



**WORK SESSION of the Greenbelt City Council**

**Held Monday, October 2, 2000**

**For the purpose of meeting with the Millennium Community Task Force to discuss the report of the task force.**

Mayor Davis started the meeting at 8:05 p.m. It was held in the Council Room of the Municipal Building.

PRESENT WERE: Council members Edward V.J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts, Alan Turnbull, and Mayor Judith F. Davis.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk, and Greg Varda, Recreation Coordinator.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Kevin Hammett (chair), Patti Brothers, Gerald Madison, Konrad Herling, and Larry Hilliard, Millennium Community Task Force; and Frank White, the Gazette.

By way of introduction, Mr. Hammett noted that although the report was organized around two themes from the White House Millennium Communities literature ("Honor the Past" and "Imagine the Future"), the task force had tried to focus its work in terms of "community" and "neighborhoods," with the idea that the dominant consideration should be how to bring the various segments of Greenbelt together while at the same time celebrating their differences. He also said that many of the suggestions from the White House are things that Greenbelt already does, so the task force tried to come up with ideas that would be more meaningful.

Mayor Davis said that the Council was already working on some of suggestions of the report, e.g., Neighborhood Days and the Wall of Honor. She said Council was concerned about the length time for accomplishing some of the other suggestions.

Tree Plantings: Mr. Hammett said the task force had discussed the planting of significant trees in different parts of the City as a unifying element. He noted, for example, that the Eleanor Roosevelt tree on Crescent Road is no more than a shell and is not well situated to be appreciated or even noticed. Mayor Davis suggested that a Greenbelt East tree could be planted in conjunction with SchromFest. Mr. McLaughlin suggested doing City-wide plantings in conjunction with existing events, such as Arbor Day, SpringFest, or Earth Day.

Celebrating the Green Belt: Mr. Roberts suggested going a step beyond celebrating the green belt by taking some formal action to "dedicate" it, thereby sending a strong signal about the City's long-term commitment to its preservation.

Chautauquas/Millennium Evenings: Mr. Turnbull said the suggestion to do a series of chautauquas struck him as most meaningful, since it was not something the City routinely did

and would be special to the occasion. The Mayor added that these could be used as an occasion for community "visioning" of the future of Greenbelt, as Council has done in some of its goal-setting activities. She was concerned, however, that the planning and implementation of such events would involve a good deal of time and work on someone's part. Mr. Turnbull suggested that might not be the case if we brought speakers in, one possibility being presenters from our sister "green towns."

**Greenbelt Passport:** Ms. Brothers said one idea the task force had discussed that did not appear in the written report was using a "passport" similar to the one the County used over the year it celebrated its anniversary. Instead of being tied to locations, however, it would feature all the major Recreation Department and community events for the year, with the idea of encouraging community attendance. Everyone agreed the passport was a very good idea.

**Enhancing Access Points:** Mayor Davis was supportive of the notion of enhancing the Spellman Overpass, which she noted is less than welcoming. She also said that improvements for some City entrance-ways are included in the capital projects budget for this year.

**Involving Young People:** Mr. Hammett pointed out the section of the report dealing with incorporation of the Eleanor Roosevelt High School's character education program, which is using conflict resolution as its theme for this year. He noted that we must involve the young people in order to envision the future.

The big question was how these ideas might be carried out. Everyone agreed that it had not been expected that the task force would assume an oversight role, but rather that responsibility would be taken over by other organizations. The task force agreed to meet and put together a timeline of programs and activities, including the passport, for which implementation responsibility could then be assigned to other groups. Since many of the activities will piggy-back on City Recreation Department events, there will inevitably be some Recreation staff responsibility; however, it was recognized that a budget would also be necessary. Mr. Roberts said the subject should be brought up at a regular meeting, especially if funds were to be expended. It was agreed the task force would report back prior to Thanksgiving and that the goal is to be on the November 13th agenda.

Mr. McLaughlin suggested that since activities would run through 2001, they could be dovetailed with existing activities to permit focusing on the three parts of the City: e.g., tree planting and chautauqua-type activities in Springhill Lake at SpringFest; in Center City at Greenbelt Day; and in Greenbelt East at SchromFest. Mr. Varda suggested having millennium events for children as part of the Community Center Open House, which already has a major focus on kids.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Gallagher

City Clerk