



WORK SESSION of the Greenbelt City Council held Wednesday August 22, 2001, for the purpose of discussing policy on driveway aprons and the final draft of pedestrian and bicycle trails maps.

Mayor Davis started the meeting at 8:05 p.m. It was held in the Senior Classroom of the Community Center.

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; Celia Craze, Director, Planning and Community Development; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Sheldon Goldberg, Greenbelt East Advisory Committee; and Al Geiger, Greenbelt News Review.

Driveway Aprons

Mr. White said that although the staff memos implied there was no earlier closure on this topic, his memory was that Council had agreed to revise the policy so that the City would begin to pick up the cost of replacing residential driveway aprons located in City right-of-way. The referral to staff was to analyze the alternatives for implementation and what the impact of this change would be.

Ms. Craze gave an introduction to driveway aprons and the history of the City's adopting County standards by reference in the early 1960s. She said she thought that if the City were to do this, it should keep the policy simple and do all of the aprons in City right-of-way, without making distinctions between single and double aprons, or between residential and commercial.

Mayor Davis expressed concern that problems might arise if the City picks up the cost of aprons on City property but not those on private streets. Mr. Roberts responded that this happens with many City services and that it benefits everyone if public property is well-maintained.

Mr. Putens said all aprons in the City right-of-way should be taken care of by the City. Otherwise, as with the Safeway entrance into Greenway Center, the City can end up negotiating "forever." He said, "Let's just do it."

Mr. Turnbull described the suggested new policy as a "Pandora's box." He questioned the idea of having so many bearing costs for so few. He said he thought more analysis from staff of total costs, rather than just those aprons in need of immediate repair, is needed.

Ms. Craze had previously suggested that aprons would be done either when a capital project was being undertaken on the street or on an as-needed basis through the miscellaneous concrete fund. In response to Mr. Turnbull, she suggested another alternative, which would be to put all aprons on an annual program for replacement and doing a certain number of them every year.

Council discussed the perception of the relationship between level of taxes paid and level of public services received. Some Council members thought this was a legitimate issue with regard to this policy. Mr. Turnbull maintained that, historically, property taxes were designed to be regressive and that services are given on a per capita basis, not on a basis of taxes paid. Mr. White said it was not an equity issue but an issue of maintaining infrastructure within a City right-of-way.

Mr. McLaughlin asked for a straw vote to guide staff in preparing a revision to the Code. Mayor Davis said she agreed with Mr. Turnbull that Council needs to see more from staff that gives the overall implications and costs of such a change in policy. Council members White, Putens, and Roberts agreed all residential and commercial aprons in City right-of way should be maintained by the City. Mayor Davis agreed with reservations. Mr. Turnbull disagreed.

Revision of the policy will be placed on the agenda of a regular meeting in the fall. Staff will provide to Council a description of possible procedures for implementation, as well as costs for any proposed scenarios.

In response to the Mayor's question of when work could begin if the revised policy were passed, Mr. McLaughlin said probably in spring, using funding from the miscellaneous concrete fund.

Trails Maps

Ms. Craze said staff was seeking a general endorsement from Council at this time, although there are still some revisions to be made to the maps, which she displayed.

Capital Office Park: Mr. White asked staff to check into which of their trails are open to the public, since they are shown as open on the map, but experience has indicated otherwise.

Parcels 1 and 2: the unimproved trails are not shown. Ms. Craze said this is an issue of whether Council does or does not want to encourage people to go there. It was agreed to add a notation that there are "primitive" or "natural" trails.

Park Spaces: Everyone agrees with Mr. Turnbull's suggestion to shade the public park space.

American Discovery Trail Markings: It was agreed to place a notation indicating where the trail would continue to the SW of the map. There was also discussion of labeling the part of this trail that uses the unfinished piece of Ridge Road. Ms. Craze will consult with the map-maker to see what the best notation would be; she suggested possibly a broken line marked "unimproved."

Helmet Law: Mayor Davis noted the helmet graphic and notice about helmet law that had been proposed for the bike map were not there and asked staff to follow up on that.

Dog Park: It was agreed to designate it.

Public Safety: It was agreed the Fire and Police Departments should be noted.

By way of credits, it was agreed there should be an acknowledgment of MNCPPC, the City of Greenbelt, and instrumental individuals, but not a listing of Council members' names. The map should have a directional compass, and its date of publication should be given.

The meeting ended at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Gallagher

City Clerk