



**WORK SESSION of the Greenbelt City Council held Wednesday, June 13, 2001, for the purpose of meeting with representatives of Capitol Cadillac.**

Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull started the meeting at 8:10 p.m. It was held in the Senior Classroom at the Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmember Rodney M. Roberts, Edward V.J. Putens and Mayor Pro Tem Alan Turnbull. Mr. Thomas X. White arrived at 9:30 p.m.

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

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Daniel Jobe, President, Capitol Cadillac; Jim Saltes, engineer for Capitol Cadillac; Andre Gingles, legal counsel for Capitol Cadillac; and Floyd Shehan.

By way of explaining their request to meet with the City Council, Mr. Gingles gave an overview of Capitol Cadillac's (CC) interest in having the use of the property east of its current facilities, which the state has held for potential use as a ramp to the Beltway. He said they want to expand their product line and need additional showroom space. When they approached the state about buying the property, they were told the state would probably not sell, but when CC suggested leasing, the state indicated some willingness to consider a 20-year lease. CC subsequently became aware of the process that needed to be followed by the state in offering the land as surplus property, and they were aware that the City had expressed an interest.

In response to questions, Mr. Jobe said the existing structure is about 100,000 square feet. The facilities they wish to build on the state property are two smaller buildings, totaling only about 18,000 square feet. He said CC has a body shop on the existing site that would be moved off site if they expand.

Mr. Putens asked how this plan fit with the office complex environment of the rest of Golden Triangle. He said the City would not want to see the area go downhill or turn into a car park. Mr. Gingles responded that the area was entirely commercial and that the important thing was that the City knew the people involved. He said, "This ownership made Capitol Cadillac a good neighbor."

Mr. Roberts said he agreed with Mr. Putens and was concerned that the landscape buffer of 30' along Greenbelt Road that was shown on the conceptual layout plan was not nearly deep enough to assure that it would not look like a car park. He was also concerned that CC anticipated being able to build on the property, whereas the City had been told that was impossible.

Mr. Turnbull stated that it would be helpful to clarify the requirements of the state process before attempting to deal with specifics. Mr. McLaughlin said the state is going through the "public

process" now; the City was notified as a part of that process. State agencies have first refusal. Although there appear to be no other state agencies interested, the State Highway Administration may be unwilling to relinquish all rights to it. It further appears that the transfer would not be without cost, since the state wants to get a price for it based on appraised value. The county would have next right but has not indicated any interest. Local government would be next in line.

In response to Mr. Roberts' further query regarding developing the property, Mr. Gingles said CC was not proposing permanent structures, but buildings and parking lots that could be removed eventually, assuming a long enough lease.

Mr. Putens commented that CC has a good reputation and has been a good neighbor to Greenbelt but that there were concerns and hurdles that would need to be dealt with. He asked if there were likely to be any restrictions on the property based on the original federal involvement. He also noted there is a historic part of that property, since it contains the Toaping Castle site in the area of the Pepco substation.

Mr. Roberts stated again that he did not want a car showroom and lot sitting right on Greenbelt Road. Mr. Gingles responded that it would be much easier for CC to deal with these issues if they owned the lot outright and could do a masterplan for the whole property. He asked if Council would support their effort to purchase the land.

Mr. Putens said he tended to agree with Mr. Roberts' point of view, and he further pointed out to Mr. Gingles that the City has recently been in a frame of mind to acquire and maintain green space. Mr. Roberts noted that this property had been cleared and graded 30 years ago when the state acquired it.

Mr. Turnbull responded that sometimes acquisition is the only way for the City to get what it wants but that he is not averse to the notion of having someone else write the check if the City can still get an acceptable result. He said he has real concerns about this plan but could be convinced that it is viable. He agrees more buffer is needed; he would like to see a straightforward presentation of what space on the lot would be developed; and he would be concerned with the visual impact from both Greenbelt Road and the Beltway.

In response to a query from Mr. Putens regarding a City easement for the buffer area, Mr. Jobe said they of course understood that while their goal would be maximum exposure from the street, the City's goal would be maximum camouflage. He suggested the possibility of having a deeper (80-100') buffer along Greenbelt Road and building with a Capitol Drive exposure. He also asked if Council would oppose their going back further on the Beltway side of the property as a compromise.

Mr. Gingles said they would like to be able to tell the state that if they could acquire the property, they could do this well and even meet Greenbelt's standards. He stressed their wish to be able to reconcile their need to expand with their wish to stay in their current location. It was pointed out to Mr. Gingles that two members of Council were missing and that the three present were not necessarily representing the opinion of the full Council. Mr. Putens also noted that he

was more favorable to the possibilities if CC acquired the land than with the long-term lease and that the latter would require much more discussion.

Mr. Roberts asked the City Manager to check further into the state's requirements regarding development on the property. He also asked for clarification on whether the state could lease the property without exhausting the surplus process. Mr. McLaughlin said he would get as much detail on the process for Council as he could.

Other business items:

Council agreed to hold the second work session on the compensation plan on Monday, July 9, and the work session to review the New Deal Café's application for status as a City contribution group on Wednesday, July 11.

Mr. McLaughlin said that recent developments in the USDA case required discussion by Council. It was agreed to hold an executive session with the City Solicitor on Tuesday, June 19, at 8 p.m. Mr. White will be available to participate by telephone.

It was confirmed that no one from Council will be available to attend the opening of the new emergency facility at Doctors Hospital. Staff will attend if possible.

It was announced that the Lt. Governor would not be in attendance on Friday afternoon at the Adult Day Care Center as had been planned.

The meeting ended at about 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Gallagher

City Clerk