



WORK SESSION of the Greenbelt City Council held Tuesday, May 15, 2001, for the purpose of discussing the Metroland conceptual site plan.

Mayor Davis started the meeting at 8:15 p.m. It was held in the Council Room of the Municipal Building.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmember Alan Turnbull and Mayor Judith F. Davis. Council members Edward V.J. Putens and Rodney M. Roberts arrived shortly after the meeting began. Councilmember Thomas X. White arrived at 9:30 p.m.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; Celia W. Craze, Director, Department of Planning and Community Development; Terri Hruby, Community Planner; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Norman Rivera, Attorney for Metroland Developers; Sandi Gallagher, Metroland Developers; Greg Ault, EDAW, Inc.; Al Arnold, Greenhorne & O'Mara; Brian Collins and Kelvin Robinson, RBA Group (City consultants); Mark Burchick, ESA (City consultant); Joe Chang, Community Planning Division, MNCPPC; Christopher Hagert and Dean Armstrong, Fossett & Brugger; Larry Taub, O'Malley, Mislner, Nylén & Gilmore; Sheldon Goldberg; Advisory Planning Board; Lowell Owens, Barry Schlesinger, Doug Love, and Tom Moran, CCRIC; Virginia Beauchamp, Greenbelt News Review; and Amy Boyes, the Gazette.

Mr. Rivera said the dates for planning board hearings on the conceptual site plan and preliminary plan of subdivision were scheduled for June 7 and June 14 respectively. He said the "meat of the matter" lies with the conceptual site plan. He gave an overview of the plan and said the developers granted the 70-day extension as Council had requested in its letter. He then introduced Mr. Ault, who reviewed the conceptual design.

Mayor Davis told Mr. Ault the City has some major problems with the overall design. She asked if they were in the process of getting rid of the concrete mountain. Mr. Rivera replied that they are still acquiring the needed permits.

Mr. Roberts asked about the stormwater management plan. Mr. Arnold said they are lowering the area of the current floodplain below its current elevation, and this should work better. Mayor Davis asked if doing so would cause a major disruption to the wetland area, and he said it would. He also confirmed that this area is part of the property owned by the state. In response to Mr. Turnbull's query as to whether the Governor had really given Metroland ten million dollars and reserved to the developer the right to turn the property into a backwater, Mr. Arnold said there were two wash ponds there with no forest resources on them. Mr. Roberts said that was "absolutely not true." Mr. Turnbull and Mr. Putens both expressed anger and concern that none of this information had been conveyed to Council by the Governor's office.

Ms. Craze asked Mr. Arnold to outline the variation requests and their impacts. Mr. Arnold said the four variation requests relate to: the north-south connector road; the mitigation pond on Parcel E; storm drain outfalls from developed areas to the stream; and sewer crossings of streams.

Mr. Putens asked if this area can handle all this drain-off. Mr. Arnold said, yes, because these creeks have already been sized by nature to handle it. Mr. Putens expressed some skepticism, saying there is already flooding in that area. Mr. Rivera stated that in theory the developers are not allowed to do anything that would increase downstream flow. Some discussion followed of devices to hold and clean water before it can enter the county stormdrain system. Mr. Rivera said the private owners would ultimately be required to maintain these devices.

Mayor Davis told Mr. Ault the City questions their definition of "mixed use" and does not find the plan transit-oriented by Council's definition, which would mean not more than a half-mile to destinations from mass transit. She said the current plan would require everyone to use cars. Mr. Rivera stressed that conceptual designs are merely illustrative and that the site plan would provide more reliable detail.

Mayor Davis noted that the Sector Plan had recommended that the development be tiered, with the highest point closest to the Capital Beltway. She asked what the anticipated price range would be for residential units, and Mr. Rivera said \$1,200-1,400 per month rent for a one-bedroom unit.

Mr. Turnbull questioned the plan's compatibility with CB-47. Mr. Rivera reiterated that in the absence of a detailed site plan, he could not convince Council of the details and that he could not provide any insight into what the state had or had not told Council.

Mayor Davis stated that the City is not against development but wants to see transit-oriented development. Mr. Putens emphasized that Council has been supportive of developers in the past but is extremely concerned about the planned disturbance to the environmentally sensitive area. He said Council had been told there would be no disruption other than that required to remove the concrete mountain.

Mr. Collins questioned Mr. Arnold about traffic and parking issues, including whether replacing lost Metro parking spaces one-for-one would be adequate if Metroland itself increases the need for parking, and whether traffic will increase on Greenbelt Road if their Metro ridership figures are overly generous.

Mr. Collins then briefed Council on his May 14 written traffic impact study, and Mr. Burchick briefed Council on his written report on environmental issues. In response to a question from Mr. Roberts, Mr. Burchick said an agreement between the state and the developer of the sort described would have to be public. In response to a question from Mr. White regarding how the City could find out what WMATA's response was, he said the Corps of Engineers and the Department of Environmental Resources should have a paper trail on record. It was agreed that this should be further investigated.

Mr. Schlesinger asked what is not under the county's purview. Mr. Burchick said wetlands, waters, flood plains, and endangered species are state issues.

Ms. Craze said all the City's consultants and the City Solicitor would testify at the planning board hearing. Mayor Davis asked that as many representatives of CCRIC and Council as possible should attend.

Information Items

The 4 Cities meeting has been changed to May 24 at 7:30 p.m. in New Carrollton.

Mayor Davis shared an e-mail message she had received from Mr. Settle of the Astronomy Club.

Mr. White complimented Ms. Craze and Ms. Hruby on the staff's work on Metroland.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Gallagher

City Clerk