



**WORK SESSION of the Greenbelt City Council held Monday, June 13, 2005, for the purpose of holding a stakeholder meeting with the Greenbelt Homes, Inc. (GHI) Board.**

Mayor Davis and Ms. Eichhorst called the meeting to order at about 8:05 p.m. It was held in the Board Room at the GHI Offices.

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; Terri Hruby, Assistant Director, Planning; David E. Moran, Assistant City Manager; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: GHI Board Members Julia Eichhorst, Dorothy Lauber, Sylvia Lewis, Don Hudson, Chuck Hess, Gail Alexanderwicz, Sheila Alpers, and Joyce Abell, and George Moore; GHI Audit Committee members Diane Wilkerson, Mary Crellin, and Diana McFadden; Gretchen Overdurff, General Manager, and GHI staff members Eldon Ralph and Tom Sporney.

Playground Agreement: Mayor Davis explained that only Windsor Green, with five or six playgrounds, and Greenwood Village, with one playground, had decided to sign the agreement in addition to GHI. She noted that the City had reduced the budget for capital improvements for the playgrounds and had decided against hiring an additional maintenance person in Public Works. Mr. McLaughlin added that since the Windsor Green playgrounds are most in need of repair, those have been moved to the front of the list. The Mayor asked if a copy of that list could be provided when it was available. Ms. Lewis also asked for clarification on the arrangements for City maintenance of City playgrounds located within GHI. Mr. McLaughlin said GHI would continue to do the maintenance but bill the City for the costs.

RPC Zoning Issue: Mayor Davis said Council had asked to see the criteria used by GHI in approving an addition to a house. Mr. Sporney provided copies of pages from the GHI handbook and other forms and materials. The Mayor raised issues of whether it was possible for residents to circumvent the permitting process and how frequently people received county permits without coming to the City. Based on other materials that were distributed, there was considerable discussion regarding the size of additions, GHI criteria and requirements, and under what circumstances GHI assumes responsibility for maintenance of the addition.

Mayor Davis said it was her belief that there were people in GHI who were opposed to lifting the requirement for filing a Detailed Site Plan (DSP) but who were "intimidated" about speaking out because of what has happened to those who have spoken out. Ms. Lewis asked what exactly had happened to those who had spoken out. She said she would like to know, since this was a community where everyone spoke out all the time.

Mr. Hudson remarked that it was certainly reasonable to assume that most people would prefer to have the option of what to do with their homes rather than cede that authority to the county.

Mayor Davis asked how GHI would handle it if everyone in a court or everyone in a row of GHI houses wanted an addition. Mr. Hudson said he was not aware of any discussion about limiting that or handling it. The number of existing additions would not in itself trigger a need for special review by the Architecture and Environment Committee or the GHI board. The Mayor said if GHI imposed no restrictions on the number and size of additions, then GHI could become very built out and lose much of the quality of the historic community by losing green space and leaving only paths between the houses.

Ms. Lewis responded that there was no way that anyone would be allowed to cover the whole yard. She said, "We're evoking worst-case scenarios when what we need to be doing is looking at the 1988 law." She said dealing with the 1988 law was the issue on the agenda, and the detail of the GHI review process could be discussed later.

In response to the Mayor's concern that more GHI additions would bring larger households with more cars and increased parking problems, Mr. Hess said the trend had been exactly the opposite over his tenure on the board. He said people's increased need for space does not necessarily translate into larger households and additional vehicles.

Mr. Roberts asked what GHI favors. Ms. Lewis said they favor the City staff's proposed bill, which incorporates Mr. Peters' bill exempting GHI from the DSP requirement but goes further in exempting other single-family houses and City property.

GHI member Mark Commins said he did not see what the Mayor's questions had to do with the law. He said the existing law does not benefit anyone and does not serve to remedy any of the theoretical problems the Mayor was raising. He said all the law was doing was causing hardship.

GHI member David Morse agreed with Mr. Commins that the issues under discussion were not relevant to the existing law. He said he was more concerned with the impact on the stability of the community of families leaving than the parking situation.

Mr. Hudson said although he recognized there were legitimate concerns, he did not want additional county interference.

GHI member Susan Ready said she agreed that the existing law and its DSP requirement had to go. She said she would still like to see some control that was external to GHI, but she agreed that the control should not be in this law.

Mr. Putens asked if the GHI board wanted to see any limitation external to its own rules. Mr. Hudson said he was not categorically opposed to any City or county control. Ms. Lewis said she opposed any stated limitation, because the implication of a limitation is always that it is okay to go that far. She said none of the percentage rules that have been proposed make any sense. She said she does not support control at the county

level; rather, she supports the City staff's amendments to the bill. Ms. Alexanderwicz agreed with Ms. Lewis on all counts. She said, "If a number is there, it's a target."

Pesticides: Ms. Eichhorst said they had heard the City had a committee looking at this. Mayor Davis said the Recycling & Environment Advisory Committee had been asked by Council to look further into the issue and make any recommendations regarding City use of insecticides. Mr. McLaughlin said the committee expects to take about a year on this project before returning with a report. He encouraged GHI members to become involved or share materials.

GHI-City MOU on Right-of-Way Issues: Since both the GHI board and the City Council had just received the draft document and had not reviewed it, it was understood that this would have to be discussed at another time. In response to questions from Mr. Hess and Mr. Hudson, Mr. McLaughlin said it was not practical to consider a swap of land between the City and GHI since, for the City, that would involve very expensive issues of boundary surveys. Nor would simply ceding land to GHI work, since the City considered it likely that if, for example, a City street was on GHI property, then there had probably been a shift that meant GHI was also occupying comparable City property. He noted that in the past, the City had not had a problem with dealing with this on a fairly informal basis. It was agreed that after the draft document had been reviewed by the board, it would be placed on a City Council agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Gallagher  
City Clerk