WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, January 13, 2016, for the purpose of discussing playground surfacing at 1 Court Southway.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 8:33p.m. It was held in the Multi-Purpose Room of the Greenbelt Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Judith F. Davis, Konrad E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Silke I. Pope, Edward V.J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager and David E. Moran, Assistant City Manager.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Derek Thompson, Eric (last name withheld), Laura Kressler, PSAC Chair, Bill Orleans and Kathleen Gallagher, News Review

Council discussed the playground surfacing at 1 Court Southway. Mr. Moran stated that the FY 2016 Budget included funds to remove the shredded rubber surfacing and replace it with either Poured in Place (PIP) or Engineered Wood Fiber (EWF). He noted that staff recommends replacing all equipment when installing PIP surfacing and this playground was not scheduled for equipment replacement. Mr. Moran indicated that staff's recommendation was to use EWF.

Mayor Jordan believed PIP was the best surface choice, but noted it was significantly more expensive than EWF.

Mr. Roberts favored replacing shredded rubber with EWF and doing this at as many playgrounds as possible.

Ms. Mach favored PIP because this location was a shady playground. She also believed that it was the best surface choice for accommodating disabilities.

Ms. Pope preferred PIP but wanted to proceed with EWF and use the remaining funds to replace shredded rubber at other playgrounds.

Mr. Putens did not favor charging the playground owners for the 25% of the surfacing cost. He believed the City was mistaken in installing shredded rubber and needed to rectify the situation.

Ms. Davis favored surveying the neighbors surrounding the playground to get their input on surfacing choices. Mr. Herling believed surveying the neighbors was a wise approach.

Mr. Roberts expressed frustration with the number of times the City had discussed this issue and did not want to further delay action by taking a survey. He wanted to get rid of the shredded rubber.

Mayor Jordan disagreed that the City made an error in installing the shredded rubber, noting that the City was following best practices.

Ms. Davis stated a survey did not need to take years. She believed it could be done quickly,

Dr. Kressler stated that EPA was now saying there was concern about toxicity. She believed it was

good to remove the shredded rubber and suggested using the budgeted monies to remove the shredded rubber as soon as possible.

Mr. Thompson discussed the playground improvements in Windsor Green and believed the process used at the time was a good one. He acknowledged they had not responded to the City's letter. Mr. Thompson reported Windsor Green was researching changes to their Recreation facilities and was getting RFP responses which he expected in 2-3 months. He stated there were no complaints from Windsor Green homeowners about the shredded rubber in their playgrounds.

Ms. Davis asked if Windsor Green would be seeking City support for the improvements. Mr. Thompson responded no that Windsor Green wanted to incorporate the playground into an overall recreation plan for the pool area that would be limited to residents only.

Mr. Putens stated that he wanted to remove shredded rubber and that was his top priority.

Mr. Putens asked for more detail from Windsor Green about renovations to their recreation facilities. Mr. Thompson responded that 2-3 tennis courts, basketball and activities for a larger range of ages including a modern playground for kids.

Mr. Roberts was not looking for playground owners to share the cost of replacing the shredded rubber. He believed the City needed to replace it as soon as possible and was facing legal liability.

Ms. Davis stated that this was not a legal issue. She indicated she favored installing EWF now and in the future when the equipment is replaced, survey residents about their surfacing preferences.

Mr. Herling also favored moving forward with EWF.

Ms. Mach agreed that the shredded rubber needed to be replaced. She was comfortable finding other money to replace shredded rubber at the other playgrounds, but wanted the 1 Court Southway playground to be PIP.

There was consensus to replace the replace the shredded rubber with EWF as quickly as possible.

Information Items

Ms. Davis reported on the MML Legislative Committee meeting.

The meeting ended at 10:00p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

David E. Moran
Assistant City Manager