

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, September 15, 2010, for the purpose of holding a stakeholder meeting with the State Highway Administration (SHA).

Mayor Davis started the meeting at 8:00 p.m. It was held in the Multipurpose Room of the Community Center.

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

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; and Cindy Murray, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Felicia Murphy, Assistant District Engineer for Traffic, and Kate Mazzaro, Assistant District Engineer for Program Development, State Highway Administration, District 3 Office; Germaine Timmermans, Bill Orleans, Cary Coppick, CeCe Richardson, Catherine James and Jacquelyn Waters.

Following introductions, Mayor Davis welcomed the representatives from the State Highway Administration and explained the purpose of stakeholder meetings.

Guardrails in Median on Rt. 193

Ms. James explained the recently installed guardrails in the median on Rt. 193 have made it very difficult for pedestrians to cross the road by Chelsea Woods to reach the westbound bus stop. She requested an opening be placed in the guardrails to make it easier for pedestrians to cross the road.

There was discussion regarding placing a staggered break in the guardrail. Mr. Jordan noted vehicles making u-turns on Rt. 193 at the entrance to Chelsea Woods also create an unsafe situation for pedestrians crossing at this location. Mr. Herling suggested the westbound transit bus make a u-turn to pick up passengers on the eastbound side, then make another u-turn at Cipriano Road to resume its run.

Ms. Murphy explained the guardrails were installed to prevent opposite direction vehicular accidents. She noted the high number of pedestrian fatalities at mid-block unmarked crossings and said the State would not make a cut which would encourage pedestrians to cross at this location. Ms. Murphy said a request was made to WMATA to relocate the bus stop at this location to Rt. 193 and Cipriano Road. She added that a request has also been made to the SHA Office of Safety to have a pedestrian crosswalk installed at this location to allow pedestrians to safely cross the road. The crosswalk request is waiting on final approval. Ms. Murphy also said installing a sidewalk on the westbound Rt. 193 side between NASA and Chelsea Woods had been considered, but there is currently no funding available.

Germaine Timmermans, 6907 Lady Anne Court, commented on the safety provided by the guardrails in preventing opposite direction accidents. She said she had recently observed a near head-on accident occur in this section of Greenbelt Road which was prevented by the guardrail.

Ms. Mach said relocating the westbound bus stop to Greenbelt Road at Cipriano Road and installing a walkway and crosswalk would provide the safest crossing for pedestrians. She suggested sending a letter to the SHA Office of Traffic and Safety Director recommending approval of this recommendation. Mr. Roberts and Ms. Pope said relocating the bus stop to Rt. 193 and Cipriano Road was not a solution, as it would just create a longer and unsafe walk for pedestrians.

Mayor Davis noted that the highway, right of ways and intersection along Greenbelt Road and Cipriano Road belong to the State, and possibly the County in some areas. She asked the State representatives to work with the County and WMATA to determine the best solution to this problem. Mayor Davis also suggested a letter be sent to County Councilmember Turner and WMATA requesting their assistance in resolving the situation.

Bridge Repair on Rt. 201

Ms. Murphy reported the Rt. 201 bridge repair project was approximately 20% complete at this time and she expected the entire project would be finished by fall of 2011.

Bike Lanes on Rt. 193

Ms. Murphy said there is not enough space available to consider full bike lanes on Rt. 193 west of Good Luck Road. She added that when a resurfacing project is done in the future, the SHA will evaluate whether vehicular traffic lanes can be narrowed to allow for installation of bike lanes. Ms. Murphy said that bike lanes are always considered when new construction projects are planned.

Mr. Jordan noted the difficulty for cyclists using Kenilworth Avenue in the area along Greenbelt Road. He suggested consideration be given to connecting this area to sections of Berwyn Heights and Westchester Park when future resurfacing projects are planned. Ms. Murphy said the State would evaluate this request.

Pedestrian Connection at Greenbelt Station South Core and Rt. 193

Ms. Mazzaro said SHA attorneys are pursuing Greenbelt Station's bonds to get the pedestrian connection on Greenbelt Road complete.

Noise Barriers

Mayor Davis explained that residents of Hunting Ridge and Belle Point have expressed concern regarding the noise level from the I-495 traffic increasing and their request to have noise barriers installed. There was discussion regarding the current State policy regarding noise barriers.

Jacquelyn Waters, 6996 Hanover Parkway, and Germaine Timmermans, 6907 Lady Anne Court suggested the policy should not focus on when communities were built, but on the current decibel

level of the traffic.

Mayor Davis suggested a change in the requirements for noise barriers be considered as a future legislative item.

Maintenance of Sidewalks/Right of Ways along State Highways

Ms. Murphy said the SHA removes brush or tree branches in the State right of way that obstruct driver visibility. However, the State does not maintain any sidewalks along state highways and maintenance issues, such as snow removal, are up to the local municipality.

Other Issues

Mayor Davis asked about the current SHA schedule for mowing medians on State highways. Ms. Mazzura said she thought medians were mowed annually, but would check with the proper department and report back to Council.

Ms. Mach questioned whether LED lights are being used in traffic signals. Ms. Murphy said each time a signal is upgraded, LED lights are used.

Jacquelyn Waters, 6996 Hanover Parkway, and Germaine Timmermans, 6907 Lady Anne Court, reported the Southway Road exit and entrance ramps from/to southbound Rt. 295 were in need of repair. Mr. McLaughlin advised maintenance of the ramps is under the control of the National Park Service and they were aware of the problem.

Informational Items

Several informational items were discussed.

The meeting ended at 10:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Cindy Murray
City Clerk*