



**WORK SESSION of the Greenbelt City Council held Wednesday, April 11, 2001, for the purpose of reviewing the Planning and Community Development and Capital Projects budgets.**

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

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; Jeffrey Williams, City Treasurer; Celia W. Craze, Director, Department of Planning and Community Development; David E. Moran, Assistant to the City Manager; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Sheldon Goldberg, Advisory Planning Board; Katrina Boverman, Marjorie Whitacre, Greenbelt Dog Park Association; Betsy Likowski, Greenbelt News Review.

Mayor Davis started the meeting at 8:40 p.m. It was held in the Multipurpose Room of the Community Center.

Dog Park: A petition dated March 31, 2001, was presented in support of Council's keeping the previously appropriated \$15,000 for the expansion and addition of a utility (lighting or water) to the Dog Park in the budget for FY02. In response to a question from Ms. Boverman, Mr. McLaughlin said the cost estimate is probably old enough to justify recalculating. The representatives of the Dog Park confirmed once again that they would choose lights over water. Council agreed to add the Dog Park as item #16 on the Capital Projects list and to consider it at the work session for prioritizing Capital Projects. Mr. Putens and Mayor Davis both stressed the need for the Association to convey its thoughts to Council on various topics that were mentioned at the regular meeting earlier in the week regarding surfacing and other options for expansion. Mr. Putens stated it would be important not to disturb property for any addition; in particular, trees should not be cut down.

Planning and Community Development: Ms. Craze reviewed the department's accomplishments for the current year, noting, for example, the City's achievement of getting an administrative search warrant for an owner-occupied unit, the cross-training of staff in parking enforcement, work of the Springhill Lake Neighborhood Improvement Team. As upcoming issues, she cited Metroland in particular as an item that will take a great deal of staff attention this year. She also discussed Code revision and the reformulation of the animal control officer position. The City may be able to coordinate with College Park on the use of animal control staff time.

Community Legacy Program: Mr. McLaughlin said this legislation had passed in the assembly. Mr. Turnbull raised questions about the likelihood of City eligibility, given the emphasis on areas with a declining base. Mr. McLaughlin said he believed that at least in the early days of the program, the City might be able to compete.

Capital Projects: Council added, as item #17, \$5,700 for the City match on the grant from the Bay Trust for the wetland educational facility. There was discussion of revenues for capital projects. Mr. White suggested a need to re-conceptualize the proportion of the tax dollar that should be allocated to capital projects under the new tax scale.

Mr. McLaughlin drew Council's attention to the proposal to consider funding Phase II of the upgrade of City playgrounds using Open Space funds. He also suggested the refinancing of the existing debt, which would be a ballot item in the fall.

Mr. White asked if there would eventually be a presentation on the project to replace the Community Center windows. Mr. McLaughlin said that would be the case, but at the moment there is a problem with identifying capable vendors. Mr. White asked if the playground item should be stretched over two years, saving \$51,000 this year. Mr. McLaughlin said that although the process had seemed slow, there had been a great deal of planning activity thus far and that once the implementation started, it would move quickly.

Mr. Putens inquired about the status of video cameras at the Spellman Overpass and at Attick Park. Mr. McLaughlin advised funds are included in the budget for the proposed facility at Attick Park but not for a camera at the overpass. He added there is a possibility of funding a camera at the overpass from funds being paid to the City for cable access.

There was discussion about the possibility of pursuing a bond issue to fund some of the City's capital projects. Staff was asked to prepare a timeline for having a bond question on the November ballot and a report on financial impacts.

Mr. Roberts asked about a swale between two houses on Lakeview Circle that had been a problem. Mr. McLaughlin said staff would look into it.

Mr. Turnbull said he thought that relative to other landscaping and gateway issues, the City has neglected the approaches to its pedestrian underpasses. He noted that because of the role the underpasses and, more generally, pedestrian thoroughfares played in the design of the City, there are legacy issues involved with their preservation. Mayor Davis added that re-evaluating the lighting in some of the underpasses has been raised as a concern too. Council agreed to add the underpasses to the list of projects for long-term consideration.

Process for Bringing Budget Requests to Council: Mr. Turnbull asked that there be a consistency of procedure on how items are brought to the attention of Council at budget work sessions. In particular, he was concerned about staff raising needs or wish-lists with Council that have not come up through the City Manager. Mr. Roberts agreed that this could put both Council and the Manager in an awkward position. The other Council members were not concerned about this interaction, saying it had always part of the budget process and that it helped to keep the process "open." Ms. Craze commented that the staff appreciated that the City Manager allowed very open discussion of issues and that this tendency probably spilled over into work sessions. Mr. Turnbull emphasized that it was not that he was unwilling to hear from staff, or that he wanted to squelch discussion, but that he wanted the City Manager's overview and perspective.

## Other Business/Informational Items

Mr. McLaughlin distributed a memo from Terri Hruby, Community Planner, regarding action taken by County Councilwoman Audrey Scott to introduce amendments to the Greenbelt Metro Area Sector Plan. Council agreed there should be a quick response from the City, probably a phone call followed up by letter.

Mr. Moran distributed a memo on redistricting.

Regarding the Maryland Municipal League's requirement that only one person per municipality be on stage to receive the award for the street sweeper, Mayor Davis asked for and received Council's agreement that Kenny Hall, Director of Public Works, should represent Greenbelt.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Gallagher

City Clerk