



WORK SESSION of the Greenbelt City Council held Wednesday August 29, 2001, for the purpose of holding a stakeholder meeting with the management of Beltway Plaza and discussing developments with the redistricting process.

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 Rodney M. Roberts, Alan Turnbull, Thomas X. White, and Mayor Judith F. Davis.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk. David E. Moran, Assistant to the City Manager, and Celia Craze, Director, Planning and Community Development arrived at about 9 p.m.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Kap Kapastin and Fred Wine, Quantum Companies/Beltway Plaza; Sheldon Goldberg, Advisory Planning Board; Sylvia Lewis; Amy Boyes, the Gazette; and Virginia Beauchamp, Greenbelt News Review.

Beltway Plaza Stakeholder Meeting

Mr. Kapastin and Mr. Wine said there was no "news" this year on the scale of the opening of Target last year and that it has been a difficult year for retail. Nevertheless, the vacancy rate is low, Marshall's has what is essentially a "new store" as a result of the Target reconfiguration, Burlington Coat Factory has improved its look, and the Sports Authority has renewed its lease. Overall, they believe the east end of the mall is both more stable and looking better. They will be redeveloping an area that currently includes Finnegan's car wash for 10-12 shops, in which they hope to include some more upscale restaurants. The theaters are doing reasonably well, and AMC is also doing well in terms of the industry.

Greenbelt Station: Mr. Kapastin and Mr. Wine briefly discussed what they said was a very open discussion with representatives of Westfield Corporation regarding the lack of retail growth in the area and the lack of potential for new growth unless Greenbelt Station attracts a genuinely new and upscale market. Mayor Davis commented that it was "very gratifying" to have Beltway Plaza participating with Council in the hearing process, and Mr. Kapastin complimented the City on the work of its Planning Department staff on this issue.

Shopping Carts: Mayor Davis praised the development of the connector paths to Springhill Lake but noted that some stores were obviously more cooperative than others in terms of retrieving their shopping carts. Mr. Wine said he thought this had fallen between the cracks when Target changed managers but that it should improve. He also said he would look into the problem of Giant storing its carts in the mall entrance hall.

Bus Stops: Mayor Davis and Mr. Turnbull praised the resolution of the problem with the location of the bus stop. Mr. McLaughlin said he would send information on the Mass Transit Administration's grant program, which included funding for bus stop plans and improvements. Mayor Davis commented on the decline of the landscaping at the Cherrywood Lane bus stop. Mr. Wine said he would check into this, but everyone agreed the heavy use the area receives makes this location difficult to deal with.

Signage: Mr. Wine said they are following the sign plan and intend to complete it.

Landscaping: Mr. White said he continues to hear criticism from residents in Center City and Greenbelt East regarding the appearance Beltway Plaza from Greenbelt Road. Council encouraged continued attempts to improve landscaping.

Redistricting

Mr. Moran reported on the hearing of the County Redistricting Commission he had attended the night before. In addition to the anticipated Hagey and Dean plans, a Kennedy plan was introduced that would move Greenbelt from district 4 to 3 and College Park from 3 to 1. The Kennedy plan would put College Park and Laurel in the same district, leave Bowie standing alone, and make Greenbelt the largest municipality in a district with New Carrollton, Landover Hills, and Riverdale Park. A slight change in the previously proposed Dean plan (now Dean-1A) would re-attach 21-16 to Greenbelt.

Council discussed the pros and cons of the various plans. Although there would be benefit to Greenbelt in the Kennedy plan, Mayor Davis asked Council to keep in mind that there were benefits to other municipalities in the Hagey plan, which, unlike the variations of the Dean plan, would keep Bowie intact and would not separate the University of Maryland campus from College Park. Ultimately it was decided to accept a suggestion of Mr. McLaughlin's to send a letter indicating Greenbelt's appreciation for attempts to keep municipalities intact while recognizing possible benefits to Greenbelt in the Kennedy plan.

The meeting ended at 10:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Gallagher

City Clerk