

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Monday, December 6, 2010, with NASA Goddard Space Flight Center.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 8:05 p.m. It was held in the Council Room of the Municipal Building.

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

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael McLaughlin, City Manager; and Cindy Murray, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Rick Obenschain, Deputy Center Director, Tom Paprocki, Director of Management Operations, Ray Rubilotta, Deputy Director of Management Operations, Phillina Tookes, Legislative Affairs Specialist, Kris Brown, Deputy Chief, Office of Public Affairs, Goddard Space Flight Center.

Mayor Davis welcomed everyone. Mr. Obenschain, Deputy Center Director, gave an overview of operations and the science and technology mission capabilities at Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC). He said that nine missions had been successfully launched in the last two years. Mr. Obenschain commented on current projects at GSFC including the James Webb Space Telescope, the Joint Polar Satellite System, and the ICESAT-II mission. He mentioned that although GSFC was primarily a mission center, they were also active in education and offer internship programs, donate to area schools, and adopt schools in challenged areas.

Mr. Obenschain said the total workforce at GSFC is 9,100, with 3,400 being civil servants and the remainder contractors. Of the civil servants, 60% are scientists and engineers, 30% are administrative personnel, and 10% are clerical employees. Ms. Mach questioned the percentage of employees that were Greenbelt residents. Ms. Tookes, Legislative Affairs Specialist, said they didn't have the information available this evening, but would forward it to the City. Mr. Herling requested that information on the type of transportation used by Greenbelt residents commuting to GSFC also be provided.

Mayor Davis asked about federal support and funding for GSFC. Mr. Obenschain said the work done by GSFC is well recognized, and there is a high level of support in continuing their operations by both the Congress and the President. He said he will know the funding level when the appropriations bill is available within the next few weeks, but added that he expects funding levels will be maintained. Mr. Obenschain noted that increases or decreases in funding levels are normally addressed through the expansion or contraction in the area of contractors.

Mr. Paprocki, Director of Management Operations, reported that the master plan from 2008 is in the process of being updated. He explained that all new construction will be high density with LEED silver or higher rating and would stay within the footprints of existing buildings. Mr. Paprocki said a new shipping and receiving facility is now being built on the perimeter of the property for security reasons and when complete, the existing shipping and receiving building will be demolished and a new flights project building will be constructed on that site. He also noted other building revitalization projects and relocations scheduled to occur over the next few years. Mr. Paprocki mentioned they are working towards developing a walking campus area by relocating all engineering buildings to one area, science buildings to another area, etc.

Mr. Paprocki also commented on several recent major projects including the replacement of all fencing around the perimeter of the Center. He said the main gate is scheduled for reopening on January 3rd, and the visitors entrance is scheduled for opening about February 1st.

Kris Brown, Deputy Chief, Office of Public Affairs, reviewed recent enhancements to the visitors center including, Science on a Sphere, GeoDome, Family Science Nights and Sunday Experiments. She also commented on the poor condition and small size of the current 13,500 square foot center which can only serve 40,000 visitors annually. Ms. Brown provided an update on the plans for the Science, Exploration and Education Center (SEEC) which will be a 120,000 square foot state of the art green facility, situated at the current visitor center site. She said the SEEC is projected to open in 2016 and will be able to accommodate 330,000 visitors annually.

Mr. Jordan questioned the impact of traffic associated with GSFC over the next five years, specifically along Greenbelt Road and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. Mr. Obenschain said the number of civil servants at GSFC is expected to remain steady, but the number of contractors may fluctuate. He added that the GSFC five year plan only concentrates on activity on the Center site. Mr. Paprocki noted GSFC had offered shuttle service for employees to both the Greenbelt Metro and New Carrollton Metro but this service was discontinued due to lack of ridership. He added that telework and flex time schedules are being explored for specific jobs, but noted these schedules are not practical for a large amount of the workforce.

Ray Rubilotta, Deputy Director of Management Operations, reviewed a proposed bicycle route from Greenbelt Metro to GSFC. He noted the plan uses many existing bike routes and keeps bicyclists off Greenbelt Road. Mr. Putens requested the plan be forwarded to the Advisory Planning Board for their review. Mayor Davis said she would discuss the proposal with Greenbriar since the proposed route runs along their property.

Mr. Putens raised the matter of annexation of GSFC into the City. Mr. Obenschain said he will look into this matter.

Mayor Davis thanked the GSFC representatives for attending and noted how important a stakeholder they are considered by all.

Informational Items

Councilmembers agreed to send a letter to Thomas Dernoga thanking him for his many years of service on the Prince George's County Council. It was also agreed to present Mr. Dernoga with a Greenbelt History Book at the upcoming Legislative Dinner.

The meeting ended at 10:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

*Cindy Murray
City Clerk*