

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Monday, September 30, 2013, to discuss Forest Preserve Issues.

Mayor Davis started the meeting 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; Celia Craze, Director of Planning and Community Development; Jim Sterling, Assistant Director of Public Works; and Cindy Murray, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Bob Snyder, Joe Murray, Willis Witter and Susan Gregerson, Forest Preserve Advisory Board; Martha Tomecek, Bob Trumbule, Jude Law, John Henry Jones, Jennifer Stabler and Bill Phelan, Greenbelt Garden Club; and others.

Bob Snyder, Chair of the Forest Preserve Advisory Board (FPAB), summarized the FPAB Report #2013-1 regarding removal of vegetation in the forest preserve. He reviewed the recommendations of the report.

Mayor Davis asked about routine maintenance in the forest preserve. Celia Craze, Director of Planning and Community Development, said there is no routine/regular maintenance work done in the Forest Preserve. She added that matters such as public safety and safety of the preserve itself are addressed and the Forest Preserve Maintenance Guidelines set forth a general policy that the community gardens should be continued. Ms. Craze explained that it has been staff's position that the guidelines are intended to protect the act of gardening and related maintenance for the gardens located in the forest preserve. She suggested the guidelines should be revised to better describe the rules and expectations associated with operation of the community gardens.

Mayor Davis stressed the need to determine what can be done now and in the future regarding the forest preserve and community garden issues.

Mr. Putens and Mr. Roberts said the City, FPAB and Greenbelt Community Garden Club (GCGC) need to come together to clearly define boundaries between the forest preserve and community gardens. Mr. Roberts suggested the garden areas be fenced so everyone understands that maintenance work is only allowed on the garden side of the fence and not the forest side.

Bob Trumbule, GCGC, said he had been a former member of the Forest Preserve Task Force. He explained the thorough process that had formed the Forest Preserve Guidelines which included a contingency/exemption for the community gardens. Mr. Trumbule said he did not recommend a change to the guidelines that would allow the FPAB to advise on matters. He also suggested the GCGC be represented on the FPAB. Richard Olson agreed that this would be helpful.

Jennifer Stabler, GCGC, expressed the desire of the GCGC to preserve both the forest preserve and the community gardens. Ms. Stabler said she and Ben Fischler had met with Ms. Craze on developing revised/expanded guidelines for permanent edge/routine maintenance of the gardens which will be a combination map and written guideline. Ms. Craze added that the timeline for this

project is six months.

There was discussion regarding establishing a routine maintenance zone of eight feet around the community gardens which would be regularly cleared by Public Works and the maintenance would be done on a semi-annual basis.

Bill Phelan, GCGC, said gardeners had expressed concerns about the minutes of the FPAB meetings not being available on the City website. He noted the need for transparency and sharing of information.

Martha Tomecek, GCGC, said the Greenbelt Garden Club Garden Health Guide will be submitted to Council after approved by the GCGC membership.

Stacy Cumberback, GCGC, asked for a map of the entire forest preserve. .

After further discussion, Council requested 1) staff stake the garden boundaries; 2) staked area be reviewed by Council and members of the FPAB and GCGC review the staked boundaries; and 3) item be included on a future Council meeting agenda for action.

Ms. Craze said delineating the edges of gardens is straight forward and can be done within the next two weeks.

Items of Information

Several informational items were discussed.

The meeting ended at 10:48pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Cindy Murray
City Clerk*