

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, February 9, 2011, for the purpose of holding a stakeholder meeting with State's Attorney Angela Alsobrooks.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 8:15 p.m. It was held in the Multi-Purpose 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; David Moran, Assistant City Manager; Celia Craze, Director of Planning and Community Development; Chief James Craze, Capt. Tom Kemp, Capt. Carl Schinner and Lt. John Barrett, Police Department; Liz Park, Director of Social Services; and Cindy Murray, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Angela Alsobrooks, State's Attorney; and Ramon Korionoff, Chief of Staff.

Mayor Davis explained the importance of stakeholders meetings and welcomed everyone.

Comments by State's Attorney

Ms. Alsobrooks said she was very excited about the future of the State's Attorney Office which is composed of very talented and energetic attorneys with an average of 3-4 years of experience, and an equal number of administrative staff. She explained they are well aware the impact crime has on the quality of life in the County and their focus is to be firm, fair and consistent in handling their cases. Ms. Alsobrooks commented that her office was understaffed due to funding issues and noted that other local jurisdictions with similar crime issues have a much larger staff of attorneys to handle comparable workloads. She reported it was difficult to retain good attorneys with these jurisdictions offering considerably higher salaries and reduced workloads.

Crime Issues

Ms. Alsobrooks said her office was working closely with communities to keep track of crime trends in all areas of the County. She advised Renee Battle-Brooks had been recently assigned as Assistant Chief of Community Prosecution and would be meeting soon with Chief Craze and Council to discuss the various ways the State's Attorney Office will be working with and educating the community on their programs. Ms. Alsobrooks mentioned the Speak-Up Program, which encourages residents to come forward with information on crimes, and the Back on Track Program, which identifies productive ways to help first time drug offenders.

Domestic violence: Chief Craze commented that the State's Attorney Office is very strong and swift on prosecution of domestic violence cases. Dr. Park mentioned the difficulties of finding shelter within the County for victims of domestic violence.

Gang Activity: Ms. Alsobrooks thanked Congressman Hoyer for the funding recently approved for staffing a unit in her office focused on gang related activity. Chief Craze reviewed steps the Police Department has taken related to gang activity. Chief Craze and Ms. Alsobrooks both commented that gang related crimes are normally the hardest crimes to solve because people are not willing to come forward and provide information on these crimes.

Police Issues

Drug Forfeiture Process: Chief Craze mentioned the City participation in the Maryland Drug Task Force and commented on the length of time, often years, before confiscated money is disbursed back to the City. Ms. Alsobrooks said she would check on this issue.

Subpoenaing Intoximeter Operators: Chief Craze asked why the State's Attorney office was automatically subpoenaing intoximeter operators for every trial. He requested some clarification regarding this practice, noting it was causing an overtime issue for the City as well as a burnout factor with the officers. Ms. Alsobrooks said she would check on this issue.

Leave Notification: Chief Craze said officers are required to notify the court 90 days in advance about vacation leave. He noted the message does not often make it to the Assistant State's Attorneys, and therefore, good cases are often dismissed because of this communication issue. Chief Craze also asked who should be notified when officers are unable to appear due to illness. Ms. Alsobrooks said she would check on this issue.

Code Enforcement Issues

Mayor Davis and Ms. Craze noted the prosecution of municipal infractions is often viewed as low priority within the State's Attorney Office. Ms. Craze explained these cases directly relate to quality of life issues. Ms. Alsobrooks stressed prosecution of municipal infraction cases are important to her office. She said she would identify a liaison within her office for the City to contact regarding these cases in the future.

Other Issues

Dr. Park asked about truancy issue. Ms. Alsobrooks said that her office is taking a comprehensive approach, working with the School System and Social Services, to address this issue. She added that their focus is primarily at the elementary school level.

Mayor Davis thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting ended at 9:26 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

*Cindy Murray
City Clerk*