



REGULAR MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL
Held Monday, May 8, 2000.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 8:03 p.m.

ROLL CALL was answered by Council members Edward V.J. Putens and Rodney M. Roberts and by Judith F. Davis, Mayor. Council members Alan Turnbull and Thomas X. White had previously indicated that they would be absent.

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 Bradley T. McGaha and Christian M. Bowman, residents. She then led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

CONSENT AGENDA: Mayor Davis removed the minutes from the Regular Meeting of April 24, 2000. With this change, Mr. Putens moved approval of the consent agenda. Mr. Roberts seconded. The motion passed 3 to 0.

Council thereby took the following actions:

MINUTES:

- Work Session, April 19, 2000
- Work Session, April 25, 2000
- Work Session (1), April 26, 2000
- Work Session (2), April 26, 2000
- Work Session, May 2, 2000

Approved as presented.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Park & Recreation Advisory Board Report #00-4: Restroom Design at Buddy Attick Park. Council accepted this report and directed that it be held until Council receives the revised plan from the consultant.

PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE : Council agreed to set a work session to meet with the chair and vice-chair of the committee and any other interested committee members to discuss concerns that have been raised.

RESIGNATION FROM THE ADVISORY PLANNING BOARD: Council accepted Pauline Grant's resignation with regret and directed that staff draft the appropriate letter of appreciation for the Mayor's signature.

RESIGNATION FROM THE EMPLOYEE RELATIONS BOARD: Council accepted John Mongelli's resignation with regret and directed that staff draft the appropriate letter of appreciation for the Mayor's signature.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Mr. Putens moved that the agenda be approved. Mr. Roberts seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

PRESENTATIONS:

ACE Student Awards: The Mayor introduced Leta Mach, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Education (ACE), who then provided introductory remarks to ACE's 6th Annual Student Awards Program. State Senator Leo Green, Delegates Mary Conroy and Joan Pitkin, and County Councilmember Audrey Scott joined Council in greeting the award recipients, who were presented by Ms. Mach. Each student received certificates from ACE, the County Council, and the State Senate, as well as a small gift. Scholarships were announced for the high school students. Awards were presented to the following, with all present except for John McDonald and James Boyd:

Kiet Tran and Keirra Shinault Greenbelt Elementary School

John McDonald and Charlae Thompson Springhill Lake Elementary School

Chieun Ahn and David Yi Magnolia Elementary School

Jaelyn Crowley and Stephen Didion St. Hugh's School

Meraj Chowdhury and Berthel Tate Greenbelt Middle School

Victoria Anale-Dibia and James Boyd Robert Goddard Middle School

Thomas Milligan Hindsley & Joannah Hy Kim Eleanor Roosevelt High School

Legislative Wrap-Up - 23rd District Delegation: Senator Green and Delegates Conroy and Pitkin provided a summary of the 2000 General Assembly Session, which they all agreed was a very successful one for Prince George's County. The Mayor and Council members expressed their appreciation to the delegation for their work. Plaques for their Mother and Child statues were also given to Senator Green and to Delegates Conroy and Pitkin.

Proclamation: Police Memorial Day & Police Week: May 15 is Police Memorial Day, and May 14-20 is National Police Week. Mayor Davis read a proclamation in honor of these occasions, which was accepted by Lt. Thomas Kemp on behalf of the Police Department. The Mayor also noted the domestic violence workshops being offered under the aegis of the Police Department in the Community Center. Lt. Kemp indicated that Greenbelt was leading the way locally for increased training of officers in domestic violence issues, with the goal of improving handling of these cases in order to increase convictions.

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE FY 2001 BUDGET: The Mayor read the agenda comments and then recessed the regular meeting for the purpose of conducting a Public Hearing on the FY 2001 Proposed Budget. The following individuals addressed Council:

Jean Snyder, of 12-A Hillside, requested the Council earmark \$100,000 of the City's Open Space monies toward future purchase of the Jaeger tract when additional funds from other sources materialize. She said she believes it to be in the interests of the citizens of Greenbelt not to let it happen again that land contiguous to Greenbelt Park be developed; she also indicated that while there may be other legitimate uses, land acquisition is the "real spirit" of Open Space funding. Mayor Davis noted that she and other members of Council have worked actively on this matter and said that Council would take the request into account. Mr. Putens reminded Ms. Snyder that there are other tracts of land that impinge directly on Greenbelt that are also of concern to Council. Mr. Roberts said that he would support this use of Open Space funds and suggested that while there are other land needs competing for the funds, they do not require immediate funding and would not be jeopardized by this use of \$100,000. It was further clarified that this money comes from a tax on transfer of real estate.

Kelby Brick, of 8148 Mandan Terrace, congratulated the staff on the clear presentation of the proposed budget document. He expressed concern with the tax increase, saying that it was not acceptable that while other governments are debating what to do with their surpluses, Greenbelt has raised taxes for seven years in a row. The commercial tax base should be increased, and the City should have a plan for so doing. Mayor Davis indicated that Mr. McLaughlin did address this in the proposed budget. Mr. McLaughlin said that the staff would be undertaking a study with the state Department of Assessments and Taxation and that this is a county-wide problem, not just Greenbelt's. In addition, it was by plan that the Council approved last year a draw-down plan that effectively returns money to the taxpayers. He noted that there is a strategic plan and that he would have a copy sent to Mr. Brick. Mr. Putens then noted that the commercial vacancy rate is low and that since the City is at a near-saturation point, new development would be required to increase the tax base. Council is not sure that it wants to go that route and believes that many Greenbelt citizens would prefer to pay somewhat higher taxes if doing so will limit growth. Mr. Brick agreed, emphasizing that what he had in mind was not additional business but higher-quality business. Mayor Davis observed that some businesses in the City have received a tax abatement, as well, and that Council is looking into that. She thanked Mr. Brick for his remarks, saying that Council is looking into these matters. Mr. Roberts added that he agrees that we shouldn't continue to raise taxes but should instead learn to live within our means; he said he liked Mr. Brick's notion of "better" rather than "more" business.

Sheldon Goldberg, of 7848 Jacobs Drive, said that he believed there had been some unfortunate development events in Greenbelt over the last few years that may have impacted revenues but that were more on the order of bad breaks than the result of poor planning on the part of the City.

Janet Jacobs-Parker, of 6-N Ridge Road, said that its high level of services is what makes Greenbelt unique and makes people want to live here. She said she does not object to paying taxes for the level of services she receives and agrees with Al Herling that "taxes are the price you pay for a civilized society."

Following up on Ms. Jacobs-Parker's remark, Mr. Putens read a note he had received from a resident indicating not only support for the proposed change in admission policy for non-residents on summer weekends and holidays at the Aquatic and Fitness Center but also a willingness to pay higher fees if necessary to support the change.

At this time the Mayor declared the Public Hearing to be over, and the regular meeting was reconvened.

PETITIONS AND REQUESTS:

New Gazette Reporter: Mayor Davis introduced and welcomed Amy Boyes, the Gazette reporter who is taking over the Greenbelt beat from Karl Hille.

MINUTES:

Executive Session, April 24, 2000: Mr. Roberts moved that the minutes of the Executive Meeting of the City Council held Monday, April 24, 2000, be approved as presented. He further requested that the minutes of this meeting reflect that the Council met in Executive Session at 7:35 p.m. in the Library of the Municipal Building and that Council held this closed meeting in accordance with Section 10-508 (a)(7) of the State Government Article of the Annotated Code of Public General Laws of Maryland (1999 Replacement Volume) to consult with legal counsel to obtain legal advice regarding the Greenbelt Theatre. Mr. Putens seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Putens - yes

Mr. Roberts - yes

Mayor Davis - yes

Regular Meeting, April 24, 2000: Mayor Davis requested that two corrections be made. Mr. Putens moved that with the so-stated amendment the minutes be approved, and Mr. Roberts seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:

There were reports on the many City community events of the last two weekends:

Community Center Open House & Forum - May 6: Joe McNeal, Community Center Supervisor, described the many successful activities of the day, including "Community Building" where children developed their own community with the help of arts and planning staff. He said preliminary indications were that the Nursery School had its best fund-raiser ever. The only disappointment was that the dedication of the Meditation Garden had to be put off until Friday, June 2, during the Greenbelt Day weekend celebration.

Springfest at Springhill Lake - April 29: This was the third annual event, and Mr. McNeal reported that it went very well.

Public Works Open House - April 29: Bill Phelan said this event was a big success, with estimates that it drew 250-300 people.

Earth Day - April 29: Mr. Phelan also reported on this event, a highlight of which was the second phase of shoreline restoration at Greenbelt Lake, in the forebay near Charlestowne Village. Supported by a \$2,000 grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust, the work effectively creates a marsh of native plants.

Youth Advisory Committee's Food Drive - April 29: Mayor Davis asked how this event went, and Mr. McNeal said they had collected seven or eight boxes and bagsful.

Also on April 29, the Mayor attended the dedication of Mt. Rainier's new roundabout, which is still under construction. On April 30, she attended Greenspring's annual meeting with two representatives from the Police Department.

LEGISLATION:

A Resolution to Establish Admission Fees and Pass Rates for the Greenbelt Aquatic & Fitness Center and Repeal Resolution 764: Mayor Davis read the agenda comments. Mr. Putens introduced the above-titled resolution for first reading. The only fees that will change are the summer daily admission fees for non-residents. The resolution does not cover the related change in policy, which would prohibit non-residents during the summer on weekends and holidays unless they are the guests of Greenbelt residents or pass-holders. This policy change will appear on the agenda of the next regular Council meeting, when this resolution will also appear for second reading. Mayor Davis encouraged the staff to get information on this out to the homeowners' associations and do any other appropriate publicity.

A Resolution to Negotiate the Purchase of a Dump Truck from Tysons Ford of Vienna, Virginia at a Cost of \$44,059.46: Mayor Davis read the agenda comments. Mr. Roberts made some queries of staff regarding the model of the truck. He then introduced the above-titled resolution for first reading..

LANDSCAPING PLAN FOR GREENBELT ROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY BY GREENBELT ARMORY: The Mayor read the agenda comments and added that the armory is now also the home-base of an honor guard of the National Guard. Mr. Phelan introduced Pat Heaney, an environmental consultant for the State, working through Greenhorne & O'Mara to oversee

landscape contracts for installation in Prince George's County. Mr. Heaney indicated that the primary reason for bringing this before Council was that the plan calls for the removal of two trees. The reason for removing them is that they are non-native, a maintenance hazard, and would be replaced by more attractive native species. Mr. Roberts suggested—and it was subsequently agreed—that the new trees be planted around them and that they not be taken up until the other trees are established. Mr. Phelan agreed that this would work well, since if the American hollies are re-sited they could benefit from the shade provided by the Bradford pears and that eventually the other trees would shade out the pears. Mr. Heaney that this was not a problem from the state's point of view; funds had been found to take down the trees since Mr. Phelan had suggested that they be taken down, but the state would have no objection to leaving them. Mr. Roberts was also concerned that the plan includes no trees in the parking lot. After discussion, it was agreed that a letter should be sent to the State strongly encouraging them to include a 6'-8' strip for trees in the middle of the parking lot. Two motions resulted from this discussion:

Mr. Roberts moved, and Mr. Putens seconded, that the landscaping plan be approved with the amendment of keeping the two existing Bradford pear trees. The motion passed 3-0.

Mr. Roberts moved, and Mr. Putens seconded, that a letter be sent to the state recommending strongly that a landscaping strip for trees be included in the middle of the parking lot. The motion passed 3-0.

Council also directed staff to forward the plan to the Advisory Planning Board and the Recycling and Environment Action Committee with the request that they review it and forward any comments to Mr. Phelan and to Council.

STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION (SHA) TASK FORCE ON GREENBELT ROAD:
Mayor Davis read the agenda comments. Mr. McLaughlin added that the City had subsequently learned that the first meeting would be put back until later in June; Council was agreeable to the present inclination of the SHA to schedule it for a Tuesday or Thursday. It was moved by Mr. Putens and seconded by Mr. Roberts that appropriate letters be drafted for the Mayor's signature to all the individuals who applied to serve on the task force and to the SHA notifying them of our appointees. The motion passed 3-0.

MEETINGS:

4 Cities: Mr. McLaughlin said he had a call from College Park saying that they would host the next

meeting and that the SHA consultant for the Greenbelt Road project wanted to be on the agenda of this meeting or one soon following. Mr. Putens asked that it be added to the 4 Cities agenda to ask whether the 4 Cities would like to make a joint contribution toward the purchase of the Jaeger Tract.

The following were agreed upon: the GATE meeting can be combined with the CAR meeting and held on Wednesday, June 21. It is important to meet soon with the Public Safety Committee—

on May 31, if possible, depending on the scheduling of a stakeholder meeting for May 24. There will be no meeting on July 3. Mr. Putens indicated he could not attend the Saturday meeting May 20.

ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Putens moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Roberts seconded. The motion carried unanimously. Mayor Davis adjourned the regular meeting of May 8, 2000, at 10:50 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 May 8, 2000."

Judith F. Davis

Mayor