

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, April 9, 2014, to discuss the Planning and Community Development Section and Animal Control Section of the Proposed FY 2015 Budget.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 8:03 p.m. The meeting was held in Room 201 of the Greenbelt Community Center.

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

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

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Bill Orleans, Molly Lester and Laura Kressler.

Planning and Community Development

Ms. Craze reported on several issues/projects of the Department including the relocation of the FBI headquarters to Greenbelt, the Greenbelt Theater Renovation, the Greenbelt Lake Dam, the Greenbriar Park stream mitigation, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, Safe Routes to Schools, Economic Development Study and Forest Preserve Advisory Board. She provided an update on several derelict properties in the City.

Ms. Craze advised that the workload in the Planning and Community Development Department continues to be a major issue especially since one Code Inspector position and one Community Planner position are vacant. She said they are in the process of interviewing and selecting candidates for both positions.

There was discussion regarding the budget proposal to relocate snipe sign removal to the Public Works Department. Ms. Craze commented on the difficulty of identifying most owners of the signs but said Code Enforcement staff would maintain the enforcement aspect and continue to pursue the owners if readily identifiable. She said the prompt removal of these signs has shown to be the most effective method for enforcement.

Ms. Davis mentioned reassigning parking enforcement functions to the Police Department. Ms. Craze said all civilian enforcement functions should remain with Planning and Community Development. She added that the workload in the Department is in the Planning and Code Enforcement functions, not in the Parking Enforcement function.

There was discussion regarding the recommendations from the Organizational Assessment. Ms. Pope asked about reassigning animal control and code enforcement functions to another department. Ms. Craze said she disagrees with the main points in the Organizational Assessment which didn't capture that the City doesn't have planning and zoning authority. She expressed concern regarding the recommendation of the Organizational Assessment to create a new Community Services Department noting that would replicate the management function already in place.

In response to a question from Mr. Putens, Ms. Craze said data generated from the license plate reader is a police records issue. Mr. Putens advised that license plate reader data was an issue being discussed by the National League of Cities.

Mr. Putens and Mr. Herling asked about the idea of a landlord tenant commission in Greenbelt. Ms. Craze stated there was no regulatory authority to enable this type of commission. She added that most landlord tenant disputes are contractual issues. Mr. Putens noted the benefits a landlord tenant commission could provide and suggested a work session with State legislators to discuss the idea.

Ms. Craze mentioned the Cherrywood Lane roundabout had been a successful project. She said Public Works will be painting some changes to the roundabout markings soon. In response to a question from Ms. Pope, Ms. Craze said the painting would provide clarity to the bike lane markings.

Mr. Orleans, Greenbelt, mentioned some concerns he had regarding the design of the bus shelters at Roosevelt Center. Ms. Craze said staff would review his concern.

Mr. Putens said that many homeowner associations have been experiencing significant financial problems caused by non-payment of fees by homeowners. He requested staff check with Prince George's County to determine if they have been enforcing limited priority liens for non-payment of homeowner association fees.

Animal Control

Ms. Craze advised the City currently operates an animal control program that demands approximately 120 work hours per week with employees that work 100 paid hours per week.

Mr. Roberts suggested animal control services (calls for service, street patrols) be separated from the actual shelter management as is done in other animal shelters.

Ms. Craze said the City's policy of operating a "No Kill" shelter often results in housing animals that are not able to be adopted for a long time and may need to be reconsidered at some point in the future. She noted the best use of kennel space needs to be considered, such as housing one animal for a long period of time or housing 13-16 animals on a short term basis through the adoption process.

Mayor Jordan said he participated in a conference call with Mayor Fellows, City of College Park, and Mayor Calvo, Town of Berwyn Heights, about working together to provide a better level of animal control services in the northern part of Prince George's County. He said Adam Ortiz, Director of Prince George's County Department of Environmental Resources, has suggested a study to determine the feasibility of the idea. Mr. Ortiz estimates the cost of the study will be \$200,000 and is looking for the municipalities to fund 1/3 of the cost of the complete study. Mayor Jordan said the City of College Park will be contributing \$25,000 and Berwyn Heights \$10,000, and have requested a contribution from Greenbelt. Mr. Ortiz will be at the next Prince George's County Municipal Association meeting. After discussion regarding Greenbelt already having a City animal shelter, Council suggested \$3,000 to \$5,000 be added to the Budget "Wish List" for possible contribution towards the study.

Mayor Jordan asked about the Facebook Page for the Animal Shelter. Ms. Craze said the Page is primarily maintained by Animal Control Officer Crossed on her own time. She added that public affairs are primarily handled by volunteers.

In response to a question from Mayor Jordan, Ms. Craze estimated she spent approximately one to two hours each week on animal control management.

Ms. Davis and Ms. Mach asked if the fee for the City's Dog Park is comparable to other dog parks in the area. Ms. Craze said no, the City Dog Park was essentially a free park with a \$5 fee for a lifetime license. She said the purpose of the license is to obtain information on the dogs.

Informational Items

Ms. Davis reported that she and Joe McNeal, Assistant Director of Recreation, had attended the hearing for County Bill 4 (Commercial Kitchens) which passed without any controversy. She requested a letter to Councilmember Ingrid Turner be included on the next agenda to thank her for her assistance on the passage of this legislation.

Ms. Davis also reported she had attended the Roosevelt Center Merchants Association meeting.

The meeting ended at 10:41p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Cindy Murray
City Clerk*