



SPECIAL MEETING OF GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Monday, July 2, 2001, for the purpose of evaluating the plans for Greenbelt Station.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 8:09 p.m.

ROLL CALL was answered by Council members Edward V.J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts, Alan Turnbull, Thomas X. White, and Judith F. Davis, Mayor.

ALSO PRESENT were Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; Robert Manzi, City Solicitor; David E. Moran, Assistant to the City Manager; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk.

Mayor Davis observed a moment of silence for resident Michael Burchick and former resident Kay Smith. She then led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

CONSENT AGENDA: Mr. Turnbull moved approval of the consent agenda. Mr. Roberts seconded. The motion passed 5 to 0.

Council thereby took the following action:

Advisory Planning Board - Report #01-03 (Greenbelt Station Plans): Accepted report for consideration later on the agenda.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND ADDITIONS: Mr. Putens moved approval of the agenda with the additions of "County Bill 9-2001" and "Meetings." Mr. Turnbull seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

PRESENTATION - Labor Day Festival. Patti Brothers presented Council with t-shirts that will be on sale at the July 4 celebration as a fund-raiser for the Labor Day Festival. Ms. Brothers said about \$2,500 has been raised for the festival by various activities. Council thanked her for coming and for her work on behalf of the festival.

GREENBELT STATION - CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN AND PRELIMINARY PLAN OF SUBDIVISION: Mayor Davis noted that a staff report and an Advisory Planning Board report on this topic had both been included with Council's packet. She introduced Celia Craze, Director, Planning and Community Development, to provide an overview of these documents and of the current situation. First, Ms. Craze stated that Norman Rivera, attorney to Metroland, was present and that he had been under the misunderstanding that tonight's meeting was a work session, with Council action not to be taken until next week. Representatives of Westfield also expected to attend next week.

Ms. Craze said the conceptual site plan and the preliminary plan of subdivision will both be heard, in that order, at the July 12 county public hearing. She and Terri Hruby, Community

Planner, then reviewed the staff evaluation and recommendation as presented in the staff report dated July 2001 and an expanded list of 26 findings that was distributed at the meeting.

Ms. Craze also said the Park & Planning technical staff report on transportation had been received today and, while staff has not yet had time to review it in detail, it makes a general finding of adequacy but recommends capping development at levels significantly lower than those proposed. Mayor Davis commented that this suggested that they wanted to reduce traffic not by making the development more transit-oriented but by simply reducing its size.

With regard to a staff recommendation that the City request 9.28 acres in the north core as the mandatory dedication for recreational purposes required in the City Code, Mr. White asked if the county would request a mandatory dedication on the south core. Upon being told by Ms. Craze that the county would accept private recreational uses for residences, he asked that the City add a comment regarding public recreational uses on the south core.

In response to a question from the Mayor, Ms. Craze confirmed that even if the developer pays for the beltway interchange, all environmental requirements will prevail, and the Corps of Engineers will look at the cumulative impacts of the entire site.

In response to a question from Mr. White, Ms. Craze explained that conceptual site plans Council has reviewed for other developments have been substantially more detailed as a requirement for rezoning requests, which is not the case here.

Mr. Roberts noted the City's environmental consultant had said at the work session that trees cannot be removed from state property in order to mitigate, and he asked why this did not appear in the staff findings with regard to the land to be "scooped out" in order to lower it. Mayor Davis also suggested mentioning the potential impact on the hydrology of the area as a result of this.

Mayor Davis and other members of Council had been called by a resident, Paul Downs, who asked that the City address potential problems of air quality to be worsened by the increased traffic. It was agreed that this was an important topic to raise. In response to a query from Mr. Turnbull regarding what would be triggered by the beltway exchange, Mr. Manzi clarified the applicant would have to address this is if an Environmental Impact Study is required, but probably not in an Environmental Assessment.

Mayor Davis opened the floor first to questions, to be followed by any public comment.

Sylvia Lewis, 2-C Gardenway, asked Ms. Craze if Park & Planning still opposes the amendment to the Sector Plan, and Ms. Craze said staff would check into that..

Mi Ae Kim, 13-D Laurel Hill Rd., asked Ms. Craze to review the map for the conceptual site plan once more.

Jim Cassidy, 7846 Somerset Court, and Jordan Choper, 121 Northway, both raised questions related to the size of garages and parking lots.

Doug Love, 3-D Plateau Place expressed concerns raised by residents of north College Park regarding the site line of the new construction from the viewpoint of their residences. The Mayor noted that this issue is addressed in the Sector Plan.

Mary Linstrom, 11-C Ridge, questioned the timing of these plans vis-à-vis the county's consideration of the Sector Plan

Izolda Trakhtenberg, 3-H Plateau Place, raised issues of impact on soil quality, as it affects both vegetation and water quality. Ms. Hruby said the City's environmental consultant had mentioned this issue. Mr. White added that it had also been discussed in the Sector Planning group and that the soil is "notoriously bad" here.

In response to a query from Rhonda Henstead, 15-P Laurel Hill Rd., the Mayor explained Greenbelt does not have zoning authority. She and Mr. White elaborated on how the process works. Mr. Turnbull and Mr. Roberts mentioned some of the specific rights and powers the City has that can influence the process.

Kelby Brick, 8148 Mandan Terrace, asked if there is a plan to challenge the developers' market study, which claims the shopping areas will be complementary to those already in the area. He said he is concerned with the potential competition to existing merchants. He suggested that if a substantially new and different audience will not be attracted, perhaps that would be an argument to make with the county, since the county's motive for wanting to develop the property is to bring in new revenues. Ms. Craze said the City's consultant has said the marketing study is not adequate and that the southern section will compete with Beltway Plaza. She said it is also necessary to question what will happen when the original stores are replaced on the northern section.

Kap Kapastin, Quantum Companies and Beltway Plaza, said he is very concerned that the retail be truly upscale and complementary to that in Beltway Plaza and other existing retail areas. He said movie theaters would have a big impact on Beltway Plaza as well.

Tom Moran, 1-H Plateau Place, said the City's traffic consultant had found faults with the developers' traffic study. He asked if development could be stopped if the roads reached their capacity before the development was completed. Mr. Manzi said there is no control over traffic coming in from outside the area and that the plans for each site would be approved as each specific site plan come up. He added that impact on schools can stop a residential plan, but traffic will not stop a plan once it has been approved.

The Mayor opened the meeting to other comments.

Paul Downs, president of the Committee to Save Green Belt, read a statement regarding the car-orientation of the plans and the potential impact on an area that already has problems with clean air.

Pat Blankenship, chair of Citizens to Conserve and Restore Indian Creek (CCRIC), reviewed CCRIC's concerns with the environmental impacts and questioned whether this area could

support upscale retail offerings even if they are initially provided. She encouraged the development of a vibrant, transit-oriented town center at Greenbelt Station, not the mall that is being proposed.

Tom Moran, 1-H Plateau Place, observed that wherever the developers have made presentations, they've received serious criticism, both from citizens and expert consultants. The developers, in his opinion, have not responded to any of the criticism.

Norman Rivera, attorney for Metroland, said that much that had been said tonight was based upon misinformation and that a revised plan had been submitted and copied to City staff. He said they had been under the impression that this was to be a work session and that Council would have another meeting at which they would vote next week. He said they just received the staff report tonight and will not have an opportunity to respond. The county staff report will not be out till the end of this week. In addition, representatives of Westfield had expected to attend next week. Mr. Rivera described some changes that had been made to the plan since City staff had reviewed it and asked that Council take them into consideration at the hearing on July 12. He said these changes are responsive to criticisms they have received. Mayor Davis said Council could not meet again on this next week and that many of these items the City has made known to the developers for a long time. She added that this did not mean that the City was unwilling to continue to talk with the developers.

Mr. Roberts said he was glad to know the developers were willing to respond to the City's comments, but he noted that little had changed that would affect either the environmental impacts or the basic mall concept. He suggested that if the developers were to delay their hearing with the county, the City Council could delay its vote. He said it was not Greenbelt's choice to have to act by July 12.

Mr. Putens said he was glad to see there had been some movement on the part of the developers in response to comments received, but he agreed with Mr. Roberts that at this point Council was responding to deadlines set by the developers and the county.

Mr. McLaughlin added that some staff members would not be available later this week and early next week.

Ms. Craze said had in fact addressed the new concept C in its comments, but she stated that all these versions are merely illustrative plans that can change. She noted that some of the recommendations must be submitted to go to the county's technical staff tomorrow.

A motion was made by Mr. Turnbull and seconded by Mr. Putens to approve the staff recommendation to oppose the conceptual site plan and preliminary plan of subdivision with the list of findings to be amended as directed at tonight's meeting. Items were added, and a number of specific modifications were then made to the list in discussion with Ms. Craze.

Mr. Roberts expressed concern that by asking for greater road width for right of way, Council might be encouraging County Council approval of the new roadway. Ms. Craze argued that this

was not the case. She said Council needs to exercise its right to determine the width of the right-of-way for the part of the road on City property. It is not required to use it.

It was determined that the consultant reports and the Advisory Planning Board (APB) report should accompany the staff report and cover letter from Council. Mr. White asked that typographical errors in the APB report be corrected. He also asked that some extra copies of the package be made available. The motion passed 5-0.

COUNTY BILL 9-2001: Mr. Turnbull moved that Council support of the bill be conveyed. Mr. Roberts seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MEETINGS

There was discussion of a possible joint work session with College Park and Berwyn Heights on Thursday, July 5, regarding Metroland. Council directed the City Manager to convey to Mayor Jacobs that Council would be glad to try to meet with them.

In discussing scheduling a meeting with the New Deal Café, Mayor Davis asked the City Solicitor whether those Council members who are members of the organization would need to recuse themselves. Mr. Manzi said it would depend on the situation, if there were to be any issue of financial gain or a biased vote. He said whatever involvement exists should be publicly stated.

Mr. White said he was willing to miss the work session on the compensation study but asked that if Council made tentative directions to staff following the meeting, he be allowed to comment on them at the regular meeting of July 16.

ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Turnbull moved the meeting be adjourned. Mr. Putens seconded the motion, which carried 5-0. Mayor Davis adjourned the special meeting of July 2, 2001, at 12:35 a.m. on July 3, 2001.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Gallagher

City Clerk

"I hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and correct report of the special meeting of the City Council of Greenbelt, Maryland, held July 2, 2001."

Judith F. Davis

Mayor