WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, December 18, 2013, to discuss Greenbelt Theater Renovation.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 8:03 p.m. It was held in Room 201 of the Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Judith F. Davis, Konrad E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Edward V.J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan. Silke I. Pope was unable to attend due to illness.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; Celia Craze, Director of Planning and Community Development; and David Moran, Assistant City Manager.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Kade Sheridan, GTM Architects; Clyde Hurst, Hurst & Associates; Thomas X. White, News Review and many Greenbelt residents.

Mayor Jordan began with introductions. It was noted this was the third work session on this topic since August. Mayor Jordan hoped Council would not have to go over items already discussed.

Mr. Herling was glad the City was holding the work session. Ms. Davis and Ms. Mach wanted to move forward and hoped this matter would appear on the next Council meeting agenda.

Mayor Jordan asked about available funding. Mr. McLaughlin responded there was $880,000 available in the 2001 Bond Fund. He noted there was talk of applying an additional $200,000 from the City's Fund Balance and $13,000 from the small business loan fund.

Mayor Jordan asked what was necessary to get started. Ms. Craze responded that based on Council's direction at the work session on September 17, the revised project cost was $1,500,354. Mr. McLaughlin noted that State Bond funds must be expended or encumbered by June 30, 2014. He believed if the City executed contracts within the next 3 or 4 months, the funds would be considered encumbered.

Ms. Craze reviewed her memo of December 13. She noted meetings with a number of individuals. She also noted the County building permit and Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) approval had expired. With Council approval in January and renewal of the permits, she estimated that the project could begin in April.

Ms. Craze reviewed the design for the bathrooms. She noted that anything could be changed but that design changes required time and money.

Mr. Roberts asked about the return air duct next to the current men's bathroom. Mr. Hurst noted the duct would have to be modified. Mr. Roberts believed this would change the performance of the system. Mr. Roberts asked about the cost of renovating the projection room and requested a breakdown. Ms. Craze responded that the project cost was apportioned by division and not by section of the building.

Ms. Davis asked if the City could recover costs associated with the Pepco power upgrade or moving the HVAC unit blocking egress from the projection room from Mr. Christacos. Ms. Craze responded that the City would attempt to recover these costs, but that these items had to be done and were not *emergency repairs.*

Mr. Herling liked Ms. Mach's idea of reducing the fund balance to 11%. Mr. Herling asked about partial bathroom renovation to keep the facility open. Ms. Craze responded that due to building permit, Use & Occupancy permit, safety and patron experience that it made sense to renovate the entire facility. Mr. Herling expressed concern about the restroom renovation cost.

Ms. Mach agreed that reducing the fund balance was a viable idea to gain more project funding. She also asked if there had been follow-up with the County Executive.

Mayor Jordan asked if the current proposal reflected Council's consensus. Ms. Craze noted that part of the HVAC work for the lobby, concession area and restrooms in the front of the house needed to be done so that remained in the project..

Mayor Jordan asked about the digital and ADA projection accommodations. Ms. Craze described the proposal from Cardinal Sound.

Ms. Sarracino expressed concern that the deaf community was not being consulted about the projection accommodations. Mr. Hartman expressed concern that City staff had not consulted in advance with the deaf community. Ms. Craze stated she had consulted with Alice Mitchell and thought she had a good understanding of the needed options, but the options were flexible.

Mayor Jordan asked about the 3% contingency. Ms. Craze responded that it was slim and scary. She noted that only a condition not readily knowable to the designer or contactor would be the City's responsibility. Ms. Craze noted that the City often required a 25% contingency construction projects.

Ms. Davis asked about incentives for early completion and penalties for delays. Ms. Craze responded that City contracts didn't include incentives, but did include damages for delays. Ms. Davis suggested an incentive approach for future contracts.

Mr. Gervasi expressed a need for accurate plans. He distributed an alternative restroom layout.

Mr. Herling asked about accommodations to the ticket booth. Ms. Craze responded that the ticket booth could not be modified to make it accessible, but the concession counter could be modified to allow for ticket sales there.

Ms. Sheridan stated that Traceries had reviewed theater documents and even done a paint analysis.

Mr. Roberts wanted to revisit the Negotiated Agreement. He suggested Council consider a competitive bid process and believed it might yield a better deal for the City. He suggested a widespread bid advertisement.

Mr. McLaughlin stated that this project was designed to go out to bid. Initially the City only received one response. Ms. Craze described the prior bid process.

Mayor Jordan asked if pieces of the project could be competitively bid. Ms. Craze responded no.

Ms. Craze believed if Council approved the Negotiated Purchase in January, the project would begin April 1.

Ms. Davis did not believe a new competitive bid process would yield different results.

Ms. Mach stated that Council tried previously to get competitive bids.

Mr. Roberts stated that he was aware of companies that were struggling who might provide better pricing.

Mr. Herling wanted to incorporate ideas from members of the community like those from Mr. Gervasi.

Mr. Hartman suggested that an independent consultant be hired to evaluate the cost proposal.

Mr. Gervasi thought $200,000 was high for the lobby HVAC system. He suggested the City piece out the project to subcontractors and believed this would save money.

Ms. Ernsberger asked why the bathroom for women was so large. Ms. Davis responded that the bathroom was needed to accommodate larger audiences and for the future.

Mayor Jordan noted there were code and safety issues that had to be done.

Ms. Sanchez asked for further itemization of the cost estimates.

Mayor Jordan hoped some fundraising could be done.

Mr. Hartman asked for a response regarding his request for an independent consultant. Mr. McLaughlin stated this would add time to the project. He was not sure it would add value.

Mr. Herling noted that the Community Center renovation had involved the community. He wanted to make it a contractual condition that would involve the community. Ms. Craze responded that this was not appropriate.

Mr. Roberts noted there were games being played by Gardiner & Gardiner. He believed the City should hire a construction manager to manage the project and subcontract with local contractors.

Mr. Mason suggested the City hire a construction manager.

Ms. Lester stated the project had gone on for a long time. She noted the efforts of the County Executive to bring people to Greenbelt and put Greenbelt on the map. Ms. Lester believed further delays could jeopardize State funding and other City efforts.

Mr. Gervasi asked about the Pepco upgrade. Mr. Hurst responded that the City was required to upgrade the electric service to the building.

Mayor Jordan stated that the funding commitment from the City was there. He suggested that a community fundraising effort was needed.

Ms. McGrath gave a powerpoint presentation which made suggestions for the lobby and concession area and discussed some of the historic components of the theater.

Ms. Mach expressed appreciation for the work that had been done by Ms. McGrath. She asked if specific changes would impact the City's permits. Ms. Sheridan responded that changes to doors and light fixture changes would not impact permits. She noted something like a larger refrigerated case might impact the Health Department permit.

Mr. Putens wanted to keep the theater historically accurate. He wanted to get the project moving and did not want the City to lose the grant funding it had obtained

In response to questions, Ms. Craze stated that the City successfully went through the Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) approval process in 2008 but this had expired. She believed the plans would be approved again by MHT.

Mr. Roberts favored spending a little time and money to get a consultant.

Mr. Putens asked about bringing on a consultant while the contract was moving forward. Ms. Craze responded the City had already hired its expert. She believed the City was making a faithful restoration.

Ms. Mach believed the City already had its experts. Ms. Craze was happy to have a group of citizens to help advise her on finishes.

Mr. Herling appreciated the offer to include citizens. He asked about the second phase. Ms. Craze responded it was funding dependent and the theater would have to close.

Ms. Vacarro stated the renovation project needed to move forward.

Ms. Rosenthal asked when the work session would be held on operating the theater as a cooperative. Mayor Jordan responded it was planned for February.

Ms. Davis asked about aisle lights. Ms. Sheridan responded that accessibility code required the floor lighting,

Mr. Roberts expressed concern about putting a rooftop unit on the theater. He believed that these units would weaken the roof and cause leaks in the future.

Ms. Mach suggested that the City move forward with the $1.5 Million project and take the additional $400,000 from the General Fund balance. Ms. Davis asked about other City fund balances. Mayor Jordan wanted to know the impact of reducing the fund balance on debt payments.

Ms. Davis & Ms. Mach wanted a Resolution for Negotiated Purchase to appear on the January agenda.

Mr. Gervasi believed the projection room cost, bathroom cost and front house HVAC costs were high. He stated a consultant might be able to help the City reduce some of the costs.

Ms. McGrath stressed the need to make a decision about the proposal to operate the theater as a Cooperative.

Informational Items

Ms. Davis shared two Christmas cards. She suggested the City have a restaurant week. She noted that MML would work on the street light bill.

Mayor Jordan reported on a briefing he received from Congressman Hoyer's staff about the FBI relocation.

The meeting ended at 11:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

David E. Moran
Assistant City Manager