

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Monday, July 19, 2010.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 8:03 p.m.

ROLL CALL was answered by 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.

ALSO PRESENT were Michael McLaughlin, City Manager; David E. Moran, Assistant City Manager; Terri Hruby, Assistant Director of Planning; and Cindy Murray, City Clerk.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: It was moved by Mr. Putens and seconded by Mr. Jordan that the agenda be approved. The motion passed 7-0.

PROPOSED METROBUS AND THEBUS SERVICE CHANGES:

Ms. Hruby explained recent revisions to the County and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) transit service change plan that Council reviewed at the July 12 meeting. She said the WMATA plan was essentially unchanged, with the exception of the removal of morning rush hour service into Beltway Plaza, but a number of revisions had been made to the County plan.

Ms. Hruby, along with Larry Glick and Jim Hamre, WMATA, and Carl Schuettler and Kevin Thornton, County, summarized the plans. Mr. Hamre expressed Ms. Hewlitt's appreciation of the work between all groups towards development of the plans. He indicated that if Council indicates their support of the plan this evening, he expects it will be placed on the WMATA Board agenda for their August 10 meeting and would vote on the plan on September 23. If approved, the new plan would be implemented on December 26. Mr. Hamre indicated WMATA cannot meet the earlier implementation date of September 27, since there was not enough time to include the plan on the July 22 WMATA Board agenda.

Mr. Herling expressed concern that the removal of morning rush hour service into Beltway Plaza may create a hardship for mall workers using transit services. Mr. Glick said WMATA would make some adjustments to their plan to address this concern. Ms. Hruby added that TheBus provides morning rush hour service into Beltway Plaza.

Mayor Davis asked about the procedure for advertising new service changes. Mr. Hamre said WMATA advertises new service changes through press releases and local news stories, as well as the use of social networks. He further advised the WMATA standard is to advertise approximately one month in advance of any service changes. Mr. Hamre said WMATA would be willing to work with the City to begin advertising prior to that time.

Mr. Jordan asked for a cost estimate to provide G12 route service on Sundays. Mr. Hamre estimated the cost to be approximately \$1.4 million.

John Stith, 2-G Laurel Hill Road, commented on the new service plans, noting there was some new service provided as well as some service eliminated.

Jennifer Errick, representing Transit Riders United of Greenbelt (TRU-G), said TRU-G had met on July 17th and had voted to neither officially support nor oppose the proposed service changes. She said members had noted several positive aspects of the proposed changes, including the potential to increase ridership with new service to Lakeside North and Boxwood and improved service to the Gates of Cipriano, the Social Security Office and Goddard Corporate Park, as well as some negative aspects such as new time transfer procedure, connectivity issues, service levels for NASA and safety issues. Ms. Errick said TRU-G is concerned that there are riders in the community with limited mobility issues who are not aware of the proposed changes, and may be negatively impacted by the proposed route changes. She also noted that TRU-G continues to strongly support increased funding for public transit services and Sunday transit service in the City.

Mayor Davis thanked TRU-G and Ms. Hruby, as well as Mr. Glick, Mr. Hamre, Mr. Schuettler and Mr. Thornton, for working with each other on the proposed service change plans.

Laura O'Neal, 44-R Ridge Road, noted the lack of direct transit service for residents of Empirian Village to the Center, and for residents of Greenbelt East to Beltway Plaza under the proposed plan.

Stephanie Warner, 14-N Laurel Hill Road, said she was completely dependent on public transportation and stressed the need for Sunday transit service.

Michael Cohen, 4-D Hillside, asked and was provided answers to questions regarding time transfers.

Bill Orleans, Greenbelt, requested Council not endorse the proposed plans tonight but to review the plans in further detail, and schedule additional work sessions.

Mayor Davis noted she had received four emails from residents of Boxwood regarding proposed bus service in their area. She advised three residents were pleased with the plan, but one expressed concern about busses traveling at a high rate of speed through the neighborhood.

Anna Socrates, 14-J Ridge Road, thanked Council and staff, along with WMATA and the County, for listening to community concerns regarding the proposed service changes. She noted the importance of educating transit riders on the proposed changes, gathering improved data on transit ridership, lobbying the State for increased transit funding and equitable transit funding between counties, and the long range need for improved transit services.

Mr. Jordan questioned the proposed route changes in Empirian Village. Ms. Hruby noted residents of Empirian Village would need to transfer for east to west transit service. She added that several options were reviewed but a better solution had not yet been identified.

Mr. Putens stressed the need for the City and TRU-G to work with WMATA and the County to develop performance measures to track data such as ridership counts by time period, on-time performance and time transfer success. Mayor Davis suggested that the number of passenger complaints during the early change period be included also. Mr. Schuettler said that if the proposed plan was implemented in December, the data probably won't be available until February.

Ms. Hruby said a plan would be brought back to Council at a future meeting on how performance measures would be reviewed.

Mr. Roberts noted his opposition to the proposed transit service changes, stating it was an overall cut to transit services in the City.

After further discussion, Ms. Mach moved to support the proposed Greenbelt transit service changes to allow for December 2010 implementation with the following short-term and long-term conditions identified by Council, staff, the Advisory Planning Board and TRU-G.

Short Term

- WMATA and the County, in consultation with the City and TRU-G, shall develop a list of performance measures and will provide the City with a report on a regular basis. WMATA and the County will work with the City and TRU-G to monitor these performance measures and identify improvements that can be made.
- WMATA and the County will maintain the existing span of service on all new routes.
- WMATA will evaluate the impact of eliminating early morning bus service into Beltway Plaza, and will restore the service if justified.
- WMATA will evaluate current ridership data for the NASA South Gate, will provide direct service if justified, and will continue to monitor future ridership levels to determine if additional service is needed.
- WMATA will work with the State Highway Administration, County and the City to ensure that all new bus stops and pedestrian routes are accessible and safe.
- WMATA and the County will develop and implement an early public notification process to educate the public on the proposed transit changes.
- WMATA and the County, with the assistance of the City, will develop and implement a comprehensive marketing and education campaign, including targeting residential and commercial developments, that takes advantage of all available media outlets.
- WMATA and the County will commit to preserve the implemented new routing for a trial period, which shall be no shorter than the industry standard of 18 months. If it is determined that minor changes are necessary within the first 18 months, such changes shall be implemented in consultation/agreement with the City.
- WMATA will provide planning support and funding to provide safe, handicap accessible stops where new stops are being added on City and State roads.
- WMATA will work with the City and provide financial assistance to address any safety issues associated with Roosevelt Center being a timed-transfer station.
- WMATA and the County will agree that one of its primary goals is to plan and implement a seamless transit system that coordinates implementation of route changes, scheduling, transfers, bus stops, routing, frequency of service and connectivity.
- WMATA and the County will continue to recognize the importance of public participation in the planning and implementation process and agree to hold public hearings on future service changes, which shall be properly advertised and accessible by transit.

Long Term

- WMATA and the County will work together to address the transit funding disparity that currently exists between Prince George's County and Montgomery County.

- WMATA and the County will develop a map that shows existing and proposed bus stops so that during review of proposed route changes sufficient information is available to evaluate bus stop accessibility, safety, location, etc.
- WMATA and the County will continue to develop and implement a comprehensive marketing campaign to support the long-term success of transit in Greenbelt.
- WMATA and the County recognize that there are opportunities to improve accessibility, efficiency and availability of transit in Greenbelt, and agree that a common goal is to provide longer operating hours, increased frequency, Sunday service and expanded Saturday service as funding becomes available.

Mr. Herling seconded. The motion passed 6-1. (Roberts)

COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT'S ENERGY OUTREACH CAMPAIGN:

Mr. Jordan moved that Council support the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments application to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Climate Showcase Communities program and, if the program is approved by EPA, the City would serve as one of three communities to pilot an outreach campaign to improve energy efficiency in communities. Mr. Herling seconded. The motion passed 7-0.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn the special meeting was made by Ms. Mach and seconded by Mr. Putens. The motion passed 7-0.

Mayor Davis adjourned the special meeting of Monday, July 19, 2010, at 10:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Murray
City Clerk

"I hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and correct report of the special meeting of the City Council of Greenbelt, Maryland, held July 19, 2010."

Judith F. Davis
Mayor