



***WORK SESSION of the Greenbelt City Council held Wednesday, September 30, 2009,
for the purpose of meeting to discuss the Pesticide Report and Invasive Species Report.***

Mayor Davis started the meeting at 8:06 p.m. It was held in the Senior Classroom of the Community Center.

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

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael McLaughlin, City Manager; Lesley Riddle, Assistant Director of Public Works; Luisa Robles, Recycling Coordinator; and Cindy Murray, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Maggie Cahalan, Mary Chapman, Ed James, and John Lippert, Greenbelt Advisory Committee on Environmental Sustainability; Bob Cahalan, Jean Newcomb, and others.

Pesticide Report

Ms. Cahalan explained the history of the development of the Pesticide Report by the Greenbelt Advisory Committee on Environmental Sustainability (Green ACES), formerly the Recycling and Environment Advisory Committee. She commented that since the report had been submitted, there has been a reduction in the amount of pesticides used by the City but the use of pesticides by residents and contractors continue to be a significant issue.

Ms. Riddle said the Pesticide Report had been reviewed by Public Works staff. She explained that staff agrees with the following specific recommendations put forth by the committee:

- 1. Act as an innovative leader by promoting best practice land care stewardship throughout Greenbelt. Adoption and integration of Organic Land Care Management and Organic Pest Management on all public lands by January 2011.*
- 2. Set a goal of phasing out the cosmetic use of pesticides on public land by January 2011.*
- 3. Creation and adoption of a formal written policy in regards to pesticide usage by City employees and City contractors.*
- 4. Require that current and new contractors are environmentally responsible and follow City standards in regards to pesticide and fertilizer use. All contractors will be required to adhere to City guidelines in regards to pesticide usage.*
- 5. Regular reporting of products being utilized by Public Works for land care in the City.*
- 6. City staff will have access to education resources and certifications that promote and teach organic land care, for example GAIA College.*
- 7. The City will partner with local municipalities and citizen organizations to utilize external resources in achieving the organic land care management goal.*

8. *Continue to observe, document, and address all issues regarding storm water runoff and the impact that the City has on the greater watershed.*
9. *A study of pesticide use by private citizens in Greenbelt should be considered. This issue can also be addressed through community educational outreach, and workshops on organic gardening practices.*
10. *Engage in citizen outreach to address issues that include but are not limited to reducing pesticide and fertilizer use.*

11. *The City will continue to recognize and appreciate the efforts of their dedicated staff. Particular attention will be given to the efforts to implement Organic Land care in the City.*

Ms. Riddle noted that Green ACES had recommended a citizen committee be established to oversee the approval and review of the City's plant care management standards and practices. She explained that staff recommends an alternative action of providing quarterly or bi-annual reports detailing plant and tree health care, community outreach, recycling programs and other sustainability programs and practices. Ms. Riddle advised that waiting for committee approval on specific issues that need immediate attention could impede intervention and possibly cause harm to City trees and green space. Ms. Cahalan said she believed Ms. Riddle's alternate proposal of providing quarterly reports and accountability on a regular basis to Green ACES, the Forest Preserve Advisory Board and the Advisory Committee on Trees would be sufficient.

Ms. Riddle reviewed the following actions that have already been undertaken since the submission of the committee's recommendations in regards to pesticide use.

1. *A comprehensive plant health care initiative that includes monitoring and utilization of all organic and safe control measures before utilizing more traditional means of pest control has been initiated. In effect, that includes making appropriate choices during the planning and planting process, selecting native and indigenous species that have proven to have success within this ecosystem.*
2. *Community forums on environmental issues such as storm water runoff and water quality have already occurred and there will be other forums to address additional critical environmental issues.*
3. *Public Works will be targeting two ball fields for testing a solely organic approach to fertilization.*
4. *Public Works has renovated the rain garden at the Youth Center, expanding the runoff capacity to over 1,000 square feet. This opportunity was also used to address storm water runoff education to the community during the Earth Day celebration.*
5. *Public Works continues to target areas where more rain gardens, rain barrels and other means of storm water management can be implemented.*
6. *Public Works strives to encourage all staff to increase their knowledge of environmental issues and sustainability. Public Works is always in search of new and innovative ideas and processes to better and more safely serve the residents.*

7. *Public Works is currently reviewing the guidelines to several municipalities that utilize only organic methods of pest control; the appropriate information will be incorporated into the City's guidelines for pesticide use.*

Ms. Riddle commented that the reduction in the use of pesticides occurred when the City switched from Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to a plant health care program approach. She added that as more people become educated in pesticide usage, companies are beginning to switch from IPM to plant health care program.

There was discussion regarding the legality of the City implementing legislation prohibiting pesticide use and the difficulty in enforcement.

Invasive Species Report

Ms. Riddle said the Invasive Species Report had also been reviewed by Public Works staff. She provided a draft copy of "An Illustrated Guide to Invasive Species" which was developed to identify the worst invasive species and provide an overview on how to control the species. Mayor Davis commented that community education/outreach would be necessary. Ms. Riddle said she had already held a seminar on invasive species for the community and additional outreach would be planned.

Mr. Roberts mentioned that in many areas, invasive plants provide food for wildlife. Ms. Riddle stressed the entire area where invasive plants are found would need to be evaluated to selectively determine whether removal of the plant and replacement with other plants was necessary. She added that whenever an invasive was removed, it was necessary to replant with another type of plant immediately.

Ms. Mach asked if springs and streams are being monitored. Ms. Riddle said yes, and indicated her hope that as residents are educated in the results, they may be encouraged to reduce pesticide use. Mayor Davis commented that local watershed groups may volunteer to monitor the streams.

Recommendations

Ms. Riddle said she will be working on development of a detailed plant health care management addressing invasive species and a pesticide usage plan. After reviewing with Green ACES and ACT, the plans will be referred to Council.

There was discussion regarding costs to implement the recommendations. Ms. Riddle said she doesn't anticipate an increase in costs.

Ms. Mach suggested courses in gardening should be considered as part of the education process. Mayor Davis mentioned Green ACES and local watershed groups may be able to help with education.

Mr. Herling recommended the information be included on the City webpage and in the Welcome Wagon packet.

Mr. Orleans asked and was provided answers to several questions regarding certifications of staff.

The meeting ended at 10:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Cindy Murray
City Clerk*