



WORK SESSION of the Greenbelt City Council held Monday, March 22, 2004, for the purpose of providing an update on the Greenbelt Theatre renovation.

Mayor Pro Tem Roberts started the meeting at 8:05 p.m. It was held in the Council Room of the Municipal Building.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Konrad E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Edward V.J. Putens and Mayor Pro Tem Rodney M. Roberts.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; Kristen Ward, Community Planner; and David E. Moran, Assistant to the City Manager.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Paul Sanchez, the theater operator; Melissa Cohen, the City's project architect from GTM Architects; and members of the general public.

Mr. McLaughlin stated that the estimated cost for the renovation was much higher than had been projected prior to the 2001 bond issue. He noted that the legal documents authorizing the bonds did not specify dollar amounts and as a result, funds could be shifted between projects.

Ms. Ward reported on some of the plan documents that were available. Ms. Cohen summarized the work her firm had done in evaluating the building. She stated that based on Smart Codes, the City did not have to bring everything up to current code.

Ms. Cohen reviewed the list of work items that had been labeled as Strongly Recommended, Recommended or Optional and provided cost estimates for each item.

The list of recommended renovations noted that the separation between the stage and Pleasant Touch was not fire rated. Mr. Sanchez noted that the wall between the theater and dry cleaner was masonry and fire rated.

There was considerable discussion regarding the bathroom renovations. Ms Cohen discussed various options and the need to upgrade the bathrooms and make them handicapped-accessible.

Mr. Sanchez said the cost on several items could be reduced. He suggested that the heating system was working fine. He also believed the cost of the fire alarm system could be reduced.

Ms. Cohen explained the renovation of the ticket booth and the lobby. Mr. Roberts stressed his desire that the renovations be historically accurate.

There was discussion about asbestos. The proposal included estimates for an asbestos survey and removal of asbestos on plumbing insulation. It was noted this did not include any asbestos issues on the ceiling.

Ms. Ward stated that because of Smart Codes and because the City was renovating an existing historic structure, there were many gray areas regarding Code and ADA compliance.

There was discussion of extending the stage to accommodate performances. It was noted that audience seats would be lost if this were done. Mr. Sanchez stated his wish not to lose any seats.

Eileen Peterson stressed the need to keep the theater as a movie theater. Kevin Denney on behalf of Friends of the Old Greenbelt Theatre expressed a similar desire.

Based on the discussions, Mr. McLaughlin suggested that Council pursue everything on the list, except the exterior landing, sprinkler system, and extension of the stage.

Mr. Roberts stated bathrooms were his top priority with fire safety items a close second. Ms. Mach favored all of the Strongly Recommended and Recommended items. She indicated more information was needed on the Optional items. Mr. Putens wanted tighter cost estimates and asked Mr. Sanchez for help.

Council agreed to pursue schematics on all of the Strongly Recommended and Recommended items. Under Optional items, Council agreed to pursue HVAC replacement, hazmat survey, more lighting and updates to finishes, and separate water systems.

Other Business

Mr. McLaughlin briefed Council on a conversation with the Postal Service. Mr. Putens suggested that the City needed to get Congressman Hoyer involved. Mr. McLaughlin suggested a work session with all the parties.

The meeting ended at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

David E. Moran
Assistant to the City Manager