



WORK SESSION of the Greenbelt City Council held Wednesday, January 24, 2001, for the purpose of discussing a proposed meeting with the Governor's staff regarding the State's purchase of land at the A.H. Smith property.

Mayor Davis started the meeting at 8:05 p.m. It was held in the Senior Citizen Classroom of the Community Center.

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; David E. Moran, Assistant to the City Manager; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Lowell Owens and Zelda Bell, Citizens to Conserve and Restore Indian Creek (CCRIC); Amy Boyes, the Gazette, and Virginia Beauchamp, Greenbelt News Review.

Mayor Davis reviewed the background for this meeting, saying Council sent a letter on December 20 to the Governor stating the City's concerns about the conditions of the state's purchase of land on the A.H. Smith property and requesting a meeting to discuss these matters. The Governor subsequently called the Mayor to say a meeting would be held. Mayor Davis said she agreed that the meeting could be with the Governor's staff, but that it was understood that it would be an open meeting, held in Greenbelt.

Mr. Moran then summarized discussions leading up to the closed meeting that was now proposed for 7 p.m. in Annapolis with the following primary participants from the Governor's office: Steve Cassard, Acting Deputy Chief of Staff; Richard Castaldi, Director, Intergovernmental Affairs; and Mr. Cassard's Special Assistant, Asuntha Chiang. He said Mr. Castaldi had explained that the reason the Governor's office was specifying a closed meeting was that they wished to brief Council on some sensitive issues, only some of which would be disclosable.

Council discussed that since it appeared all decisions had been made at this point, the only purpose of a meeting would be to receive a briefing. There was agreement, however, that there might be enough new information forthcoming to justify a meeting, and it would provide a forum for Council to ask questions. Mayor Davis later noted that the City should take advantage of any opportunity to convey information to the Governor's staff, and Mr. Putens added that doing so would also provide the opportunity to send a subsequent letter reiterating the points.

Mayor Davis asked that a packet be put together of the various letters that Council had written about the Smith property. Mr. White suggested that a "to the point" summary should accompany these.

Mr. White asked if the City knew if there was a legitimate permit showing environmental compliance; Mr. Putens asked if the City could get copies of any permits. Mr. White also suggested that Council could argue at the meeting on behalf of the purchase of the additional acreage. He further suggested that Council attempt to communicate that Greenbelt is not anti-development, as tends to be the perception. Mr. Turnbull agreed that there should be a shift in rhetoric.

Mayor Davis said the top priorities were for Council members to gain as thorough an understanding of the agreement as possible and to convey their concerns about the agreement. Other issues could be brought up as possible.

Council asked that Mr. Moran be sure to specify to the Governor's staff that Council expects the meeting to address all the points that were covered in Council's letter to the Governor.

Council agreed to ask the City Solicitor to attend the meeting.

Mayor Davis asked that a letter be sent to College Park, Berwyn Heights, and CCRIC, explaining that the meeting was to be held but in a different format than had originally been anticipated.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Gallagher
City Clerk