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## Unity

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Gonzalez said minorities will not attain freedom easily. Quoting King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail," Gonzalez said, "Freedom must be demanded by the oppressed."

Summers and other speakers also said war with Iraq would go against King's beliefs of peace and non-aggression, and that a nation that

increases military spending and cuts funding for education is headed toward disaster.

The event was preceded by a one-song performance by the University Gospel Choir. Three members of MEChA also performed some traditional "black Mexican music," and other speakers read poetry and performed spoken word.

Afterward, students lit candles and marched to the EMU Amphithe-

ater, singing "We Shall Overcome." They held a vigil to voice everyone's views of King and to bring attention to the civil rights movement, which they said is still in progress.

The MLK Celebration will conclude Wednesday with a presentation and performance by soul-singer Ron Paris in 180 PLC at 6:30 p.m.

Contact the reporter at romangokhman@dailymerald.com.

## Council

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prices by at least three cents per gallon to maintain similar revenues prior to the surcharge.

While City Councilors generally supported the overall proposal, amendments were introduced and passed before the ordinance itself was approved.

Ward 4 City Councilor George Poling proposed an amendment to decrease the tax from four cents — which was the originally proposed amount — to three cents, saying it would give the county the ability to opt-in later at the same level.

"I think by bringing this down by one penny ... is not a significant amount," he said.

Ward 1 City Councilor Bonny Bettman spoke against the amendment, saying the legislative intent of the gas tax was to reduce the burden that citizens will bear with the transportation system maintenance fee, and thus decreasing the tax would be counter-productive.

The amendment narrowly passed 4 to 3.

Earlier in the hearing, Ward 3 City Councilor David Kelly proposed an amendment to the ordinance's language clarifying that the funds generated would strictly be used for repair, maintenance, operation and preservation of the transportation system — not for building new roads or funding capacity enhancement projects.

Ward 2 City Councilor Betty Taylor agreed.

"I would not support a gas tax to build new roads," she said.

The amendment passed 6 to 1.

City Councilors already approved the first part of the funding strategy — a transportation system maintenance fee — that will charge a monthly fee based on the average amount of trips generated by homes and businesses. The city had hoped EWEB — which already collects a handful of charges for the city — would gather the TSMF. Officials from the energy company declined the request, however.

City officials estimate charges for the TSMF will begin in July, and implementation of the gas tax will take at least three to six months.

Contact the senior news reporter at janmontry@dailymerald.com.

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