



MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION of the Greenbelt City Council held Wednesday, March 13, 2002, for the purpose of meeting with representatives of Capitol Cadillac.

Mayor Davis started the meeting at 8:10 p.m. It was held in the Senior Classroom of the Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Council members Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts, Alan Turnbull, and Mayor Judith F. Davis.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael McLaughlin, City Manager; Robert A. Manzi, City Solicitor; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Daniel Jobe, President, Capitol Cadillac; André Gingles, legal counsel for Capitol Cadillac; Jim Soltesz, engineering consultant for Capitol Cadillac; and Floyd Sheahan.

Mayor Davis said the City had received a response from the Maryland Department of Transportation with an offer for the City to purchase the lot in question and that Council would like to hear the latest information on Capitol Cadillac's plans in order to be able to consider the full picture.

Mr. Gingles reviewed the first two conceptual plans that were presented to Council at the first and second work sessions, and he summarized the requests Council made that were incorporated into the third plan being presented tonight. In Plan #3, they have further enhanced the Greenbelt Road buffer (which is now 100') and the green space (which is now about 35% of the lot).

There was some discussion of whether requirements for dealing with the historical site of the Walker home (Toaping Castle) would come into play if the property were to be sold. Mayor Davis suggested the use of an interpretive panel at the site, rather than just a marker, and Mr. McLaughlin said the City could provide a photograph of the home.

Mr. Roberts questioned the siting of the two buildings, suggesting they were not taking maximum advantage of the green space; however, Mr. Putens and Mr. Turnbull both liked the proposed placement of the buildings. Subsequently, Mr. Gingles and Mr. Soltesz reminded Council that some bench seating had already been incorporated into Plan #2 in the area that would be landscaped to mark the historical site, and they said they would look at the possibility of including other such areas.

Mr. Turnbull asked what the plan was for signage. Mr. Jobe said they do not intend to add any additional signs, other than marking the buildings. Mr. Turnbull subsequently raised the issue of using low lighting.

Mr. Turnbull also suggested using a porous paving material for the back parking lot, which will primarily hold inventory and receive light use. Mr. Soltesz said he would look into the possibilities, but he was not convinced that would be the most effective method for achieving the goal of storm-water management. He said porous pavement requires a great deal of maintenance. Mr. Turnbull said he would like to see them go beyond the county's requirements.

Mr. Putens agreed with Mr. Turnbull that the goal should be to exceed minimal standards, but he said he appreciated how responsive Capitol Cadillac had been thus far to Council's suggestions.

Regarding information requested by Council at Monday's meeting, Mr. McLaughlin said Mr. Manzi had determined that the state paid about \$605,000 for the lot in 1978, which appears to have been a fair market price. With simple interest, that would reach the price now being asked. He said Chief Craze responded that, although the lot could possibly be used for a public safety facility, it has the handicap of not being centrally located. Mr. McLaughlin said he had not yet heard back from Chief Krob but suspected he might express the same reservation from a fire and rescue perspective.

Mr. Turnbull asked if there would be restrictions on the use of the property if the City bought it. Mr. Manzi said, yes, it would revert to the state if the public use were not to continue.

Mr. Gingles then raised the issue of how Capitol Cadillac could go about being able to use the property to expand the dealership in the event that the City decided not to purchase it. He said in practical terms, given the current zoning laws, there is no way for them to use the property without special county legislation. He asked if the City would be willing to support that. Mayor Davis asked whether it would be adequate if the City took no position, since Council has categorically opposed special-interest legislation. Mr. Gingles said he thought it would be enough if the County knew that the City was not actively opposed and that Capitol Cadillac had been responsive to the City in developing its plans. Mr. Manzi suggested that the best way to do this would be for Council to have the site plan on an agenda for approval, with whatever conditions were necessary, including review by the Advisory Planning Board and City Planning staff.

Mayor Davis emphasized that the Council had two decisions to make—whether the City wished to purchase and, if not, whether Council wished to approve the site plan. Mr. Turnbull said that before considering those two questions, he would like to have something in writing regarding Capitol Cadillac's plans for 1) the surfacing of the back lot and storm water management, 2) signage, and 3) lighting. Mr. Gingles suggested that he and Mr. Soltesz also make an appointment to talk with Celia Craze and get any preliminary response she might have.

Other Business

Mr. McLaughlin reported on a fire at Springhill Lake today.

Mr. Putens asked Mr. McLaughlin to give high priority to getting Council a financial report on the red light camera program. He said his understanding had been that there would be quarterly reports and that these would mostly be generated by the vendor.

Mr. McLaughlin said staff's understanding had been that the reports would be at six month intervals but that he would see that a report was forthcoming soon.

Mr. Turnbull requested that the City purchase a videotape available from the Conservation Fund on preservation issues and suggested that Council screen it at a work session.

Mayor Davis reported that the COG board had unanimously supported a resolution in support of D.C. statehood. She also attended at meeting in Glenn Dale today regarding the Goddard master plan.

The meeting ended at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
David E. Moran
Assistant to the City Manager