



BUDGET WORK SESSION of the Greenbelt City Council held May 7, 2008, for the purpose of reviewing the Recreation section of Proposed FY 2009 Budget.

Mayor Davis started the meeting at 7:30 p.m. It was held in the Multi-Purpose Room 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 P. McLaughlin, City Manager; Jeff Williams, City Treasurer; Hank Irving, Director of Recreation; Julie McHale and Joe McNeal, Assistant Directors of Recreation; Nicole DeWald, Arts Supervisor, Di Quynn-Reno, Community Center Supervisor; Karen Haseley, Therapeutic Recreation Supervisor; Greg Varda, Recreation Supervisor; Stephen Parks, Aquatic and Fitness Center Supervisor and David E. Moran, Assistant City Manager.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Bill Orleans and Clement Lau, citizens; Sheldon Goldberg, Advisory Planning Board and Brian St. George, News Review.

Mr. Irving began by introducing Jared Walsh who is a new Aquatics Coordinator. He presented a quick summary of the Recreation Budget. There was a presentation of photographs of various Recreation Department activities from the past year.

Mayor Davis asked about the Park Ranger program. Mr. McNeal responded that the program was up and running. The Mayor requested that the Department provide a periodic report of park ranger activities.

Council complimented the Recreation staff on the “Be Happy-Be Healthy” campaign. Ms. McHale reported that the program had been successful. Mr. Roberts asked about the Fire Department’s request to use City recreational facilities for their personnel. Mr. McNeal responded that staff was exploring options with the Fire Department.

Under Recreation Centers, Mayor Davis noted the increase in facility reservations. Ms. Mach asked if the skate park had caused an increase in insurance costs. Mr. McNeal responded that insurance rates for the skate park were steady.

Next, Council reviewed the Aquatic & Fitness Center account. Mayor Davis noted that election survey scores were up. She also indicated that corporate pass visits were up. Mayor Davis asked about an accidental discharge of cleaning chemicals into a creek near the pool and a recent citation by MDE. Mr. McNeal reported that staff was now discharging into a sanitary sewer. Council agreed that the City should pay the \$5,000 contribution required by MDE. Mr. McLaughlin explained the % of expenditures covered by fees and asked if Council was

comfortable at the 60% level. Council responded yes.

Council reviewed the Community Center account. Ms. Mach asked about increasing the kitchen rental rates. Ms. Quynn-Reno stated it had been 2 or 3 years since the rates were increased. Mr. Putens requested that other rate increases be examined. Mr. Herling asked why rates in Laurel were higher and if their facility was more heavily used. Council suggested closing the Community Center on Christmas and Thanksgiving, given the poor attendance. Mr. McLaughlin suggested trying this and collecting hard data about usage at other facilities. There was Council consensus to do this in FY 2009. Mr. Putens asked if revenue as a % of expenditures could reach 40%. He referenced a program in Wichita KS that generates a much higher % of revenue and gives bonuses to staff based on the higher amounts generated. Other Council members were not inclined to pursue this idea. Ms. Mach and Mr. Herling suggested a program where employees could be rewarded financially for ideas which result in cost savings or revenue increases.

Next, the Greenbelt Kids account was reviewed. Council discussed some of the specific programs listed under accomplishments. Mayor Davis asked if Camp Pine Tree might eventually be replaced by the more popular camps like circus camp and the performing arts camp. Mr. Varda responded that Camp Pine Tree was still very popular and he did not see it going away anytime soon.

Council reviewed the Therapeutic Recreation account. Mayor Davis asked if fewer seniors were participating in City programs. Ms. Haseley responded that younger seniors were not joining and participating, but that she and the GAIL program were conducting focus groups to better understand this phenomenon. Ms. Mach requested that staff add revenue as a % of expenditures line item for this account. Mr. Herling asked about Green Ridge House participation in City activities. Ms. Haseley reported on efforts, but indicated the majority of Green Ridge House residents do not participate.

The Leisure & Fitness account was reviewed. Mayor Davis asked if participation was broken down/tracked based upon the three sections of the City. Ms. McHale responded this had never been tracked before and would be difficult. Ms. McHale reported on several "Get Active Greenbelt" activities.

Council discussed the Arts accounts. Ms. Mach noted that the Maryland Municipal League was going to sponsor a geocaching trail. Mayor Davis asked about the increase in attendance at special events. Ms. DeWald responded that these activities were largely weather dependent and that staff was hoping for good weather.

Next, Council reviewed the Special Events account. Mayor Davis questioned the increase to FONDCA under contributions. Mr. McLaughlin explained this was FONDCA's regular contribution plus money for Greenbelt New Year.

There were several informational items discussed. Mr. McLaughlin reported on a meeting with Petrie-Ross where they showed staff a revised plan for Greenbelt Station – North Core including a soccer stadium and a 70,000 square foot entertainment center. Council expressed serious

concern with the proposal.

The meeting ended at 11:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

David E. Moran

Assistant City Manager