

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, April 16, 2014, to meet with the Roosevelt Center Merchants.

Mayor Pro Tem Judith F. Davis started the meeting at 8:00 p.m. The meeting was held in Room 201 of the Greenbelt Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Konrad E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Silke I. Pope, Edward V.J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Pro-Tem Judith F. Davis. Mayor Emmett V. Jordan was unable to attend due to work out of state.

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

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Joe Natoli, Generous Joe's; George Boyce and Eva Fallon, Club 125; Terry Kucera, Greenbelt Farmers Market; Anwar Saleh, Greenbelt Barber & Stylist; Dirk Kingsley, Realty 1; Michael Hartman, New Deal Café; Bob Davis, Greenbelt Consumers Supermarket; Cindy Comproni, Greenbelt Federal Credit Union; Linda Ivy, Greenbelt Professional Building; Barbara Simon, Friends of New Deal Café Arts and Greenbelt Community Development Corporation; Paul Sanchez, Greenbelt Theater; Sheila Alpers, Greenbelt Step Club; Caitlin McGrath, Thomas White, Greenbelt News Review; and Bill Orleans.

Update from Merchants

Ms. Comproni announced that the Credit Union and City would be holding a Shredding Day on Saturday, May 3rd. She reported that several hours after the last shredding event in October, the shred truck had a small fire that had been caused by batteries someone had mixed in with their paper for shredding. Ms. Comproni said none of the shredded paper could be recycled.

Property Owner/Roof Leaks

Ms. Craze reported that the Center owner does not have an occupancy permit due to his failure to address issues identified in a June 2013 inspection of the property. She said the City began fining the owner on January 10th for allowing occupancy of the property.

Ms. Craze advised that the City had received an Abatement Order in March 2014 to abate the roof violations but the owner has a contractor replacing the roof this week. She said it is expected the work will be complete by Friday if the weather stays dry. City Inspectors will then go through the businesses to determine if visible ceiling cracks will be separately cited. Mr. Roberts asked how the repairs would be done. Ms. Craze said that it is up to the owner to take adequate and appropriate action for repairs. Mr. Roberts said the majority of cracks on the roof were caused by the roof installed HVAC units and roof cracking will continue if this type of installation is allowed in the future. Ms. Craze advised that roof installed HVAC units are permitted by the building code and as long as the units are installed per code, the City has no authority to restrict their installation.

Signage/Advertising

There was discussion regarding directional signage on Greenbelt Road to the Center. Mr. McLaughlin advised requests for signage have been made to the State numerous time to no avail because the State rules and regulations are very specific as to what type of signage are allowed within their right-of-ways. Mr. McLaughlin said the directional signage to the Farmers Market was part of the State Farmers Market Program and the directional signage to Historic Greenbelt was part of the Wayfinding Initiative Program.

Ms. Davis said the merchants had discussed the idea of developing a website for the Center at the last Roosevelt Center Merchants Association (RCMA) meeting. Mr. Boyce said he will be creating the website and will be working with the merchants on its design.

Ms. Mach suggested a kiosk at the Center, as well as the other shopping areas, would be useful for marketing and promoting all the shopping center areas of the City. Ms. Mach and Ms. Davis suggested the merchants consider a Greenbelt Community Foundation grant, Jim Cassels grant or Anacostia Trails Heritage Area grant to fund a kiosk. Mr. Herling commented that the bulletin boards by the Credit Union could be used for posting of information also.

Ms. Mach suggested the merchants participate with the Greenbelt Geocache, perhaps with a joint coupon. She directed them to contact the Recreation Department.

Trash Area/Parking

There was discussion regarding the trash area to the rear of the Credit Union/Generous Joes. Mr. McLaughlin said the trash area is currently under review by staff. The merchants indicated there hadn't been any major problems with the area recently. Ms. Craze noted that when the City does receive a complaint about the trash area or the rear doors to merchants being blocked by deliveries or trash storage, an inspector goes out and discusses the problem with the merchants.

Mr. Hartman said delivery trucks often park in handicap parking spaces and would like to see more enforcement of these violations. Ms. Craze noted and will advise the Parking Enforcement officers.

Theater Renovation Project

Ms. Craze reported that the Theater Renovation Project should begin about June 1st and estimated the theater would remain closed for approximately six months.

Mr. McLaughlin said the City will be showing around 10 free films in the Center bi-weekly during the summer. Mr. Hartman asked that the City be mindful of people with disabilities during the film showings. Ms. McGrath said that a silent film had been considered for one showing.

Ms. Comproni said the RCMA had discussed the idea of each merchant hosting an event while the Theater was closed. She requested the City consider waiving any permit fees that may be required.

Festivals

There was discussion regarding the increase in the number of festivals over the last several years. Ms. Davis and Ms. Mach said that Council had directed staff to develop a policy on the use of City property for festivals and determine whether fees for deposit, set-up and clean-up, trash removal, insurance, etc. should be charged.

Ms. Davis said the participation of food truck vendors had been permitted at a festival last year. She advised that food truck vendors were not being permitted for the festivals this year while the policy is being developed and staff is researching whether these vendors were taking business away from Center merchants, whether they carried health department permits, the parking of the trucks, etc. After the draft policy is developed, Council said the Arts Advisory Board, Park and Recreation Advisory Board and Public Safety Advisory Board will review the policy.

Other Items

Ms. Ivy provided an update on the Greenbelt Labor Day Festival for 2014. She said a new carnival operator has been contracted for the event.

Informational Items

Ms. Davis reported that the Maryland Municipal League had named both Delegates Tawanna Gaines and Alonzo Washington "Outstanding Friend of Municipal Government."

Several other informational items were discussed.

The meeting ended at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Cindy Murray
City Clerk*