

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, April 18, 2012, for the purpose of reviewing the Planning & Community Development section of the Proposed FY 2013 Budget.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 8:02 p.m. It was held in the MultiPurpose Room of the Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Konrad E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Silke I. Pope, Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Judith F. Davis. Councilmember Emmett V. Jordan arrived at 8:05 p.m.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael McLaughlin, City Manager; Jeff Williams, City Treasurer; Celia Craze, Director of Planning & Community Development; and Cindy Murray, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Jim Giese, News Review; Chris Shuman, Molly Lester, Laura Kressler and Bill Orleans.

Ms. Craze reviewed the major issues/highlights of the Department. She noted there had been a significant turnover in staff over the past year but all vacancies had been filled except for those of Assistant Director and Inspector. Ms. Craze said she did not feel the Department needed two Assistant Director positions given its small size and recommended eliminating the vacant Assistant Director position and combining the duties of that position with those of the Supervisory Inspector position. She further recommended an increase in staffing for animal control and noted the cost would be offset by the elimination of the Assistant Director position.

Mr. McLaughlin praised the animal control program but noted the needs for services are great throughout the City. He said he supports filling positions, such as those in CARES and IT, which provide services to the residents.

Mr. Herling asked if a full time person is needed to handle transportation issues. Ms. Craze said Jaime Fearer, Community Planner, is the primary transportation person in Planning and has taken over a number of transportation issues. She said another position may be needed in the future but not at this time.

Chris Shuman, 1-E Gardenway, questioned whether the need for additional staffing for animal control may be cyclical, and may not be needed next year. Ms. Craze said the shelter had experienced an increase in the number of owner surrenders recently but explained that the additional staffing is not associated with care of animals at the shelter but with calls for service.

Ms. Craze said she also recommends that a consulting inspector assume duties for construction inspection. She explained that it would not be cost effective to have an inspector on staff with that level of expertise for a very small amount of work. She added there would be no cost impact to the City as expenses are borne by the project permittee.

Council then reviewed the Planning and Community Development sections of the budget.

Mayor Davis asked the location of the two vacant residential properties that are in unsafe condition. Ms. Craze advised they were both in the Lakewood neighborhood.

There was discussion regarding enforcement of the anti-snipe sign regulations. Ms. Craze advised the primary deterrent is the removal of the signs which results in a loss of money for the offenders. She said warnings and fines are issued when the responsible party can be identified.

Mr. Shuman said he supports the removal of signs as soon as they go up and suggested the Police, when not busy with other duties, issue citations to offenders when they observe signs being placed.

Under Management Objectives, Mr. Putens suggested a thorough review of the City Code. Ms. Craze agreed, noting some sections were antiquated.

Mr. Jordan questioned the amount of staff time that was devoted to grants, applying, monitoring, etc. Ms. Craze said less than 5% but added grant work is a combined effort between various departments.

Molly Lester, 6-M Hillside, questioned the time frame for dam improvements in order to be compliant with the State. Ms. Craze reviewed the history of the dam breach study, the proposal that the lake dredge project be joined with the dam improvements, and said they are working with the State for an additional extension of time for compliance with the dam repairs.

Ms. Craze said the budget proposes the purchase of an automatic license tag reader for parking enforcement. She estimated that the cost of the tag reader (\$16,000) would be recovered within one year by the more efficient and thorough identification of vehicles with infractions. Mr. Shuman spoke in support of the purchase of the tag reader.

Ms. Craze reported that Greenbelt was one of a few municipalities that don't have a business license requirement. She advised that evaluation of the need/benefit of implementing a business license requirement was included as a management objective in the budget. Mr. Roberts expressed concern that this requirement would be a burden on small business owners.

Under Animal Control, Mayor Davis suggested volunteer service hours be included under performance measures.

Council then reviewed the proposed Planning Work Program.

The meeting ended at 11:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Cindy Murray
City Clerk*