



MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION held Monday, October 14, 2002, for the purpose of discussing the Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation's proposal for a Space Camp to be located at Goddard Space Flight Center.

Mayor Davis started the meeting at 8:10 p.m. It was held in the Council Room of the Municipal Building.

PRESENT WERE: Council members Rodney M. Roberts, Edward V. J. Putens, Thomas X. White, and Mayor Judith F. Davis. Councilmember Alan Turnbull arrived at about 8:35 p.m.

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

ALSO PRESENT WAS: Joseph J. James, President and CEO, Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation.

Following introductions, Mr. James gave an overview of the proposal the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) intends to make to NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center to establish a Space camp@ (called the Prince George's County Space and Flight Center) at the visitor's center at NASA/GSFC.

Mr. James said EDC believes this project would enable the county to take advantage of two major assets that are located here: GSFC and Andrews Air Force Base. He said he has been interested in the Space camp@ concept since first encountering the one located in Huntsville, Alabama. The camps are educational facilities dealing with space and flight science and technology. He envisions the one at GSFC including such space memorabilia as a Saturn Rocket and Space Shuttle and military flight memorabilia like helicopters, fighter jets, and possibly an Air Force One. Camps include interactive exhibits and simulations. Typically, visitors come to stay 3-5 days at the camps to participate in intensive programs, but they are also intended for day trips by local students. EDC sees the GSFC camp as providing educational enhancement for the region, while also benefitting the county by bringing in tourists who would stay several days and by showcasing the county's technology capabilities.

EDC received funding for a feasibility study, which was very positive in its findings. Although the total ticket for such a facility would be quite expensive, the project can be built incrementally, starting small and then increasing in size as revenues permit. It is expected that NASA/GSFC will put out a Request for Proposals within the next 15-45 days for a contractor to run their existing visitor center, which occupies 23 acres on the GSFC campus. EDC intends to submit a proposal to incorporate the visitor center into its space camp concept. Initially, EDC approached the City because it thought having a government partner would greatly enhance their application. Although they have since

learned that this is not necessary, they would still be pleased to have the City participate in the partnership they are setting up.

Mr. James did note that two space camps in Florida and California have gone out of business, but he thought Prince George's County could avoid the problems they had.

Mr. Putens asked how such a facility would fit in with the GSFC Master Plan. Mr. James said they had received encouragement from GSFC and that the visitor center location is outside what would become their secure area.

In response to another question from Mr. Putens, Mr. James listed some of the organizations who are already part of the partnership: the Marriott, the College of Education at University of Maryland-College Park, Prince George's Community College; Owens Science Center; and the Prince George's County Schools.

Mr. White asked if EDC had looked into the Anacostia Trails Heritage Area program. Mr. James said he had spoken with them earlier, but he would renew the contact.

Mr. McLaughlin said that he and Joe McNeal, Assistant Director-Facilities, Recreation Department, had talked about the City providing in-kind support by making the swimming pool available to campers, assisting with registrations until they have their own systems, and working out some shared programs between the City's summer camps and the space camp. Mr. James said they were not looking for a financial contribution at this time and noted that Congressman Steny Hoyer's office has promised to hold \$150,000 in this year's budget for the program.

Mayor Davis suggested the camp could also take advantage of its proximity to the Air and Space Museum and the College Park Aviation Museum.

In response to a question from Mr. Turnbull, Mr. James said EDC would be involved in launching the program but would not run it long term.

It was agreed that when the RFP comes out, the City will put the question of partnering on a regular meeting agenda. Mr. James said it would be helpful to have a contact named from the City and to have a specific list of potential shared opportunities or contributions.

Council thanked Mr. James for coming and for inviting the City to take part.

The meeting ended at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen Gallagher
City Clerk