*City of Greenbelt, Maryland*

***GREENBELT CITYLINK***

**REGULAR MEETING OF GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Monday, September 10, 2001.**

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 8:10 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; John Shay, City Solicitor; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk.

Mayor Davis observed a moment of silence for residents Jane M. Craver and Theresa Needham and for former residents Julia Hogan Rose and Mariann Barnard.

Mayor Davis then led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

CONSENT AGENDA: Mayor Davis asked that the minutes from the work session of May 22, 2001, and the work session of August 13, 2001, be removed from the consent agenda. A motion to approve the amended consent agenda was made by Mr. Turnbull and seconded by Mr. Putens. The motion passed 5-0.

Council thereby took the following actions:

MINUTES

- Work Session, July 30, 2001
- Interviews, August 13, 2001
- Interview, August 20, 2001
- Work Session, August 20, 2001
- Work Session, August 21, 2001
- Work Session, August 22, 2001
- Work Session, August 27, 2001
- Work Session, August 28, 2001

Approved as presented.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Board of Elections, Report #01-1 (Voting Machines for 2001 Election). Council accepted this report.

Community Relations Advisory Board Communication, Report # 2001-2 (Community Pledge). Council accepted this report and will consider it on the agenda of the next regular meeting.

Arts Advisory Board Communication, 9/7/01 (New Deal Café). Council received this communication and agreed to refer the question of the New Deal Café’s application to become a City contributions group to the board for review.

Advisory Planning Board, Report #01-04 (Greenbelt Lake Buffer Zone). Council received this report and will consider it when this topic is discussed at a future meeting.

Advisory Planning Board, Report #01-05 (Detailed Site Plan - 3.75A Jaeger Site). Council accepted this report and will consider it at the next regular meeting.

DESIGNATION OF VOTING DELEGATE AND ALTERNATES TO NLC CONGRESS OF CITIES: Council approved the designation of Mayor Davis as the "voting delegate" and Council members White and Putens as the "alternate voting delegates" and directed the City Clerk to so notify the NLC.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND ADDITIONS: Mr. Turnbull asked that "Appointment to an Advisory Group" be added to the agenda. Mr. Putens then moved, and Mr. Turnbull seconded, approval of the amended agenda. The motion passed 5-0.

PRESENTATIONS

End-of-Year Report from School Resource Officers: Cpl. David Buerger and MPO Marty Parker presented the report and responded to Council’s questions. Cpl. Buerger said problem incidents have dropped substantially since last year. He gave some of the credit to the use of bicycles, which enable the officers to gain quick access to areas they could not previously. He also said the police are enjoying using the bikes.

Mayor Davis asked if problems had resulted from the increased number of children walking to school as a result of the enforcement of the school bus policy. MPO Parker said he had received some calls regarding elementary school children, where parents were concerned either with personal or pedestrian safety. He said there are not always crossing guards at intersections. Mr. Turnbull said it would be useful to know where the problems are, in case the City can help with road problems or volunteers might help with crossing. The Mayor noted the County School Board is trying to identify more funding for crossing guards but that the City would need to know where they are needed.

In response to a query from Mr. White, Cpl. Buerger said adult volunteers could possibly provide additional support at the overpass as well. Mr. Roberts asked if the current patrols at overpass are permanent, and Cpl. Buerger said they are, but they are subject to other calls for service, which have increased at the elementary schools. He stressed, however, that the police consider the overpass to be safe, particularly when the brush is kept cut back, and they do not think permanent resources should be kept here that are needed more greatly elsewhere. Mr. Putens asked about afternoon patrol at the overpass. Cpl. Buerger said there was not much coverage then because there are other needs at that hour.

Council congratulated Cpl. Buerger on the citation he received in July from the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO). Mr. Putens added that demands for the services of the SROs will continue to increase because they have made such a success of the program.

PETITIONS AND REQUESTS

Security at Roosevelt Center: Eileen Peterson, 28-B Crescent Road, read a letter from Barbara Tanen of 13-D Ridge Road regarding problem behaviors on the part of teenagers and adults at Roosevelt Center and on the benches and walkways in the vicinity of the Center. She also presented a much lengthier letter on this subject from Larry Phelps, 28-C Crescent Road, and herself. Several merchants from the Center also spoke and described some of the problems, including Leonard Wallace of Realty One, Louis Parker, of Chef Lou’s, Daniel Kim of the Mini-Mart, and Terri Rutledge of the New Deal Café. They cited fights, profanity, littering, and intimidating behavior. It was noted that the surveillance cameras in the Center do not move, with the result that individuals have learned to get out of range of the cameras. It was also noted that many of the younger people who hang out in the Center stay indefinitely and have no apparent adult supervision or time for going home.

Mayor Davis said that since this was a petition, Council would refer the matter and bring it back up later, but she asked for any discussion. Mr. Putens commented there have been problems for some time, but they seem to be getting worse. Mr. Turnbull said the City has been only in "response" mode and that what the citizens are requesting is preventative action. There was discussion of the fact that because this is a public place, people cannot be banned from it. Mr. White suggested that some of the behaviors, including drinking, under-age smoking, and vandalism would be actionable. Mr. Roberts commented that in a public place where people are allowed to loiter, cameras cannot make that much difference. Mr. Wallace also suggested that really closing the "park" at 11 p.m. would make a real difference. Ms. Rutledge observed that the group that hangs out in the Center has gotten larger. She said the Café is open till midnight and that young people could not be removed if there were still adults there. She agreed with Mr. Roberts that cameras are of limited use and that a greater police presence is needed. Ms. Peterson commented that her apartment overlooks the Center, and there is noise and activity cars stopping and meeting people well after 1 a.m.

The Bond Issue: Sheldon Goldberg, chair of the Greenbelt East Advisory Committee, spoke briefly to explain that the reason he has not been able to respond specifically about the attitude of Greenbelt East toward the package of road and pedestrian improvements included in the bond issue is that they do not believe they have enough information to form a strong judgment. For example, since they do not yet know what the Hanover Parkway study or the playgrounds study will reveal, it is not certain how the projects proposed under the bond would fit into these concerns. He said this was not intended to be a complaint, just an explanation of why it is difficult for Greenbelt East to respond specifically. Mayor Davis, Mr. White, and Mr. Putens all expressed understanding of this difficulty but said they thought there was reason for confidence that the categories included under the bond issue would be in accord with the more specific needs that could be identified later.

ROBBERY AT THE CREDIT UNION: At the City Manager’s request, Lt. Michael Craddock told Council that the FBI is investigating the robbery at the Greenbelt Credit Union, and the Police Department is supporting their investigation. He said a robbery like this at the Credit Union is unexpected because of the location. With regard to the problems described earlier by the merchants at the Center, Lt. Craddock suggested that an appropriate first step could be a "breakfast" or other meeting between the Police Department and the merchants to discuss the situation, and he said he would initiate doing this.

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS: Regarding the minutes from the work session of May 22, 2001, Mayor Davis noted the group of visiting women elected officials was from Switzerland. Mr. Putens moved acceptance of the amended minutes, and Mr. Turnbull seconded. The motion carried 5-0. Regarding the minutes of the regular meeting of, August 13, 2001, Mayor Davis noted it was not, as stated, the Golden Age Club that had originated the petition against the closing of the branch bank. Mr. Turnbull moved acceptance of the revised minutes. Mr. Putens seconded the motion, which then passed 5-0.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mr. McLaughlin announced that Green Ridge House has received notification that it will receive a beautification award from the county at an event on September 26. Mayor Davis added that Isaac Robinson has also been named for an award for his garden and pond at his and Janet Parker’s residence at 6 Court Ridge.

Mr. Shay said Robert Manzi, City Solicitor, had provided some notes on the hearing on the preliminary plan of subdivision for Greenbelt Station. He said although the plan was approved on a 5-0 vote, several conditions were added. Mr. Manzi said it would be well to wait to see what the Planning Board resolution actually looks like before discussing any further action. Mr. White asked what the time line for appeal to the Circuit Court, and Mr. Shay said he believed it was 30 days from the time of the publication of the resolution.

Mayor Davis reported briefly on the hearing held today for appeals to the District Council on the approval of the conceptual site plan for Greenbelt Station. The vote was 6-2 in favor of the plan, with Mr. Maloney and Mrs. Scott voting against it. Mayor Davis cited many misrepresentation that were made by the developer at the hearing. She thanked Mr. Manzi, the Planning Department staff, and the other groups who supported the City. Mr. White suggested scheduling a strategy session for Council and staff on the next steps to take.

Mayor Davis announced congratulations were in order for Richard Santos, who has been elected National Commander of the American Legion. She thanked volunteers and staff who worked on Labor Day (noting particularly the float produced by the Creative Kids Camp) and the Arts Center for their Shakespeare on the Green performances. She also asked that the information on the upcoming Community Pledge and Peace Month activities be conveyed to the National League of Cities.

LEGISLATION

An Ordinance to Amend the Capital Projects Budget for Fiscal Year 2002: The Mayor read the agenda comments. Mr. Putens introduced the ordinance for first reading. He also moved that a public hearing on the capital projects budget be held at the September 24 regular meeting. Mr. White seconded the motion, which passed 4-0, Mr. Turnbull being absent.

An Ordinance to Authorize and Empower the City of Greenbelt, Maryland, from Time to Time, to Borrow Not More than Three Million Five Hundred Thousand Dollars ($3,500,000) for the Public Purpose of Financing the Cost of Certain Municipal Facilities and Public Improvements as More Particularly Described Herein, and to Effect Such Borrowing by the Issuance and Sale, upon its Full Faith and Credit, of its General Obligation Bonds in like Par Amount Pursuant to the Authority of Sections 31 to 37, Inclusive of Article 23a of the Annotated Code of Maryland (1998 Replacement Volume, as Amended) and Section 55 of the City Charter; Providing for the Appropriation and Disposal of the Proceeds of Sale of the Bonds; Providing for the Levy and Collection of Taxes Sufficient for the Prompt Payment of the Maturing Principal of and Interest on the Bonds; and Generally Relating to the Issuance, Sale and Payment of the Bonds: Mayor Davis read the agenda comments. Mr. White introduced the ordinance for first reading.

Mr. Roberts said he did not disagree with the idea of putting the issue on the ballot for citizens to decide, but he was concerned that the citizens had not been given information on what the alternatives were. He particularly wanted more information on what the impact would be if the City did not borrow additional money but, rather, paid off the existing debt and then budgeted funds for capital projects free of debt. The Mayor asked the City Manager to provide such information prior to the introduction of the ordinance for second reading. She added that there were many issues to consider, including the need to match the funding from the state, as well as the long delay that might occur on fulfilling some of the projects. Mr. Roberts responded that he was not opposed to any of the projects, but he wanted to have the scenario laid out of what could and would happen in the absence of the bond.

A Resolution Providing for a Referendum to Be Held at a Regular Municipal Election on Tuesday, November 6, 2001, for the Purpose of Submitting to the Voters of the City of Greenbelt, Maryland, the Question of Approving the Issuance and Sale of General Obligation Bonds of the City in an Amount Not to Exceed Three Million Five Hundred Thousand Dollars ($3,500,000) as Authorized by Ordinance Number 1205 of the City: Mayor Davis read the agenda comments. Mr. White introduced the resolution for first reading.

Mr. Turnbull clarified that passing the bond referendum would authorize the City either to issue bonds or to negotiate other types of loans. Mayor Davis said she would prefer to see more specifics in the question to placed on the ballot regarding the potential uses of the funds. Mr. Turnbull agreed that it might facilitate passing the referendum if the voters had more specific language in front of them. Mr. McLaughlin said the projects would be described in greater detail in the brochure to be mailed to all households but that alternate language would be presented at the next meeting.

A Resolution of the City of Greenbelt, Maryland, to Authorize the Designation of a Resident Agent for Service of Process: Mayor Davis read the agenda comments. Mr. Turnbull introduced the resolution for first reading.

A Resolution to Approve and Authorize the Submission of a Management Plan for the Certification of the Anacostia Trails Heritage Area: The Mayor read the agenda comments. Mr. Putens introduced the resolution for first reading.

FEE INCREASE FOR ARCHITECT OF PUBLIC WORKS FACILITY: Mayor Davis read the agenda comments. Mr. White moved that Council approve the $28,184 in additional fees for Scott Grice Architects for work on the Public Works Facility. Mr. Putens seconded the motion. After brief discussion, the motion was passed 5-0.

REQUEST TO TRANSFER A 75-ACRE STATE PROPERTY ADJACENT TO GREENBELT STATION: The Mayor read the agenda comments. She noted that because this information had not previously been part of the record, it could not be introduced as part of the City’s appeal of the approval of the conceptual site plan. Mr. White said he thought the City should ask for the entire 111 acres, not just the 75 acres. Mr. McLaughlin said that could be done. It was moved by Mr. Roberts and seconded by Mr. Putens that a letter be sent under the Mayor’s signature to Mr. Lynch of the State of Maryland, requesting the state to enter into discussions regarding the possible transfer of the property to the City of Greenbelt. The motion passed 5-0.

STATE REDISTRICTING: Mayor Davis read the agenda comments and said she thought the City should reiterate its opposition to the Prince George’s House delegation plan, which separates precinct 21-08 from the rest of the City. Mr. White stated that, in light of the Dean plan, the City should stay in the 23rd District. He moved, and Mr. Roberts seconded, that Greenbelt communicate to the Governor’s Redistricting Advisory Committee that it wishes to remain in the 23rd District. The motion passed 5-0.

STATE LEGISLATION - DEADLINE FOR FILING LOCAL AND BI-COUNTY BILLS: Mayor Davis read the agenda comments. Mayor Davis explained that the issue under consideration, limiting signage in liquor store windows, involves a safety issue of the police not being able to see into stores from the street. She asked how the City would go about developing legislation on this if it had the authority, and Mr. McLaughlin said staff would first examine the City of Laurel’s bill. Mr. Putens moved support from the City for acquiring this authority, and Mr. White seconded. Mr. Roberts asked if it was known what the limitation would be and was told that is not known. He expressed reluctance to vote on the matter without knowing the specifics and also questioned targeting only one type of business. Mr. White said Council would be supporting having the authority to limit, not supporting a specific law, and that the authority had to be tied to the state’s existing regulation of liquor stores. In response to a question from Mr. Turnbull, Mayor Davis explained that illegal activity in the stores was often with the consent of the store owner and endangered customers and the public. The motion passed 5-0.

APPOINTMENTS TO ADVISORY GROUPS: Mr. Turnbull moved that Susan Gregersen be appointed to the Recycling and Environment Advisory Committee. Mr. Putens seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.

MEETINGS: The list of upcoming meetings was reviewed. It was decided to hold the work session on Greenbelt Station on Monday, October 1, and to try to schedule the combined stakeholder meeting with the Greenbelt Area Schools and the school board representative on Wednesday, October 3.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Putens and seconded by Mr. Turnbull. The motion carried 5-0. Mayor Davis adjourned the regular meeting of September 10, 2001 at 11:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen Gallagher
City Clerk

"I hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and correct report of the regular meeting of the City Council of Greenbelt, Maryland, held September 10, 2001."

Judith F. Davis

Mayor