

Greenbelt News Review

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GREENBELT, MARYLAND

Thursday, December 11, 1975

REFERENDUM REJECTED FOR NOW

HOUSING RESOLUTION TO BE ACTED UPON THIS MONDAY

by Al Skolnik

"A referendum on the housing for the elderly project at this time would be premature." This was the reaction of city council at its Monday, December 8 meeting to a petition signed by 604 persons calling for a citizen vote on the subject. Instead, council decided to push its efforts to gather all the facts before making a final commitment to the project.

The vehicle for the assembling of the facts would be a resolution stating the council's preference for two alternate sites (Ridge Road or Hamilton Place) and directing the city manager to initiate applications for financial assistance and to make studies of the feasibility of the project and of the two sites.

Upon councilman Thomas White's motion, the resolution was amended to strengthen the exploratory nature of the resolution. Because of the resolution change, it had to be held over to the Monday, December 15 meeting for final approval.

Rehabilitation

The council also decided to consider at the December 15 meeting a suggestion by the city's Advisory Planning Board in Report #171 that it pursue the possibility of rehabilitation of existing housing units for the elderly. Up to now the city's thinking has been in terms of new construction on a new site.

Jack Queen of the audience felt that the renovating of 100 Greenbelt Homes, Inc. units through Federal section 8 funding would be more in character with the community than construction of a new building, especially if a high rise.

Councilman Charles Schwan disputed that renovation was a "feasible alternate." Others argued that only new construction could provide the physical amenities and centralized facilities that the aged require. Mayor Gil Weidenfeld suggested that full-scale discussion of this proposal be held over until the December 15 meeting.

WHAT GOES ON

Thurs., Dec. 11, 8 p.m. GHI Board Meeting, Hamilton Pl.
 Fri., Dec. 12, 8 p.m. Duplicate Bridge Youth Center
 Mon., Dec. 15, 8 p.m. City Council Meeting, Municipal Bldg.
 Wed., Dec. 17, 8 p.m. GHI Special Membership Meeting, Center School
 Thurs., Dec. 18, 7:30 p.m. Board of Education Meeting (FDR) Upper Marlboro
 7:30 p.m. North End PTA
 8 p.m. GHI Board Meeting, Hamilton Place
 Sat., Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m. Caroling, Youth Center

Seek Referendum

Proponents of the referendum argued that the elderly housing project was sufficiently important to be decided directly by the citizens and not by the vote of council, especially if city land or costs are involved. "We citizens represent the city," said Viola Keer, "not the five councilmen."

Those favoring a referendum also argued that the results of the informal election survey questionnaire were, at best, not representative of public sentiment and, at worst, were produced through a rigged question. The questionnaire had shown that 84% of the 682 persons answering the question had favored the elderly housing project.

"People are always in favor of a project," George Loutch said, "until they learn of the cost. We need to know the facts." The council countered by stating that that is precisely the intent of the resolution - to gather the facts.

But some proponents of the referendum such as Mrs. Keer argued that enough facts have already been assembled and that a referendum should be held now before the city engages in the expenditure of any more time or money. Councilman Richard Pilski said he saw no conflict between adoption of the resolution and a referendum to be held later. Weidenfeld quoted the city attorney's opinion that there is no requirement for the city to hold a referendum on the resolution.

Loutch also expressed concern that the project would provide a "free ride" for the elderly. Schwan explained that persons above a certain income limit would pay the full rental and that the rent subsidies would go only to those elderly of limited income.

Need for Project

Joseph Hanyock, one of the few persons at Monday's meeting to state outright opposition to the project, felt that there was no demonstrated need for the project in Greenbelt. "There is a world of difference," he said, "between what people want - what they would like to have - and what they need."

In addition, he felt that the pro-

(See HOUSING, page 8, col. 1)

AGENDA REGULAR MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL Monday December 15, 1975 8:00 P.M.

I. ORGANIZATION

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Meditation
Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
4. Minutes of Regular Meeting of December 8, 1975
5. Additions to Agenda by Councilmen and Manager

II. COMMUNICATIONS

6. Petitions and Requests
7. Administrative Reports
8. Committee Reports

III. OLD BUSINESS

9. An Ordinance to Appropriate \$2,500 from the Replacement Fund Out of Existing Replacement Reserves to Provide for the Purchase of a Static Roller, Said Appropriation to Supplement a \$9,000 Sum Appropriated by Ordinance Number 798 - Second Reading
10. A Resolution to Amend Resolution Number 313, "A Resolution to Authorize the Negotiated Purchase of Certain Goods and Services from Various Vendors, As Enumerated Herein, Not to Exceed an Aggregate Total Cost of \$43,800", by Re-Estimating the Total Estimated Cost of Motor Vehicle Fuel Purchases from Certain Vendors - Second Reading
11. A Resolution for the City to Proceed with the Undertaking of a Housing for the Elderly Project (As Amended) - Second Reading
- * 12. Advisory Planning Board Report No. 171 - Housing for the Elderly
- * 13. Park and Recreation Advisory Board Report 12/75 - Housing for the Elderly
14. Advisory Planning Board Report No. 169 - Special Exception No. 2991, Junk Yard and Modification of Parking Requirements
15. Advisory Planning Board Report No. 170 - Concept Plan - Golden Triangle
16. Letter from Mr. Kenneth Michael Re: Golden Triangle Property
17. Appointment to Boards
18. Greenbriar Pumping Station
19. Franklin D. Roosevelt High School

IV. NEW BUSINESS

20. Legislation - 1976
21. Meetings

V. MISCELLANEOUS

*NOTE: Item 12 and 13 to be considered with Item 11.

THIS IS A PRELIMINARY AGENDA SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Volleyball

All men interested in playing volleyball are invited to join the game on Mon. evenings at 7 p.m. in the Greenbelt Elementary School gym.

FDR School Controversy Raises Many Concerns In Greenbelt

by Elaine Skolnik

"My big concern is to have FDR boundaries settled as soon as possible so that programming can begin," G. James Gholson, assistant superintendent who supervises 74 schools in the northern area of the county, told the News Review last week. Boundaries, however, are not the only problems at this time. The very nature of the \$11 million Franklin D. Roosevelt senior high school is still in doubt, and this issue must be resolved before any definitive boundaries can be drawn.

From the beginning FDR was planned as a comprehensive general academic high school similar to Parkdale and High Point. However, since October 30, various proposals by board members have been submitted envisioning the conversion of FDR into either (1) a full career-technology school, (2) a combination career-technology-general academic school, or (3) a combination advanced technical-general academic school.

December 18 Meeting

Coming up before the school board in Upper Marlboro on Thursday, December 18 (probably starting at 7:30 p.m.) is consideration of board member Nicholas Eny's latest resolution. This resolution pushes for establishing "no less than half" of the capacity of FDR as a Career Technology Center which would be open to all students in the county on a "first come-first-serve" basis "with the board providing transportation." The other portion of the school would be utilized as a "regular senior high school with established attendance areas." The resolution, though vague, appears to imply that students residing in the Greenbelt area would attend FDR.

Golato Proposal

Board member A. James Golato, also favoring a scheme for a dual purpose FDR, has stated that he would not vote for Eny's resolution unless it were amended to incorporate a system where half the student body would be enrolled in the general academic high school program while the other half - an advanced technology center - would draw students voluntarily into a program specializing in pre-college technical courses, such as math, science and electronics.

The advantage of this proposal, he said, is that it would satisfy Greenbelt's desire to have all its students attending FDR together. At the same time, it would hopefully help to ease the problem of Bowie residents who have made it clear that they would prefer to have their students remain at the overcrowded Bowie high school. At present, Bowie high school is almost 500 over its present capacity. It is Golato's hope that FDR as an advanced technology center would draw on a voluntary basis some Bowie students, thus helping to relieve the overcrowding which led the school board staff to recommend that 333 Bowie students be transferred to DuVal and 230 to Largo.

Board member Lesley Kreimer felt that Golato's advanced technology courses would be a desirable component of the school, which she views as a comprehensive high school. FDR, she said, should (1) offer programs that will utilize to the maximum the school's unique features, such as the full scale theatre-auditorium and other design innovations, and (2) meet the interests of the students in attendance.

Eny's Proposal

According to Eny, the initial proposal of October 30, which was also co-sponsored by board members Sue Mills, Kathleen Barker, and Norman Saunders related to a career-technology program offering courses in the construction trades, electronics, cosmetology, etc. Interpretation of his December 1 proposal, which requires staff input within 60 days, varies. It is

expected that the staff will come up with several alternatives with respect to the school's concept and boundaries.

Eny's latest resolution also calls for the closing of Fairmont Heights as a senior high school offering regular academic and/or vocational programs and its reopening as a senior high school for music and the performing arts. This move will be controversial since similar proposals in the past were rejected after much public controversy.

Greenbelt Concerns

Greenbelt civic leaders have expressed concern that any drastic change in FDR's concept at this time could result in serious delays in the opening of the school and could produce serious problems in programming, scheduling, and staffing. Moreover, there is concern that a dual purpose FDR school would shortchange Greenbelt students in that the school would not be able to provide a full-scale academic curriculum.

LATE FLASH

Come tonight to council chambers at 8 p.m. to prepare for the December 18 School Board meeting on FDR.

School officials have pointed out that scheduling and programming for the 1976-77 school year have begun or will begin in earnest in January. They also look to the opening of FDR to alleviate overcrowding at high schools and to achieve the goal of 90% of pupil capacity. For example, Parkdale, which has a pupil capacity of 2,365, had a student population of 2,479 in September 1975. With the opening of FDR in September, Parkdale will open with 2,125 students. If Fairmont Heights is closed in September as envisioned by the Eny resolution, it would adversely affect this new criteria and almost offset any enrollment reductions in the county's high schools.

Mrs. Kreimer also has noted the possibility that the Eny proposal would require some renovation of FDR. The availability of such funds, she asserted, appears to be non-existent since the State drastically cut all recently approved construction and renovation projects.

In addition to questions of funding there is the matter of whether or not the State Department of Education would be required to approve any change in the FDR concept. If necessary, the process would undoubtedly further add to the delay.

Other questions raised: (1) Would a career-technology program at FDR duplicate those offered at Bladensburg, Crossland, Gwynn Park and Laurel? Crossland, for example, has a combination school - 38% of the student body in the Industrial Trades Center and 62% in general academic studies. (2) Will there be additional transportation costs? (3) Will the career-technology portion of FDR serve grades 9 through 12 and the general academic grades 10 to 12? (4) Will public hearings be required on any change in concept in addition to the one on boundaries?

TWIN PINES SAVINGS & LOAN ASSN. will reconvene the SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING adjourned from January 1975 on Wed., December 17 at 8 p.m. at Twin Pines. A progress report on members' votes on the Articles of Amendment will be given.

Attention: GHI Members

SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1975

8:00 P.M.

GREENBELT CENTER SCHOOL

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