



**WORK SESSION of the Greenbelt City Council held Wednesday, June 1, 2005,
for the purpose of discussing election issues.**

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 8:10 p.m., in the Senior Classroom of the Community Center

PRESENT were Mayor Judith Davis and Councilmembers Rodney Roberts and Edward Putens.

ALSO PRESENT were Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk; Judith Ott, Chair, Jean Cook, Steven Gilbert, Pamela Gregory and Dorothy Lauber of the Board of Elections; and Michael McLaughlin, City Manager.

Mayor Davis announced that the purpose of the meeting was to review a number of election issues with the Board of Elections.

1. Campaign Sign Agreement – There was discussion about the intent of the campaign sign agreement and if it limited candidates or not as to whether signs other than those posted at agreed public sites could be posted. After some discussion, it was suggested the agreement needs to be revisited. Mayor Davis raised whether there ought to be additional City sites to the existing nine for the posting of signs. It was noted that she would like to request staff to look into this possibility.

2. 300-Foot Electioneering Law – Mayor Davis made the suggestion of allowing signs at some point within this limit on Election Day. Mr. Roberts noted that when the distance was 100 feet, it used to be measured from the actual voting location. When the distance was changed to 300 feet, it was measured from an exit door. Mr. Roberts thought that if the prior 100 foot limit were measured from an exit door that would address the problem. A request will be made of staff to mark where the 100 and 150 foot limits would be for Council to review. The measurement should occur from the commonly used doors.

3. Expanded Absentee Voting – There was discussion about the definition of “absentee.” Ms. Gallagher noted that the State definition is the one being used for these purposes. Council was concerned about ensuring there was sufficient publicity of this change, if it were made. It was agreed that Ms. Gallagher and the Board will see that there is adequate publicity in the News Review and on the Web site and Channel 71, as well as a flier available for distribution and posting.

4. Revisions to City Charter and Code Chapter 8 (Elections) - Council reviewed the draft amended ordinance to implement this possible change, as well as other necessary changes. Credit was given to Mr. Gilbert for drafting the changes to section 8-a on absentee voting. A few edits were offered. Councilmembers were supportive of the changes.

5. Bilingual materials – There was discussion about what language(s) to address. Mayor Davis suggested the language most commonly seen in bilingual situations is Spanish. Interest was expressed in determining whether there are existing instructions in Spanish for using the election machines that the vendor could provide.

6. Other issues – There was discussion of voting on Sunday. It was noted that this works well in many countries in Europe.

Mayor Davis commended the Board for its work on these issues.

Informational items – Mr. McLaughlin advised that the reconsideration of the plans for Greenbelt Station was not on the June 2 agenda for the County Planning Board and at this time, it would not likely be until September. Mayor Davis had a number of items including whether the County budget included any money to fund municipal election issues or for the City’s Truancy Prevention and Strengthening Families programs. Mr. McLaughlin answered there were not. She also reported on the “If I Were Mayor . . . ” winner, a letter she received from a Forestway resident with a complaint about lack of assistance on a desired addition, and a complaint by a resident in Greenspring about police response to a party. Mr. McLaughlin noted he had responded on that matter already and concerns about how it was handled would be raised with the Police Department.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael McLaughlin
City Manager