



**MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION held
Wednesday, January 21, 1998 for the purpose of discussing beaver management
and the distinction between advisory boards and committees.**

The meeting began at 8:10pm. It was held in the Multi-Purpose Room of the Community Center.

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

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; David E. Moran, City Clerk; Ken Hall, Acting Director of Public Works and Bill Phelan, Horticulturalist.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Joanne Tucker, Ken Briscoe, Ron Perkins, Valerie Siegel, and Sheldon Goldberg, Citizens; William Bridgeland, Wildlife Biologist and Kerana Todorov, Gazette Newspapers

Mr. McLaughlin summarized the history of the beaver and the steps the city had taken.

Mr. Bridgeland noted his experience developing wildlife management policies for other jurisdictions and provided an overview of beavers and their habits. He noted that beavers are increasing in the mid-Atlantic region and are present in every watershed. Mr. Bridgeland indicated that Greenbelt Lake would likely only support one colony of 6-8 beavers. (Parents plus offspring.)

Mr. Bridgeland provided information on their feeding habits and noted that they prefer certain species of trees. Favorite species are fruit trees, flowering dogwoods, tulip popular, white oaks and beech, however a beaver may go after any tree. He agreed to provide a listing of trees and vegetation which they preferred. Beavers can't climb trees and fences.

Mr. Bridgeland suggested a number of options for dealing with the beavers. These included fencing trees and yards (min. 30" tall), planting materials which the beavers don't like, fencing entry points to the lake, draining the lake (Fall-March), harassment and trapping the beaver. He indicated that relocation required State permission and was really not an option because nobody would want the beavers. Mr. Bridgeland stressed that regardless of how the City handled these particular beavers, a plan was needed because beavers are here to stay and other beavers would return in the future.

Mr. Bridgeland responded to a letter from Mr. Larkin. He indicated that 2" X 2" fencing or under was effective. Mr. Bridgeland noted that beavers usually don't like pines. He

stated that young beavers begin eating in early Summer. He indicated that providing them with already -cut food might work, but there was no guarantee.

Mr. White asked Mr. Bridgeland to address a question raised by Ms. Siegel that the beavers came from Sunnyside because their habitat was disturbed. Mr. Bridgeland responded that while that was a possibility, there was no way to determine it definitively.

Mr. Putens stressed the need for prevention of future beavers. He also suggested changing planting strategies to reduce future beavers. Mr. Turnbull wanted to determine what the real problem was - the beavers or the loss of trees.

Mr. White believed the problem was the destruction of the trees for which the beavers were responsible. He was interested in strategies that get us back to where we were before the beavers invaded.

In response to questions from Ms. Davis, Mr. Bridgeland indicated that beavers will normally travel about 100 feet from shore for food, but can go up to 100 yards from shore for preferred trees. They live for 10 years or more. Mr. Phelan estimated that the city has lost hundreds of trees. Ms. Davis asked if there was a benefit to having beavers. Mr. Bridgeland noted that it depends on your definition of benefit; there can be improved water quality.

Ms. Siegel noted the safety hazards from trees falling on the path. Mr. Bridgeland indicated that harassment (disturbing their lodge or dam) needs to be done early, before the beavers become settled in an area. Mr. Briscoe stated that there are significant costs associated with wiring the trees, replacing trees and vegetation, clearing pipes and erosion.

Mr. Turnbull asked how long the beaver would stay. Mr. Bridgeland responded that the beavers would stay until the food supply was exhausted. Mr. Perkins expressed concern about the tree loss and how much loss the park could tolerate.

Mr. White stated that the city needed to present these concepts to the public. He believed a public meeting would need to be structured.

Council stressed the need to evaluate other areas in the city and develop a plan for the whole city. Council directed staff to retain Mr. Bridgeland to evaluate the watershed surrounding the lake, as well as other areas in the city, and present a list of options at an upcoming public meeting.

Mayor Davis thanked everyone for coming.

Distinction between Advisory Boards and Committees

Council reviewed Mr. Manzi's legal opinion and agreed to make no changes to existing boards, but in the future, use only the term "committee"

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

David E. Moran
City Clerk