community. She said some people have argued the Aquatic and Fitness Center is "a frill," though others would not agree.

Other Issues

Candles at Boxwood: Mr. Goldberg-Strassler mentioned a query from a Boxwood resident about lighting candles at the community gates in recognition of the troops in Iraq and in hope of an early end to the war. He said using live candles was not a good idea but that Boxwood might try to come up with another means to the end.

Buddy Attick Park: Mr. Sturdivant asked about the possibility of reestablishing a concession stand at the lake. Noting that it had not made money for its more recent owners and had been considered by some to be an eyesore, the Mayor said it was not included in the Master Plan. Mr. Roberts added that the thrust of the plan for the park is to keep its uses primarily passive.

In response to Ms. Shpiegelman's inquiry, the Mayor said the restrooms are still planned for the park and that the line will be run at the time it is done for the expansion of the Public Works facility. Mr. McLaughlin added that this should be within the next year.

New Development/Roads Projects: In response to Mr. Peterson's question about new development and road projects, there was discussion of Greenbelt Station, the proposed Inter-County Connector, the proposed extension of Kenilworth Avenue, and other regional development projects. There was also brief discussion of the status of traffic-calming efforts on City roads and of the planning for the skateboard park, in response to queries from Mr. Davis and Mr. Goldberg-Strassler, respectively.

Beltway Sound Barriers: In response to Mr. Peterson's question, Mayor Davis explained that the City was already exploring qualifying for sound barriers, though funding them could be an issue. It was also pointed out that Belle Point had been constructed too recently to qualify and that the commercial construction was to serve as a sound barrier for the residential.

Other Business

There was discussion of the failure of the amended bill for site review authority and of a request from the "shadow government" of D.C. for some type of statement of support.

The meeting ended at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Gallagher
City Clerk