

Greenbelt Middle School Task Force Meeting Minutes ~ January 13, 2011

Present: Natasha Jenkins, David Lange, Janet Mirsky, Beatrice Rodgers, Barbara Simon, , Theresa Bugg, Keith Chernikoff, Brenda Cooley and Rev. Daniel Hamlin, Anna Socrates and David Whaples

Excused: Elizabeth Hammett, Rosemary Pezzuto, Ken Blue

City Council: Ms. Leta Mach, Liaison (not present)

Board of Ed.: Ms. Peggy Higgins, Liaison

Staff: Joe McNeal, Liaison

The meeting of the Greenbelt Middle School Task Force was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by Joe McNeal in the City Council Chambers at 25 Crescent Road.

All in attendance were asked to introduce themselves to the other members of the Task Force.

Elections of Task Force Officers were conducted. The results are as follows;

- David Lange was nominated for Chair by Barbara Simon and seconded by Brenda Cooley. There being no other nominations, a vote was held and Mr. Lange was unanimously elected as Chair of the GMSTF.
- Beatrice Rodgers was nominated for Vice Chair by Keith Chernikoff and seconded by David Lange. There being no other nominations, a vote was held and Ms. Rodgers was unanimously elected at Vice Chair of the GMSTF.
- Mr. McNeal advised the GMSTF members in attendance they could select a Secretary from the Citizen members of the GMSTF or they could appoint Mr. McNeal, Staff Liaison as Secretary. The members unanimously voted to appoint Mr. McNeal as Secretary of the GMSTF.

At the conclusion of the elections the meeting was turned over to Mr. David Lange, Chair of the GMSTF.

Many members of the GMSTF expressed concern about having no schedule and requested Mr. McNeal contact Paul Taylor to obtain a written list of his benchmarks. Each benchmark should state the event and an estimated date. For example, one benchmark might be receiving from the City of Greenbelt their recommendations on which building portions could be demolished and which should be retained. If so, when does he need that to accomplish his orderly planning?

Mr. McNeal advised that through a phone conversation with Mr. Taylor with PGCPs, Mr. Taylor stated he understood the potential need for additional time beyond the June 2011 deadline. Mr. Taylor advised that while completion of the GMSTF report and recommendations is desired by June 2011 he considered the work of the GMSTF to be very important and that it should not be “rushed”. Mr. Taylor advised that if the GMSTF needed an addition 3 to 6 months that would probably be acceptable as long as all involved realize this extension will necessitate extending the timeline for the work Mr. Taylor needs to complete related to hiring architects, engineers, plan review, etc. related to the renovation of the existing Greenbelt Middle School.

There seemed to be consensus that the members of the Task Force felt that 9 months could be sufficient to complete the task although no formal vote was taken at the time to confirm this.

The level of funding available for the renovation was discussed. Ms. Higgins advised there was approximately 6 million dollars available for this work and that because the funding was being held in the Capital Improvement Budget the funding was as secure as it could possibly be given the current fiscal climate.

There was discussion about portions of the 1969 wing. Can it be retained, if not does the entire wing need to be demolished or can just a portion of the wing be removed such that the expanded bus lot could be accommodated by still allow for retaining part of the wing. Ms. Jenkins noted the importance of the bus lot to smooth operation of schools in the area and that there is a significant advantage to having the bus lot close to Greenbelt schools Mr. Whaples requested copies of site plans for the existing school, new school, proposed bus lot and any other plans for the site for the Task Force to review when considering parking for the site, possible demolition of various wings etc. Ms. Higgins indicated she would contact Mr. Taylor to secure copies of any relevant plans that are available.

Mr. Lange introduced the concept of “Neighboring” to conduct asset surveys and empower/strengthen communities. This contrasts with the traditional approach of providing externally imposed solutions to perceived community needs. Dan Hamlin described the similar ‘Asset-Based Community Development’ (ABCD) approach he observed in Kenya and gave examples of its effectiveness there.

However, the group was concerned about the time required to implement this approach against our target dates for making recommendations. It decided to proceed with categorizing the usage activities.

The Task Force noted the absence of members from the Franklin Park Community on the Task Force and requested that Ms. Pezzuto and Ms. Jenkins identify residents of Greenbelt West who may be willing to work with the Task Force or become members.

The Task Force requested that the Staff Liaison contact the Greenbelt Assistance in Living (GAIL) program coordinator regarding any studies or needs assessments that have

been conducted that could assist the Task Force with their proposal. as well as any other reports which might be available such as the Annual Report of the senior citizen advisory committee

The Task Force requested that the Staff Liaison contact the Prince George's County Economic Development Corp. regarding any studies or needs assessments that have been conducted that could assist the Task force with their proposal.

A number of possible uses of spaces were suggested including; tutoring programs, computer lab(s), telework center, among others. At this point all members of the Task Force were requested to develop a list of top ten uses for the existing middle school and forward to the Staff Liaison so a master list could be compiled and categorized. The next meeting of the Task Force will focus on efforts to prioritize and categorize the uses which are identified.

The Task Force discussed various approaches to facilitating community input such as holding community meetings in all areas of Greenbelt, utilizing exiting programs to get input from the community such as skate nights and movie nights held at the SHLES, the City sponsored Celebration of Spring event, etc.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:39 p.m.

Minutes APPROVED unanimously at the 2-10-11 meeting