

## Greenbelt Middle School Task Force Meeting Minutes ~ May 26, 2011

Present: Ken Blue, Keith Chernikoff, Natasha Jenkins (8:26pm), Sharmaine Koenig, David Lange (Chair), Janet Mirsky, Rosemary Pezzuto, Beatrice Rodgers (Vice Chair), Barbara Simon, David Whaples and Shane Wisdom (8:04pm)

City Council: Ms. Leta Mach, Liaison

Staff: Nicole DeWald, Liaison (acting)

Guests: Paul Shakelford, Turning Point Academy (departed approx. 8:15pm, prior to discussion of TPA)  
Bill Orleans

Excused: Rev. Daniel Hamlin

Absent: Elizabeth Hammett  
Peggy Higgins, Liaison, Board of Education

The meeting of the Greenbelt Middle School Task Force was called to order at 7:44pm by David Lange in the City Council chambers at 25 Crescent Road.

The minutes of the May 12, 2011 Task Force meeting were amended and then approved by acclamation.

Mr. Lange reported that a strong turnout had been present for the public hearing held recently at the Springhill Lake Elementary School, noting that most attendees were affiliated with Turning Point Academy ("TPA"). He noted that at the upcoming Task Force meeting in 2 weeks members will be expected to approve an interim report to the City Council. Before the meeting, they will receive a packet to review. Mr. Lange indicated that on May 27 he would share the results of tonight's meeting with Paul Taylor of the Prince George's County Public School system ("PGCPS") and inquire as to whether the recommendations of the Task Force, if approved by Council, would be sufficient for him to proceed with repair and/or demolition of the old Greenbelt Middle School ("GMS") facility in August, although he was not optimistic.

Mr. Lange noted that a Council/ Task Force worksession will be scheduled for July 13<sup>th</sup> or July 18<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Lange expressed that the Task Force does not have sufficient information about Franklin Park's plans for shuttle service and/or other facilities and services and how those might mesh with other resources being considered for the old GMS site. (Ms. Koenig noted that previously announced plans to charge Franklin Park residents for shuttle service under some circumstances had not been implemented.) Mr. Lange indicated that the Task Force also was lacking information about TPA, the position of the Board of Education on their interest in the building, and the possible costs and issues associated with their use of the GMS site.

Mr. Lange asked whether the agenda (including items for voting) was sufficient, or whether the Task Force members also wanted to vote on a recommendation concerning possible uses of the GMS facility. In the course of discussion, Board members informally agreed:

- That the Task Force should recommend priority uses, as that will influence the amount of square footage to be retained.
- That this recommendation should be made subsequent to submittal of the interim support, and possibly through the agency of a “business plan” working group similar to the effort made in the Community Center renovation planning.
- That a use plan for the facility should remain flexible, as the community’s needs will likely evolve over time, notwithstanding some service needs that may be deemed basic or effectively universal

Mr. Chernikoff asked that TPA be added to the agenda. The agenda was approved by acclamation with Mr. Chernikoff’s addition at 8:20pm.

On voting item A on the agenda, Ms. Cooley suggested that the wording be modified to reflect that community services based at a renovated GMS would be developed for the benefit of all Greenbelters, and not exclusively for the use and benefit of Greenbelt West residents. Members ultimately agreed and modified the language of proposed recommendation.

Mr. Chernikoff moved:

**“We find there is a need for more community services throughout Greenbelt, particularly in Greenbelt West.”**

The motion was seconded by Ms. Pezzuto. The recommendation, as amended, was adopted unanimously by the Task Force (11-0), with no members opposed or abstaining.

The language of item B was modified in accordance with the rationale for modifying item A. Ms. Pezzuto moved:

**“We find there is a need for more facilities to provide community services, particularly in Greenbelt West.”**

The motion was seconded by Mr. Blue. The recommendation, as amended, was adopted unanimously by the Task Force (11-0), with no members opposed or abstaining.

The language of item C was modified in accordance with the rationale for modifying items A and B. Mr. Chernikoff moved:

**“We recommend that part of the old Greenbelt Middle School building should be renovated to provide community services in Greenbelt.”**

The motion was seconded by Ms. Cooley. The recommendation, as amended, was adopted unanimously by the Task Force (11-0), with no members opposed or abstaining.

The Task Force discussed Mr. Chernikoff's agenda item. Key issues included:

- Whether or not it was appropriate for the Task Force to express an opinion as to whether a school, in general terms, would be an appropriate use for a portion of the GMS building which was not needed for use as a community center
- Whether a school would be a compatible use with a community center and with the adjacent new Greenbelt Middle School; possible concerns were noted regarding parking, security, outdoor open and play space, and the risk that a school operation, once in place, might seek to expand into the area used for community services.
- Whether or not the Task Force should recommend demolition of any portion of the facility which the City could not afford or otherwise did not wish to own; members noted a desire to prevent expansion of the County bus lot on site

The Task Force discussed that TPA could appeal to the Board of Education and could conceivably be granted use of the entire building. Mr. Lange noted that TPA had previously appealed to the Board of Education for a facility, but that they had only been offered former elementary schools which were not equipped properly to facilitate their intended expansion of services to older grades. Ms. Mach noted that TPA had approached the City about the GMS property, and that the City Manager has responded to TPA directing them back to the Board of Education.

Mr. Chernikoff moved:

**"Turning Point Academy approached the Task Force for use of the space. The matter of charter schools using the space is a Board of Education decision and the matter is outside the scope of the Task Force."**

The motion was seconded by Ken Blue, and adopted by a unanimous vote (11-0) with none opposed or abstaining.

Ms. Pezzuto moved:

**"We recommend that the City of Greenbelt should manage both the renovated Greenbelt Middle School facility and the community services."**

The motion was seconded by Ms. Rodgers. The recommendation was adopted unanimously by the Task Force (11-0), with no members opposed or abstaining.

Item E from the agenda was modified to reflect discussion concerning open space. Ms. Mirsky moved:

**"We recommend that, if acceptable to the Prince George's County Public School system and the County government, the City of Greenbelt should own the renovated Greenbelt Middle School facility and surrounding land."**

The motion was seconded by Ms. Cooley. The recommendation, as amended, was adopted unanimously by the Task Force (11-0), with no members opposed or abstaining.

Mr. Lange reiterated that information will be delivered to members before the June 9 meeting. All members will be asked to append their signatures to an interim report to be presented to Council at their June 20 meeting.

Mr. Lange noted that July 13 is likely to be the date of the Council worksession, in order that Ms. Mach can attend. He expressed that he would like to have Paul Taylor present as well.

Mr. Lange asked members to forward to him by Monday, May 30, any input they may have concerning language about the rationale for the recommendations voted on tonight.

Ms. DeWald agreed to email to members on May 27 the final language of the recommendations.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:39pm.

Minutes approved unanimously at 6-9-11 meeting