



BUDGET WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, May 4, 2005, for the purpose of reviewing the Recreation Department sections of the proposed FY 2006 budget.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 7:55 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; Jeffrey Williams, City Treasurer; Deirdre Allen, City Accountant; Hank Irving, Joe McNeal, Julie McHale, Di Quynn-Reno, George Rogala, Karen Haseley, Nicole DeWald, and Greg Varda, Recreation Department; David Moran, Assistant City Manager; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Clement Lau, Park & Recreation Advisory Board; and James Giese, Greenbelt News Review.

Recreation staff gave a slide presentation on departmental programs and activities. Mr. Irving thanked the staff for their work on the presentation and the preparation of the budget. He also enumerated the awards and honors received by departmental staff over the year.

Teen Hires: Council then began the page-by-page review of the budget document. Commenting on the number of teenagers the department hires, the Mayor asked whether any had been hired under the County Executive's program. Ms. McHale explained that this program had not proved very useful for the department's purposes because the young people were generally under 18, which is too young to be hired in most Recreation programs.

Evaluation of Programs: Mayor Davis noted that there are many new programs and practices at both the Community Center and the Greenbelt Aquatic and Fitness Center (GAFC) and that she hoped evaluation was being done on them to be included in the self-evaluation of its programs that the department is doing. She suggested that this be discussed in a work session late in the summer.

GAFC Summer Staffing: Mr. Putens asked about staffing at the GAFC. Mr. Rogala said they are fully hired for the summer, except that certain limited time periods are a problem to cover.

Program Development: Ms. Mach asked how ideas for new programs are developed. Ms. McHale replied that many new programs are inspired by information acquired by staff about successful programming in other jurisdictions. She said program participants and other residents also make suggestions on an ongoing basis.

YAC: Mayor Davis asked if the Youth Advisory Committee was used very much as consultants regarding programming. Mr. Varda said this particular group was very involved with their high school programs and that they were not for the most part interested in sports. He said he had been talking with Ms. Gallagher and with Malia Murray of GATE regarding some possible activities. Mr. McNeal also commented that they are planning to develop a youth link to the City Web site, which will involve the committee.

Special Events Programming: Mayor Davis offered particular compliments on both the quantity and quality of the programming for special events, including the high level of inter-departmental participation. Mr. Irving said much credit should be given to the Public Works Department, which provides the "backbone" for many of these efforts. Mayor Davis also thanked staff for developing ideas for a Cinco de Mayo component to the Celebration of Spring.

Springhill Lake: There was discussion of programming at Springhill Lake, including the difficulties of getting volunteers and the security concerns.

Replacement Issues: Mayor Davis commented on the age of the facilities and the increasing cost of maintenance. Mr. McLaughlin said staff is still working to determine the optimum replacement point for some of the major items concerned.

Web-Trac: Mayor Davis asked about the mention of additional resources that are needed to get on-line registration (Web-Trac) up and running – did this mean funding or personnel? Mr. McNeal said the department is still working out what will be done by Rec staff and what by Information Technology staff. It needs to be determined how much help patrons will need and how that help will be provided. Ms. Haseley added that one big question was how support would be provided outside of regular business hours. She said they were trying to be careful to work all the issues and potential problems out before "opening for business" on line. Mr. Roberts commented that he was glad to see progress being made on this, since he gets quite a few requests that registration be made easier.

After-School Programs: Mr. Herling asked what was being done about the drop in participation of younger children in programs. Ms. McHale said one thing they are doing is to go into the schools to offer programs in art and dance in situations where after-school programs are already offered.

Mileage Markers at Lake: Mayor Davis mentioned a request from a former resident to dedicate a system of mileage markers around the lake to her husband, who was a runner. Mr. McLaughlin said the markers are there, and the dedication issue might need to come to Council. The Mayor said she would write up the request for Council.

Staff Position Approved in '05 Budget: Mayor Davis commented that Council would have to discuss further the impacts of not funding the new positions in Recreation and Community Development that were approved in the FY 2005 budget. There was discussion of the need to fund additional overtime for existing Center assistants if the new Recreation position was not funded.

Skateboard Park Staffing: Mr. Herling asked about staffing for the skateboard park when it opened. Mr. McNeal said it was not planned to staff it, the hope being that the proximity to the Youth Center would provide adequate oversight.

Skateboard Park Insurance: Ms. Mach asked if the City's insurance would increase appreciably with the opening of the skateboard park. Mr. McNeal said the cost was not significant, and Mr. Williams added that because of the way the billing works, the cost would not kick in until the following year.

Pool Temperature: Mr. Rogala said the water temperature at the indoor pool had been increased to 83.90; this temperature satisfies the Arthritis Foundation's minimum but has not elicited complaints from lap swimmers.

Class/Training GAFC Revenues Down: There was discussion of the downturn in revenues from water classes and personal training. Mr. Rogala said attendance is down. He will be analyzing this in detail but has not done so yet. He said Curves may be having an impact.

Mr. McNeal said the GAFC might need to close for a day while work is done on the roof of the indoor pool.

Community Center Anniversary: It was announced that activities are being planned to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the opening of the Community Center during an Artful Afternoon in the fall. The plan is to showcase the facility by having current tenants hold open houses and display their work in order to show.

7 p.m. Sunday closing for Center: Mayor Davis asked to put on the list of items for further consideration the request to close the Community Center at 7 p.m. on Sundays. This would save about \$2,000, but there are also security concerns for both the staff and the facility when it is kept open at a time when there is little use.

Programs: Discussion continued of particular programs. Mr. Varda said participation in softball is down nationally. Ms. DeWald said it is true that many ceramics classes are offered, but there is high demand for them, and the overall offerings are of wide variety.

Increase in Pass Fees: The 5% proposed increase in pass fees was noted.

Ball Fields: There was some discussion of the ongoing problems of damage to ball fields.

Council thanked the Recreation Department for their presentation and information.

Other Business

Mayor Davis provided an update from an MML legislative meeting. She also said there was concern on the part of PGCMA that the landlord-tenant affairs office in the county had been removed from the budget.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Gallagher

City Clerk