

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, April 25, 2012, for the purpose of a Quarterly Transit Meeting.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. It was held in the MultiPurpose Room of the Community Center.

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

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Terri Hruby, Assistant Director of Planning; and Cindy Murray, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: James Hamre and Sam Stepney, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority; Carl Schuettler, Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation; John Stith and Matt Johnson, Transit Riders United; and Bill Orleans.

Mr. Hamre reviewed the ridership reports from Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) routes in Greenbelt. He commented that ridership continues to be strong and the timed transfers are generally successful but noted improvements were needed to on-time performance.

Mayor Davis said she had received a complaint that bus routes servicing University Square were overcrowded. Mr. Hamre and Mr. Stepney said they would look into the complaint but noted they were not aware of any issues. Mr. Herling mentioned that he uses this route occasionally and has never experienced this problem.

Mr. Jordan asked about the issue with bus fires recently. Mr. Hamre reported that following two recent bus fire incidents involving Orion VI busses, management temporarily placed the entire fleet of 92 Orion busses out of service Tuesday while safety concerns are evaluated. He reported the busses from the contingency fleets had been placed back in service and there had been no disruption in service.

Mr. Jordan questioned how a determination is made regarding what type of busses service various areas. Mr. Hamre reported that it depends on the fueling options available at the local bus garages, as well as the physical constraints of which types of busses can be accommodated.

Ms. Schuettler reviewed the ridership reports from TheBus routes in Greenbelt. He noted the on-time performance issues with some routes are being addressed.

Council thanked Mr. Schuettler for the bus shelter installation on Greenbelt Road by Greenway Shopping Center.

John Stith, Transit Riders United (TRU-G), recommended a recording be provided during non-service hours for TheBus complaint line. He said he had recently tried to phone in a complaint to TheBus regarding a driver who did not stop at 5:15 a.m. and the phone just rang.

Mr. Jordan mentioned TheBus stops at Metro are the furthest stops from the actual station and are problematic especially for the elderly. Mr. Hamre reported that Metro provides their busses priority locations at all stations throughout the area, but added that he would work with Mr. Schuettler and determine if a solution could be worked out.

Matt Johnson reported he had observed an incident where a bus driver who had just left the stop would not stop again to allow an elderly patron who was enroute to the bus to board. Mr. Schuettler and Mr. Hamre both advised that due to safety concerns, they are very rigorous in enforcing the policy that prohibits drivers from stopping in non-designated bus stop areas. Mr. Putens and Mr. Roberts both mentioned the need to be customer friendly.

Ms. Hruby reviewed the Roosevelt Center bus stop improvement plans. She advised WMATA has been working hard to begin the project but the relocation of utilities is currently holding up the project. She anticipates it will be completed late this spring.

Mr. Stith stressed the need for late evening transportation service and said he had forwarded some ideas recently to Mr. Hamre. Mr. Hamre said he hoped to have a late night sweeper bus in operation by September.

Mr. Orleans asked and was provided answers to several questions.

Council thanked both Mr. Hamre and Mr. Schuettler for their responsiveness throughout the route restructuring process. They requested the next Transit work session be held in September 2012 and then future meetings be held on a bi-annual basis.

Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission's Proposed Tax Shift

Mr. McLaughlin updated Council on Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission's (M-NCPPC) Proposed Tax Shift and its impact to Greenbelt residents.

After discussion, Council noted their opposition to the tax shift. They suggested that if the tax shift must occur, an equivalent amount of the increase in taxes paid by Greenbelt property owners be returned to the City through additional leadership contracts or grants. Council requested this item be included on the agenda of the May 14th regular meeting.

Informational Items

Council commented on the number of skateboarders in Roosevelt Center and requested the Police Department monitor this issue.

Mr. Jordan reported he would attend the Bike to Work Day event in Greenbelt.

The meeting ended at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Cindy Murray
City Clerk*