

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Saturday, March 3, 2012, for a City Manager Update and Goals Review.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 10:05a.m. It was held in the Council Room of the Municipal Building.

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

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; and David E. Moran, Assistant City Manager.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Ellen Kandell, Alternative Resolutions (facilitator), Molly Lester, Chris Shuman, Robert Snyder, Marsha Voight, Ed James, Kathleen Gallagher, News Review, and several students from University of Maryland

Mr. McLaughlin provided an update on the FY 2012 Budget. He reviewed the Management Objectives and Capital Projects reports.

Review of Existing Council Goals

Ms. Mach noted overlap in some of the goals. Mayor Davis stated that Council had not incorporated economic development goals. Mr. Putens asked about the City's role in economic development. Mr. Jordan believed economic development pertained to the goal of "Maintain and Improve Fiscal Sustainability." He stated the City needed to come up with actionable items and that Council needed to lead. Mr. Herling suggested the County Economic Development Initiative could be a resource for the City. He suggested a personal welcome wagon approach.

Mayor Davis stated that the City had made significant accomplishments. Mr. Putens asked if the current goals were still appropriate. Then, Council reviewed each of the Goals and the Visioning Goals Update dated February 2012.

Enhance Sense of Community: *Mayor Davis suggested that Community Development inspectors needed to visit homeowner associations. Mr. Herling believed that the lack of "community" understanding was greatest in the apartment communities. Mr. Jordan noted there were cultural differences in the different sections of Greenbelt. Mr. Roberts stated that turnover of residents was a problem in developing a sense of "community". Mayor Davis mentioned the physical separation by roads. Mr. Roberts believed Franklin Park and its all-rental community created a challenge and that people needed to buy-in to Greenbelt. Ms. Pope believed the City lacks housing diversity.*

Improve Transportation Opportunities: *Mayor Davis was looking forward to the Pedestrian/Bicycle Master Plan. Ms. Mach believed the City needed to update the crosswalk study. Mr. Jordan indicated the City had made progress in its meeting with WMATA and other transit stakeholders. Mr. Roberts stated there had been service reductions and favored eliminating "the Bus" service in Greenbelt and replacing it with a City bus service. Mr. Herling believed the County Route 11 was an improvement for riders.*

Maintain Greenbelt as an Environmentally Proactive Community: Mayor Davis suggested that the Forest Preserve Advisory Board and the Advisory Committee on Trees should be added as accomplishments. Mr. Putens stated the City has accomplished many things over the past twenty years that aren't reflected here. Mr. Jordan noted that environmental sustainability was not reflected.

Improve and Enhance Public Safety: Mayor Davis believed we had an excellent police force. Mr. Putens believed improvements at Franklin Park led to resources being available in other areas of the City. Mr. Jordan mentioned security cameras

Preserve and Enhance Greenbelt's Legacy as a Planned Community: Mayor Davis thought that items C1 and C2 were not as significant as item C3. Ms. Mach noted that some of the bullets overlapped. Mr. Jordan stated that Council needed to capture forward looking ideas. Mayor Davis noted that in the Greater Greenbelt Initiative (GGI) there was tension between status quo and affordability. Mr. Roberts stated that GGI had good ideas and bad ideas and that Council needed to filter these.

Promote Quality of Life Programs for All Citizens: Mayor Davis stated that two of Greenbelt's strengths were provision of inter-generational services and arts programs. Ms. Mach mentioned the "playful city" designation. Mr. Putens stressed the range (youth to senior) of City programs. He stressed a need for constituent services particularly with utilities and cable services (i.e., ombudsman services).

Enhance and Facilitate Cultural Artistic and Recreational Programming for all Citizens: Mr. Herling suggested a need to coordinate arts programs. Ms. Mach noted concern about usage of the City movie theater.

Maintain and Improve Fiscal Sustainability: Mayor Davis observed that this goal being listed last on the list was surprising. Mr. Roberts believed the City had not always maintained fiscal sustainability. Ms. Mach suggested the Living Wage policy needed to be reflected here. Mr. Jordan believed the City had done a good job maintaining services. He stated the Council needed to lead. Mayor Davis believed the City was not handling our infrastructure as well as we should.

Feedback from Election Campaign & Council Concerns

Council reported on the feedback they received from residents during the recent election process.

Ms. Pope heard that too much was being spent on new projects and that the City needed to address existing services.

Mr. Roberts reported the number one issue he heard was public safety. Also, taxes (paying too much) are an issue.

Mr. Jordan heard that property values are an issue. He noted some people indicated they don't utilize all the services and should not have to pay for them. Other items he reported were: issues around diversity and geographic divides, limited budget and limited staff resources,

opportunities for funding that the City doesn't have the capacity to respond to, and transportation challenges and how this affects property values and the lack of jobs.

Mayor Davis heard the perception of a "crime problem." She also reported appropriate level of growth, concern about City infrastructure, sustainability - both economic and environmental, the punishing of City employees [reduced compensation] and a perception that the rest of the County is corrupt.

Mr. Putens reported spending and taxes for new projects and not taking care of existing projects. He noted some residents cannot move or sell their house and some residents wanted the City to do something about the banks.

Mr. Herling reported hearing maintain property taxes but don't increase them. He also heard comments about partnering with new Community Development Corporation, transportation issues, Roosevelt Center and the movie theater, Code Enforcement issues in rental properties, effective marketing, outreach to new communities, homelessness, and hunger.

Ms. Mach believed the City has an overworked staff which leads to slow accomplishments. She reported hearing: managing growth and development and what does this mean; what is the role of the City with other entities; what happens with Greenbelt Middle School and the old post office space; and perception of schools in the County.

Ms. Mach heard: from both sides on Metro development and middle school utilization; concern with crime; reduce expenses (no fireworks, no weekly yard waste); and increase the City's tax base through economic development.

Mr. Herling heard: more police presence and officers walking the streets; middle school renovation and inequity of City services in Greenbelt West; broaden tax base through economic development not tax increases; concern about the movie theater and Roosevelt Center; and the need for Sunday transit service.

Mr. Putens reported public safety concerns; the need to reduce City spending and taxes; and that there are different services for different sections of town and balancing this.

Mayor Davis heard: crime and taxes; requests to improve services; the viability of Roosevelt Center; the viability of development in Greenbelt West; concerns about "mom and pop" businesses being pushed out by chains; some citizens want more police and some want less; concerns about too much code enforcement; employee benefits were too great; use of the historic Middle School; condition of Greenbelt Lake; the need for Senior adult housing; involving newcomers; and the need to maintain philosophy and standards of our unique community.

Mr. Jordan reported: a lack of engagement; residents are not able to distinguish between Greenbelt and other jurisdictions; questions about what's happening at Metro Station, Greenway Center and Beltway Plaza; public safety concerns; the need for a dog park in the center of town; Beltway noise; and environmental concerns.

Mr. Roberts heard similar things. He reported that people are most passionate and concerned about property values, police coverage and how the City spends its resources.

Ms. Pope reported: a perception that everyone caters to Old Greenbelt; lack of communication throughout the City; not everyone gets the News Review; city employees are overpaid; the aesthetics and mix of stores at Beltway Plaza; the need for noise barriers along the Beltway; residents are not aware of City's Emergency Plan.

Summary

Council agreed to the following draft goals:

- 1. Enhance Sense of Community*
- 2. Maintain & Improve Economic Development & Fiscal Sustainability*
- 3. Improve Transportation Opportunities*
- 4. Maintain Greenbelt as an Environmentally Proactive Community*
- 5. Continue to Enhance Public Safety*
- 6. Preserve & Enhance Greenbelt's Legacy as a Planned Community*
- 7. Promote Quality of Life Programs for All*
- 8. Promote Relationships with Other Agencies*

The meeting ended at 3:00p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

*David E. Moran
Assistant City Manager*