



MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Held Wednesday, December 13, 2000

For the purpose of meeting with representatives of the Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation (PGCEDC)

The meeting began at 8:09 p.m. It was held in the Senior Classroom of the Community Center.

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

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager and David E. Moran, Assistant to the City Manager

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Joseph James, President & CEO, PGCEDC and Timothy Wanamaker, Neighborhood Economic Development Manager, PGCEDC; Judy Bell, News Review and Amy Boyes, The Gazette

Mayor Davis welcomed everyone to the session and explained the stakeholder concept. Mr. James expressed positive impressions of Greenbelt.

Council reported on a meeting with representatives from Capitol Office Park where they indicated that they were not receiving interest in their undeveloped sites. Mr. James expressed surprise given Greenbelt's location and amenities. He asked why Council thought that there was a problem.

Mr. White thought that the schools and their reputation were a factor. Mr. James noted that some companies prefer the northern part of the county because it is closer to jurisdictions with better schools.

Mr. James requested information from the City on a regular basis on available sites and any heads up about vacancies or major tenants leaving. Mr. McLaughlin agreed to provide the information.

There was discussion about restaurants. Mr. James noted that the PGCEDC was beginning to work with County restaurants to try and increase marketing of restaurants.

Mr. Turnbull asked about other municipalities with economic development staffs. Mr. James noted that they work with local economic development officials. He stated that Bowie, College Park and Laurel had some level of staffing.

Mr. James expressed a desire for more spec. (speculative) buildings in the County. He noted some firms, especially high tech, want spaces they can move into immediately.

Mayor Davis expressed concern about the quality of spec. buildings. Mr. James noted he was talking about shell buildings that were high quality.

Mr. Roberts expressed opposition about spec. buildings. He indicated that he wanted tenants that made a long term commitment to Greenbelt. Mr. James disagreed and noted that high tech companies did not want to wait for a building to be constructed.

Mr. Putens proposed a "dog & pony" show and also suggested a 4-Cities approach. Mr. James indicated that they had not tried that specific approach, but were willing to work with the 4-Cities group.

Mr. Turnbull referenced the stakeholder program and noted that while the City did not have the capacity to meet with individual companies, he liked the idea that they could reach out to a group of businesses in some forum. He liked the idea of retaining and expanding existing businesses.

There was discussion about Beltway Plaza. Mr. Wanamaker noted that Beltway Plaza is a discount retailer and will remain that way. Mr. White noted that Beltway Plaza had improved itself, but that often they "whine" when the City tries to get cooperation.

Next, Metroland was discussed. Mr. James stated that the existing ramps were not inviting to development. Council expressed the City's desire for quality transit oriented development and protection of the sensitive environmental features.

The Springhill Lake proposal was discussed. Mayor Davis expressed concern about how the proposal was presented. Mr. James indicated that the PGCEDC was responding to concerns expressed by Beltway Plaza and Capital Office Park about negative things that were happening with tenants and management. He stated that PCCEDC had been put in a difficult position and was asked to respond in an informal way. Council expressed a willingness to hear ideas about Springhill Lake, but asked that the City be approached first.

Other issues were briefly discussed including: the Goddard Master Plan, Greenbelt Road Neighborhood Conservation Project, Saving the Theater, Renovation of Greenbelt Middle School, the Live Near Your Work Program, and Teleworking.

Mr. James requested an annual meeting and thanked Council for the dialogue and open communication. Council thanked Mr. James and Mr. Wanamaker for attending.

The meeting ended at 10:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

David E. Moran

Assistant to the City Manager

City Manager