



**BUDGET WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, April 6, 2005, for the purpose of reviewing the Department of Planning and Community Development, Animal Control, and Capital Projects sections of the proposed FY 2006 budget.**

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 8:10 p.m. in the Multipurpose 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 McLaughlin, City Manager; Celia W. Craze, Director, and Assistant Directors Terri Hruby and James Sterling, Department of Planning and Community Development; Jeffrey Williams, City Treasurer; David Moran, Assistant City Manager; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Sheldon Goldberg and Brian Gibbons, Advisory Planning Board; Boxwood residents Jay Henson, Erin Henson, Patrick McAndrew, Sandy Smith, and Lori Snyder; and James Giese, Greenbelt News Review.

**Boxwood Village Drainage Problem**

Mr. McLaughlin observed to the Mayor that the Hensons were present for the Boxwood item in the Capital Projects budget. Council agreed to take that item up first.

Mr. McLaughlin said he has been trying to work with the county about this problem, since if the cause is storm water management, it is the county's responsibility, comparable to a prior situation in Lakeside. Only about six weeks ago, the Department of Environmental Resources (DER) responded that the volume of water involved did not meet their quantity threshold for taking action. They subsequently reviewed the matter and came to the same conclusion again. Because there has been uncertainty about whose responsibility this is, some funding was put into the Capital Projects budget as a "place holder" in case the City needed to initiate work. He added that the City does not have responsibility for storm water, but in the past it has tried to help to solve the problem when many homeowners are involved. He said he had not yet concluded the county should be let off the hook, however, and that it might be that the City should ratchet its request up to County Councilmember Peters' office.

Mayor Davis said people in Fayette Place have also claimed to have drainage problems. Mr. Putens commented that there is a difference between ground water and storm water. Ms. Craze said ground water is constantly fed and is a natural feature of the land. Here, she said, there is a combination of a high water table, permanently saturated soil, and grading problems. She said the county's criteria are very high for putting in a storm water drainage system and that on private property, typically the

water must be conveyed to a public outlet. She said the \$20,000 in the budget would create a public lateral line, which private owners could tap into at their own expense. She added that from her conversations with Ms. Henson, she had also concluded that the City should look into the City parkland above the area to be sure problems there are not exacerbating the problems below. Mayor Davis replied that she had heard from others that City property was exacerbating the problem. Mr. Roberts asked what part of the problem the county had looked at. Ms. Craze said only the Periwinkle piece but that the City could ask them to look at the whole subdivision

Ms. Henson thanked staff and Council for their work on this issue. She said this is a situation that did not used to exist but now does and that she and her neighbors are convinced that the source of the water should be found. She said water appears to be coming down the hill from many areas and that tapping into the lateral line at the bottom would not solve the problem if the water from the hill could not be tapped. She suggested perhaps the \$20,000 in the capital projects budget would be better used to diagnose the problem and dry up or divert the water at its source. She said "We're desperate" and that much of many people's property had become unusable most of the time. Mr. Henson added that the conditions were very hospitable to mosquitoes. He said he agreed that the problem needed a diagnosis, not "band-aiding."

Mr. Putens asked Ms. Craze whether getting an analysis done would be feasible. She said currently it was not in the work plan, nor was it a management objective but that it could certainly be discussed as part of the budget.

Later in the meeting, Patrick McAndrew, president of the Boxwood Civic Association, also addressed this topic, saying he wanted to be sure Council is aware that this is a new problem.

Even later in the meeting, resident Lori Snyder also spoke. She said there are safety issues. In addition to mosquitoes, the streets in Boxwood are narrow, and the slime, ice, and water make it impossible to walk on the sidewalks so that pedestrians must walk in the streets.

Center City Dog Park: Ms. Henson also said residents of that part of town would like to have a dog park in the Center City area that residents could walk their dogs to, rather than having to chauffeur them. Mayor Davis said the biggest problem with this idea was identification of a site. She said there were various reasons why the Buddy Attick Park area had been previously rejected for this purpose but suggested that if residents could identify a site, Council could consider it with the budget.

#### Departmental Budget

Staff showed a slide presentation. Terri Hruby and Jim Sterling, Assistant Directors for Planning and Community Development, respectively, addressed major projects and activities in their areas. A list of departmental projects titled "Planning Work Program" was also distributed.

Ms. Craze then addressed some other issues. She said there is a need to reevaluate permit fees and to establish fees for review. Mr. Sterling added that money is being lost on sediment and erosion control inspection fees. Staff will try to provide more

information on this for consideration within the FY 2006 budget. Regarding the issue of reclassification of support staff in the department, Mr. McLaughlin said any such requests should go through the normal reclassification review process in the fall. There was some discussion of the funding of conference fees for training purposes and the criteria for such. There was considerable discussion of the cost-benefit ratio on applying for grants. Ms. Craze said the department had been discussing the criteria for establishing a threshold on whether the potential reward justified the considerable staff time invested in applying. This would include not only the amount that could be applied for but also the track record of the grant program in funding at reduced levels and the regulatory "strings" and commitments that might attach to the City with the grant. She said her staff would be evaluating these opportunities more critically in the future, and she wanted Council to understand the reasons.

There was brief discussion of space needs for City offices, overtime issues, the status of the Jaycee Clubhouse, and the Animal Control budget.

Mr. Putens asked for more information on the City's practice on ticketing for skateboarding and biking in restricted areas and for illegal parking in handicapped spaces.

Mayor Davis asked if any Councilmember objected to the proposal to increase the fee for parking tickets to \$40. No one did.

#### Capital Projects

Mr. McLaughlin reviewed the project list.

A work session will be scheduled to prioritize capital projects after budget adoption.

Ms. Craze said there was not an intention to do a boundary study as part of the master plan for Northway because of the expense.

With regard to the multi-year summary list of capital projects on page CF-7 of the budget document, Mr. Moran explained that, for planning and place-holding purposes, this list comprised a rough slotting-in of projects that had been discussed, although some of those projected for the future may not have reached a point of coming to Council for decision.

Informational Items: Several informational announcements were made.

The meeting was adjourned at midnight.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Gallagher

City Clerk