



WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, March 5, 2003, for the purpose of holding a stakeholder meeting with the Board of Directors of Greenbelt Homes, Inc.

Mayor Davis started the meeting at 8:05 p.m. It was held in the board room of Greenbelt Homes, Inc., on Hamilton Place..

PRESENT WERE: Council members Edward V.J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts, Alan Turnbull, Thomas X. White, and Mayor Judith F. Davis.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Julia Eichhorst, Sylvia Lewis, Dorothy Lauber, Betty Deitch, Susan Ready, and Joyce Abell, GHI Board; Sheila Alpers, GHI Audit Committee; Gretchen Overdurff, GHI General Manager.

Mayor Davis said the purpose of the gathering was the annual stakeholder meeting between Council and the Board.

Status of Playground Upgrades

Mr. McLaughlin said 19 of the 31 City playgrounds are now in full compliance with the new standards. All of them were brought into compliance last year for the top tier of safety problems. The City expects to complete all the upgrades by 2005. Ms. Eichhorst asked about the status of the review of the playground agreement. Mr. McLaughlin said this was still under staff review but should be completed this calendar year.

Woodlands Issues

There was considerable discussion of GHI's efforts and concerns regarding the invasive non-native species in the woodlands areas, and a request was made that the City coordinate with these efforts, particularly where GHI property and City property abut. Mary Kingsley, a member of GHI's Woodlands Committee, was present and described some of the work they have undertaken to date. Mr. McLaughlin said the City has really only begun to work on this issue, but it will appear as an MBO in the FY 2004 budget. Mr. Turnbull suggested that as the City comes on board with this, it would be helpful if GHI would keep the City apprised of its priorities and plans, so the City can attempt to synchronize its efforts with GHI's. Ms. Kingsley also commented that there are grant opportunities available that the City and GHI might take advantage of.

Mr. Roberts said he was glad GHI was attacking the invasives but that he wanted it clearly understood that he would not be likely to support programs involving herbicides because of their potential impact on children, other small creatures, and Greenbelt Lake. He also pointed out that invasives that had taken hold may now be fulfilling

useful functions in terms of erosion prevention and animal habitat. Ms. Kingsley assured him that GHI was sensitive to all these concerns.

Mayor Davis said this issue should eventually be reviewed by both the Advisory Committee on Trees and the Recycling and Environment Advisory Committee.

It was noted that in the process of the woodlands work, significant amounts of refuse and trash had been found on City property behind Mowatt Memorial Methodist Church. Mr. McLaughlin said he would look into this and that if any future problems of this sort arose, GHI should not hesitate to give Public Works a call.

Ms. Eichhorst said they wished to alert the City that GHI is planning on taking action soon regarding apparent encroachment on GHI property by non-GHI homeowners. One area mentioned was the Greenhill Road side of Parcel W.

Ms. Eichhorst asked if there is a City fire prevention plan for the woodlands. Mr. McLaughlin said there is not, and he and Mr. White explained there is no requirement for one. Ms. Kingsley asked if there had been consideration of creating or widening paths to give greater access to fire-fighting equipment. Mayor Davis responded that the City's policy now is a deliberate one not to augment any existing paths since there is no way to limit access only to desirable vehicles. Mr. Roberts commented that the Fire Department has never had a problem gaining access to the woodland areas and that this is not an area where brush fires would occur.

Speed Indicator Signs

In response to a question from Ms. Deitch, Mr. McLaughlin explained that the first speed indicator trailer the City acquired did not operate satisfactorily. A new one will be ordered. He said the City also has radar guns available that citizens can borrow and be trained to use. Mayor Davis provided a brief update on the status of the various pieces of pending state legislation related to speed cameras and red light cameras. Ms. Abell complimented the City on the installation of the pedestrian crosswalk signs.

Update on NORC

Mayor Davis reported that the City has contracted to undertake the needs assessment that was part of the NORC grant. Filling the Community Resource Advocate position is still underway, with interviews scheduled for next week.

Zoning Changes

There was discussion of the pending issue of municipal planning and zoning authority vis-à-vis GHI's interest in building storage facilities in its administration area. Ms. Lewis said their understanding is that because they are otherwise limited to one exceptional use, they may need to subdivide in order to rezone the administrative area. It was clarified that the one exception was allowed without application, so it has never required county action. GHI discussed this with the City's planning office a year or so ago and was advised by Celia Craze at that time to wait and see what evolved with City zoning authority. Mr. White suggested that GHI talk with the City Solicitor, since they

may be grandfathered on this legislation. Mr. McLaughlin gave Ms. Overdurff Mr. Manzi's number and suggested she call him.

Snow Removal

Ms. Eichhorst and the Board thanked the City for the snow removal efforts. Mr. Roberts said there had been a complaint at the last Council meeting regarding clearing pedestrian walkways, and he said he would like to see the City and GHI work together better on this in the future. Mr. Turnbull said the issue of the complaint primarily involved main walkways and areas where snow was plowed off the street onto primary walkways. He noted that he thought it should be possible to identify primary walkways that function as main arteries that could be given higher priority for clearance.

Council and the Board agreed that the annual meetings continue to be useful for information sharing. Council thanked the Board for hosting the meeting.

The meeting ended at about 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Gallagher
City Clerk