



WORK SESSION of the Greenbelt City Council held April 30, 2008, to meet with the Greenbelt Community Garden Club..

Mayor Davis started the meeting at 8:05 p.m. It was held in the Multi-Purpose Room of the Greenbelt Community Center.

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

STAFF PRESENT WAS: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Bob Trumbule, Ed James, John Henry Jones, Susan Barnett, Mercedes Seman, Harold Grapes, Martha Tomecek, Shirley Middleton and Harriette Phelps of the Greenbelt Community Garden Club and Bill Orleans.

Mayor Davis began the meeting by welcoming everyone and noting the value of community gardens. The meeting had an agenda submitted by the club. Mr. Jones gave an introduction of the group and a summary of the work that has recently occurred in reorganizing the group. He noted the group's mission statement and policy statement. There are 46 plots in the Hamilton area and 16 in the Gardenway area. Mayor Davis asked for some type of map of the plots. The group noted they can provide maps probably with an aerial overview as well.

It was noted there is little turnover in the plots and probably 80 to 90 percent of the gardeners are Greenbelt residents. The group holds an annual meeting which is advertised. People interested in a plot can attend the meeting and request a plot. There is also contact information left at the Greenbelt Homes, Inc. office.

Mr. Jones asked whether the City should get involved in empowering the club in enforcement of club rules. Mr. Putens suggested the rules could be approved by Council. Other Council members thought the group ought to enforce its own rules. Ms. Phelps noted she thought there was a lack of communication within the group. There was discussion around this issue and Council asked the group to work on communication and they agreed.

The presence of the forest preserve and possible conflicts was raised a number of times.

On the matter of clean-up days, the intent was for one with the understanding that a second be requested if needed. It was noted that in some past years there were two clean-ups. The club will work with Public Works on this issue.

On the infrastructure issue, the group was seeking some type of material to access the gardens. Use of asphalt millings was suggested. Mr. Roberts expressed his support for crushed stone instead since millings tend to become an impervious surface. Mr. Trumbule also asked for wood

chips at certain points.

Mr. James raised the matter of trees that are encroaching on garden plots. It was agreed that staff will take a look at the situation with the club and address accordingly.

The group is interested in having water provided to the area, though they understand there are numerous issues such as installation, cost, monitoring, etc. Discussion occurred on various ways that might be used to charge for water. It was thought that the difficulty in getting water to the gardens was probably the top reason people don't garden there. The group will continue to consider this matter.

In the discussion on the proposal for a water line to be installed to support a shared garden, Mr. Trumbule noted that the proposed water line as he understood it would not serve everyone. Mr. Roberts thought the water line could be used by anyone, though the payment issues still needed to be addressed. Mr. Jones felt the proposal does not meet the club's policy statement and feels it should have been brought to the club first. Ms. Barnett suggested the matter be given additional thought to determine the pros and cons before the project is undertaken. City Council has been asked to support the proposal as a pilot project. It was noted that Council supported the proposal at its April 28, 2008, meeting with any contingencies identified at this meeting. It was suggested that a memorandum of understanding (MOU) be executed between the group seeking the waterline and the club. The MOU would address issues such as water control, payment for the water, and ownership of the line if the plot is relinquished by the current users.

It was noted the club used to be a City recognition group but did not file papers in 2007. It was recommended the group apply to be a recognition group in future years, since city property is being used.

The meeting ended at 11:00 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Michael McLaughlin
City Manager*