



BUDGET WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Monday, May 16, 2005, for the purpose of reviewing the Green Ridge House section of the proposed FY 2006 budget.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. at Green Ridge House.

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; Christal Parker Batey, Community Resource Advocate; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Salva Holloman, Lynnette McGrath, Douglas Erdman, and William McClain, Community Realty; and Tom White, Greenbelt News Review.

Mayor Davis opened by mentioning that a number of residents had been concerned that the City's U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) mortgage was approaching the end of its term and that it was not clear what would happen with rents or the status of the facility after that. She said that the mortgage has a 40-year term, not 30 years, and thus has 14 years to go; nonetheless, the City has no intention of making any changes that would set rents at a market rate for the residents.

Reviewing the budget document, Mayor Davis first noted accomplishments over the year, including the replacement of nine heating/cooling units as the first phase of a 10-year plan. Smoke detectors were placed in all bedrooms. Ms. Holloman clarified that staff check these twice a year.

Under issues and services, the Mayor noted that HUD would be increasing the rents, but subsidies would increase, too. At the Mayor's request, Ms. Parker-Batey spoke briefly about the role of LaVerne Stewart-Logan, the new Services Coordinator for Green Ridge House.

Continuing with the budget, the Mayor commented on an increase in the cost to Green Ridge House of the Zipcar; the initiation of the installation of modified bath tubs, with four this year and more later, if these are deemed successful; the continuation of the replacement of stoves and refrigerators; and the acquisition of additional computer equipment.

Mayor Davis asked Mr. McLaughlin to explain the closing out of the original construction budget. He said this was primarily a bookkeeping change but would permit a wider range of use for these surplus funds for any capital expenditure, whereas they were previously limited to new construction. In response to another question from the Mayor, he explained that there was no cause for alarm because of the continued decrease in the reserve account, since many big-ticket systems were being replaced, and that was exactly why the balance of this account had been built up in the first place.

After brief mention of several other items, the Mayor asked about the status of parking spaces and permits and was told there were only 47 permits currently issued for the 54 parking spaces. Later in the meeting, a resident pointed out a problem with cars parking in the reserved Zipcar space on the street, with the result that it was sometimes difficult to locate the car or even to know if it had been returned. He suggested turning the sign to make it more obvious to the person parking. Mr. McLaughlin said that could be done, but the Mayor also suggested that if there were extra parking spaces in the lot, one of these might be assigned to the Zipcar. The residents will further discuss that suggestion and get back to the City if they wish to designate a spot within the lot.

Jim Cassells commented that three trees had been removed but still had not been replaced in the patio area.

Jim Bowles asked about the cost-effectiveness of renting tents as canopies for events rather than constructing a permanent canopy on the patio. Ms. McGrath assured him that the occasional rentals were much more cost-effective.

Marian Evans said the umbrellas that had been purchased for the picnic tables were too small. Mr. Erdman said both the umbrellas and the trees would be taken care of.

Another resident was reassured that there was no provision in the new budget for increasing fees for the Greenbelt Connection.

Regarding the funding in the budget for computer equipment, Mr. McLaughlin said \$2,000 was targeted for the office and another \$3,000 for the community room, if needed. Ms. McGrath assured Ms. Evans that the printer in the community room was now working properly with the computers.

Mr. Herling said GATE was interested in doing video autobiographies, which could be broadcast on channel 71 but also given to people's families. He encouraged anyone who would like to participate to get in touch. He also encouraged residents to try out for parts in productions at the Greenbelt Arts Center.

Mayor Davis thanked everyone for coming and also said thanks again for including the City Council in the 25th anniversary celebration last year.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Gallagher
City Clerk