



REGULAR MEETING OF GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Monday, December 17, 2001.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 8:05 p.m.

ROLL CALL was answered by Council members Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts, Alan Turnbull, Thomas X. White, and Judith F. Davis, Mayor.

ALSO PRESENT were Michael P. McLaughlin, City Treasurer; Robert A. Manzi, City Solicitor; David E. Moran, Assistant to the City Manager; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk.

Mayor Davis observed a moment of silence for resident Julian Weiss and former resident and St. Hugh's student Shelby Amarachi Njoku. She then led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

CONSENT AGENDA: A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Mr. Putens and seconded by Mr. Turnbull. The motion passed 5-0.

Council thereby took the following actions:

MINUTES

- Interview, November 26, 2001
- Regular Meeting, November 26, 2001
- Work Session, November 28, 2001

Approved as presented.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Senior Citizens Advisory Committee, 11/27/01 (2001 Open Forum): Council received this report and agreed to consider scheduling a work session during the "Meetings" section of the agenda.
- Community Relations Advisory Board, Report #2001-3 (Peace Month/Community Pledge): Council received this report and will consider it on the agenda of the next regular meeting.
- Arts Advisory Board, Report #02-001 (RFP for Arts Education Programming): Council received this report and will consider it on a future agenda with the staff's draft of the Request for Proposals for arts education programming.

REAPPOINTMENTS TO ADVISORY GROUPS: Council reappointed the following individuals to additional terms on advisory boards and committees: Gil Weidenfeld, Employee Relations Board; Pamela Gregory, Board of Elections; and Leonie Penney, Senior Citizens Advisory Committee.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND ADDITIONS: Mr. Putens moved approval of the agenda. Mr. Turnbull seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.

PRESENTATIONS

Introduction of New Community Development Staff: Mayor Davis introduced Celia Craze, Director, Planning and Community Development, who introduced new staff members Susie Hall (Animal Control Officer) and Rudy Watkins and John Wojcik (Parking Enforcement Officers). Mayor Davis presented the three new officers their badges, and Council welcomed them to the City.

Green Ridge House Award: Salva Holloman, Manager of the City's senior citizen apartment complex, Green Ridge House, shared with Council the Apartment Community Excellence Award they received from the Apartment and Office Building Association of Metropolitan Washington. Green Ridge House was recognized as an award winner in the mid-rise affordable category in the Maryland area. Council congratulated Ms. Holloman and thanked her for coming.

PETITIONS AND REQUESTS - Proposed CB-40 Referendum: Donna Hathaway Beck of Upper Marlboro, chair of the CB-40 Referendum Committee, addressed Council regarding the bill passed by the County Council on November 19 to replace the prior Adequate Public Facilities legislation, CB-3. She said the effort for referendum has the support of the Council of Parent-Teacher Associations for the county and of the County School Board. The following also spoke: Linda Owens, legal coordinator for the group; Sylvia Lewis, 2-C Gardenway; Michael Sedgwick, Mitchellville, treasurer of the committee; and Coach Bell, Hyattsville. Council thanked them for coming and expressed individual support of the effort. Mayor Davis also suggested that Ms. Lewis get in touch with the City's Advisory Committee on Education.

MINUTES: Executive Session of November 19, 2001: Mr. Roberts moved that the minutes of the executive session of the City Council held Monday, November 19, 2001, be approved as presented. He further requested that the minutes of this meeting reflect that the Council met in executive session at 7:37 p.m. in the Municipal Building Library and that the meeting was recessed at 8:13 p.m. and reconvened at 10:51 p.m. Council held this closed meeting in accordance with Section 10-508 (a) (7) of the State Government Article of the Annotated Code of Public General Laws of Maryland to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice on a legal matter regarding the condemnation proceedings for the property for the new postal facility. Mr. Turnbull seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL Mr. Putens - yes

Mr. Roberts - yes

Mr. Turnbull - yes

Mr. White - yes

Mayor Davis - yes

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mr. Roberts described the Pearl Harbor Remembrance event at the American Legion on December 7 at which he presented two letters of commendation.

Mr. Turnbull thanked the various City departments involved in the Festival of Lights opening ceremony, over which he presided on December 7.

Mr. Putens reported on assisting Santa in the distribution of gifts at Springhill Lake and on an event at the Arts Center. Mayor Davis added thanks to the Neighborhood Improvement Team and the Lions Club for their toy collection efforts.

Mr. White, Mr. Putens, and Mayor Davis reported on aspects of the annual National League of Cities, Congress of Cities, meeting in Atlanta December 5-9.

Mayor Davis reported on the Advisory Committee on Education Job Fair, which had over 100 attendees; the retirement party for Assistant Director of Recreation Harry James on November 29; the Greenbelt East tree lighting; the swearing in of the new College Park Mayor and City Council; the Maryland National Capital Park & Planning hearing on local planning and zoning authority; the December 13 annual Council of Governments meeting; the special Mass at St. Hugh's on December 16, at which the work of City police officers was recognized; and a performance of the Greenbelt Concert Band.

UPDATE ON NEW YEAR'S EVE 2002: Mayor Davis read the agenda comments. Patti Brothers, chair of the Greenbelt New Year Committee, gave Council a preview of events. She noted that this would be the last Millennium Passport event and that the raffle for those eligible would take place that night.

DOG PARK EXPANSION: Mayor Davis read the agenda comments. Ms. Craze described the plan to Council, saying the expansion can be started soon, with the installation of electricity and water to follow. The proposed plan would expand the park by about 50%, while avoiding grading, taking down trees, and interfering with swales. Mr. Roberts questioned the amount of space being lost to the utility boxes on the property, but Ms. Craze responded that so much of the area would have been fenced off to protect the boxes that it was judged to be not worth it. Marjorie Whitacre, 7313 Morrison Drive, president of the Dog Park Association, expressed the endorsement of that group of the expansion plan and presented two checks to the City Manager for support of the park, one for \$1,000 from the association and the other for \$300 from an anonymous donor. Mr. Putens praised the group's fund-raising efforts and involvement with the project. He then moved Council approval of the plan to expand the dog park. Mr. Roberts seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

POSSIBLE ACTION STEPS AT ROOSEVELT CENTER: The Mayor read the agenda comments. Council considered the suggestions made by the City Manager in his memo of December 10, 2001.

Undertaking a Public Information Campaign: Regarding this item, Mr. White moved Council support of the Manager's proposal, Mr. Putens seconded, and the motion carried 5-0.

Posting a Code of Conduct: Mr. Manzi said he was working on a revision to the City Code to apply to all parks that would make it possible to post an enforceable code of conduct and that he would bring this to Council next month. Mr. White said it was apparent from the forums held by Chief James Craze, Police Department, that young people would like to participate in the development of such a code, and he asked that they be allowed to review it at the next Police Department forum. There was discussion of how quickly the posting needed to be done. Mayor Davis said she thought Council needed to move quickly but agreed that the young people who attend the forums, as well as the Youth Advisory Committee, should have the opportunity to participate. Mr. Turnbull had more reservations, asking, "How can we start listing everything? Where would we stop?" He said the problem is that we need enforcement rather than longer lists. Mr. Putens suggested the City consider having officers with enforcement authority in the park and recreation areas. Mr. Roberts said he thought having a set of consistent rules for the park areas that could be posted would be good. Sylvia Lewis addressed Council to object to the posting of anything that would not be enforced, adding that the existing presence of postings and signs without strong enforcement has, in her opinion, bred a disrespect for the law that would only be proliferated if the City does additional postings. Mr. Turnbull agreed with Ms. Lewis, adding that he thought there was a "trap" in posting anything that might purport to be a comprehensive list. He said the matter should be reviewed by the landscape architect for the Center, as well as by the Community Relations Advisory Board (CRAB) and the Advisory Planning Board. He said he did not think moving fast should be the goal. Mayor Davis agreed that it should go to CRAB and YAC but questioned the appropriateness of sending it to the APB. Mr. White moved that Council direct staff to proceed with the development of a code of conduct, with the assumption that it would return to Council for further review. Mr. Putens seconded. Mr. Roberts said he would prefer that all the points in the City Manager's memo be discussed prior to voting, although he did not object to voting on the points separately. Mr. Turnbull agreed. When the vote was called, the motion passed 4-1 (Turnbull).

Supplementing Increased Police Presence with Code Enforcement Presence: In response to Mayor Davis's question as to whether staff other than code enforcement officers could play this role, e.g., park rangers, Mr. McLaughlin said, yes, but that park rangers are seasonal. Council expressed some concern about what kinds of trade-offs would be needed if code enforcement officers were taken away from other duties. Mr. Putens argued again for consideration of increasing next year's budget for this purpose. Mr. White moved that Council approve the supplementation of police personnel with code enforcement personnel and other resources to enforce civil infractions and add "presence" at the Center. Mr. Putens seconded the motion. Gwen Vaccaro, proprietor of the Pleasant Touch, told Council the merchants are also discussing a "merchants' watch" to increase security at the Center. The motion passed 5-0.

Adding Lights and Increasing Wattage of Lighting in the Center: Mr. Roberts said he had not heard any arguments that problems in the Center were related to lighting. Mr. Turnbull agreed, noting that the problems had been occurring "in broad daylight." He said he was not categorically opposed to increasing lighting but would not give it high priority right now. Council agreed upward-pointing lighting was not desirable. They further agreed 1) to try adding lights before increasing the wattage of the existing lights and 2) to add lights between the Center and the underpass prior to adding any lights to the shopping mall itself. Mr. White moved that the two additional lights be placed on the underpass side of Centerway as described in paragraph "A" of the memo, with no other action to be taken at this time. Mr. Putens seconded. Ms. Vaccaro asked that lighting be increased in the area of the Pleasant Touch, and Mr. McLaughlin asked Kenny Hall, Director of Public Works, to look into that. The motion passed 4-1 (Turnbull).

Moving the Two Benches on the Path to the Underpass to the Crescent Adjacent to Centerway: Most Council members agreed that relocating the benches as proposed would be an improvement. Mr. White was of the opinion that doing so would only relocate the undesirable congregation, and he suggested eliminating these benches altogether. Sylvia Lewis countered that removing the benches might result in the migration of the congregants farther up the hill to the benches that are closer to residences. Mr. Roberts pointed out that moving the benches was not an irrevocable action and said he thought it was worth trying. Mr. Putens moved approval of the relocation of the benches as proposed by the Manager. Mr. Turnbull second, and the motion passed 4-1 (White).

David Lange of Lanham relayed information regarding vandalism at Greenbelt Elementary School. He also spoke about the importance in Greenbelt of citizens' continuing to feel that they can speak up and take action to maintain the quality of life in the City. Mr. White asked if the Police Department was aware of the vandalism. Chief Craze said he was not personally aware but would check with the school resource officer.

Doug Love, 3-D Plateau Place, asked Council to keep in mind that increasing the brightness of lights in the Center could inhibit astronomy activities that sometimes occur there. He particularly spoke against ground lighting that points upward.

MUTUAL AID AGREEMENT AMONG MUNICIPALITIES: The Mayor read the agenda comments. She asked Chief Craze whether, because of the size of Greenbelt's department, there might be an imbalance of services flowing out of Greenbelt as a result of the agreement. Chief Craze said he was confident that would not be a problem and that under no circumstances would force be drawn from needs of the City. Mr. Putens moved that Council approve the document and authorize signature by the Mayor and City Manager. Mr. White seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.

PARKING PLAN AND YARD WASTE COMPOSTING FACILITY AT NORTHWAY FIELDS: Mayor Davis read the agenda comments. Council discussed the composting facility first. In response to questions from Council, Mr. Hall said the access to NASA would not be eliminated and that he believed that enough time had passed since the landfill days for the land under the former garden plots to be stable. Mr. Roberts objected to the use of asphalt millings, characterizing it as a "cheap way of paving" and suggesting that crushed stone would be better.

Noting the interests of the Astronomy Club, Mr. Love asked about the odor from the composting, which was quite apparent to some people. Mr. Hall said that if the plan is approved, the facility would be located farther back, and farther from the Observatory, in its permanent location. Regarding the parking plan, Mr. Turnbull asked if the area on the map really all had to be clear or whether the City could immediately begin to install trees or an island for plantings. Mr. Hall said there was no reason why not. Mr. Roberts suggested, and Mayor Davis agreed, that it would not be necessary to mark all the parking spaces as long as the perimeters of the parking lot are delineated. Mr. Roberts moved Council referral of both these items to the Park & Recreation Advisory Board, with Council direction to remove the lines for the parking places, use crushed stone instead of asphalt millings, and to straighten the line of the lower edge of the parking lot. Mr. Putens seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.

WETLAND EDUCATION FACILITY AT GREENBELT LAKE: The Mayor read the agenda comments. In response to a query from Mr. Turnbull, Ms. Craze explained that the revised plan was acceptable conceptually to the Maryland Environmental Trust but that it would not be submitted to them until Council endorsed it. Mr. Roberts thanked staff for "getting rid of the boardwalk" that had appeared in the original proposal. There was discussion of the extent to which accessibility would meet Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines. Bill Phelan, Assistant Director, Public Works, said that because the path would be made of flagstone, it would not be very accessible for wheelchairs even if it did meet the five-foot width requirement for turnaround. Mr. Turnbull suggested making one approach to the Lake accessible. Mr. Turnbull moved Council approval of the revised concept plan for the Greenbelt Lake Wetland Education Facility. Mr. Roberts seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

AWARD OF PURCHASE - ANIMAL CONTROL VEHICLE: Mayor Davis read the agenda comments. Ms. Craze explained the rationale for selecting this particular vehicle. Mr. Roberts asked about natural gas fuel. Ms. Craze said the ¾-ton vehicle was not available under state bid in a natural gas model. Mr. McLaughlin said until we could upgrade City facilities from slow-fill to fast-fill, it was not practical to expand the fleet of natural gas vehicles anyway. Mr. Roberts suggested fueling at a location on Route 1, but Mr. McLaughlin replied that this would present problems of both cost and convenience. Mr. Putens moved that Council approve the purchase of the G2500 ¾-ton cargo van for \$13,998 from Sport Chevrolet of Silver Spring, per the State of Maryland bid. Mr. Turnbull seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

CREATION OF SECOND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF RECREATION POSITION: Mayor Davis read the agenda comments. Mr. White objected strongly to Council's being asked to approve a change of this type on the basis of a brief memo. He said the claim that this was not a reorganization was specious, since "reorganization becomes moot after this." Hank Irving, Director, Department of Recreation, said it was because the department was presented with two excellent internal candidates that they considered structuring the department to have two assistant directors, following the successful model of other City departments. He added that this appeared to be "an idea whose time has more than come," given the increase in the department's size and complexity over the years. Council divided in its opinion on this recommendation. Mayor Davis and Mr. Putens were of the opinion that the creation of a new assistant director position did not have to comprise a reorganizational fait accompli and that the question of restructuring the department could be considered separately, and in greater detail, later. Mr.

Putens said it would not be a "reorganization" to duplicate a position and that "reorganization" would not come into play until a decision was proposed about how to fill the remaining vacancy. Mr. Turnbull and Mr. Roberts agreed with Mr. White that although establishing a second position might be the appropriate decision for the department long term, the issue should be brought to Council at budget time as part of a discussion of reorganization. Mr. White maintained that a decision to have two assistant directors was effectively "the first level of a reorganization, and it drives a reorganization." He said making this decision would foreclose on other options.

Mr. Putens moved authorization by Council of a second Assistant Director of Recreation. Mayor Davis seconded the motion, which failed to carry, with a vote of 2-3 (Roberts, Turnbull, White).

MEETINGS: Council reviewed the upcoming schedule of meetings and set a date for the work session on the Senior Citizens Advisory Committee's report on their 2001 Open Forum.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Turnbull and seconded by Mr. White. The motion carried 5-0. Mayor Davis adjourned the regular meeting of December 17, 2001, at 1:12 a.m. on December 18, 2001.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Gallagher

City Clerk

"I hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and correct report of the regular meeting of the City Council of Greenbelt, Maryland, held December 17, 2001."

Judith F. Davis

Mayor