



COMMUNITY HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Committee Members: Golden, Ewing, Alexander and Williams

Chaired by Mayor Pro Tem Golden

NOVEMBER 8, 2016 – 10:00 A.M.

3RD FLOOR LOBBY CONFERENCE ROOM

MINUTES

Present:

Chairman Jeff Golden, and Committee Members Chris Williams, and Jason Ewing

Absent:

Committee Member Latimer Alexander

Also Present:

Council Member Cynthia Davis

Staff Present:

Randy McCaslin, Deputy City Manager; Randy Hemann, Assistant City Manager; Mike McNair, Director of Community Development; JoAnne Carlyle, City Attorney; Richard Fuqua, Affordable Housing Manager; Nena Wilson, CD Administrator; Lori Loosemore, Supervisor- Code Enforcement; Michelle McNair, Community Resource Manager; Toni Jackson, Housing Specialist; Maria Smith, Deputy City Clerk; and Lisa Vierling, City Clerk

News Media:

No New Media

Others Present:

Sofia Crisp, Executive Director, Housing Consultants and Gene Brown, Executive Director, Community Housing Solutions

Note: The following hand-outs were distributed during the meeting and will be attached as a permanent part of these proceedings:

- *Update on Southside Pedestrian Bridge project (NSP)*
- *Code Enforcement Update*
- *Update on Core City Homebuyer Initiative*
- *Preliminary feedback on Operation InAsMuch (OIAM)*

Chairman Golden called the Community Housing & Neighborhood Development Committee meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Update on Southside Pedestrian Bridge project (NSP)

Mike McNair, Director of Community Development, reminded Council that this was discussed back in August and wanted to give a brief summary and overview on the NSP funds on the activity for purchased properties where they were repaired and sold. He reported they had the cash on-hand but had to get State authorization to do something else with it and have been waiting 8-9 months for their approval. They have advised the City of High Point to move forward. He reported that engineering would be submitting this by the end of this month and would bring to Council to appropriate the funds. He shared the estimated budget on hand was \$200,000 and the expected completion timeframe would be by April-May.

He reviewed the aerial view with the Recreation Center along with the flood plain and the bridge designed through the narrowest point. He noted how the bridge would be a 75-foot bridge. With that, they would be partnering with High Point Food Alliance at Southwest. He explained how they would be working with Southwest and the Urban Agriculture along with Patrick Harman to set in place and complete before next growing season. Council Member C. Davis asked the question if there would be any lighting along the area when it gets darker for the children near the elementary school while walking after tutoring, and Mr. McNair said that would be possible and that would be near the Greenway area.

Mr. McNair reviewed the type of bridge it would be and presented an existing bridge in High Point that would look similar to 10-feet wide, 75 long and where people would not only be able to ride bikes across it but would also be able to drive tractors and lawnmowers across it as well. He noted that there would also be some interest on the land on the other side of town and extending the Urban Orchard further up. He is expected to come back sometime in January with appropriation and contract at one time.

Randy McCaslin, Deputy City Manager, asked if the bids that Mr. McNair would be taking to Council in January would be covering just the bridge or if they would also be covering the Greenway. Mr. McNair replied just the bridge and also would have to coordinate with the people working with the water treatment and look at it from a cost effectiveness which would be part II/phase II part.

Randy Hemann, Assistant City Manager, wanted to know who was doing the orchard part and Mr. McNair commented that it was a combination of Southwest Foundation, Urban Agriculture group and the Hayden-Harman Foundation would be involved. He also noted that they have sent out a request to the State and set aside funding for the acquisition for the materials as long as the materials are purchased they would do the planning.

Code Enforcement Update

Lori Loosemore, Supervisor-Code Enforcement, reported that they did hire the last person for Code Enforcement, are currently at full staff, are working on Saturdays and trying to address some signage issues, and parking in front of yard, etc.... Council Member C. Davis asked if this was every Saturday or just once a month, and Ms. Loosemore confirmed it was just once a month. Ms. Loosemore stated they started on October 1st and received 19 signs in one block and from one Saturday received 27.

Committee Member Ewing asked if there was something in the ordinance when we take up a sign they can buy it back from us. Ms. Loosemore confirmed that if the signs were not in good condition the City would get rid of them or if they were in better condition they would keep near Russell and then they would claim them. Committee Member Ewing inquired on the Real Estate signs that were displayed high above on the electrical poles and Ms. Loosemore replied that State Code Enforcement enforces the removal and also use electric to help remove as well. Mr. McCaslin reinforced how they would include the electric trucks in a dangerous location for removal.

Ms. Loosemore reviewed the problem properties that came from the University of North Carolina-Greensboro (UNCG) studies and entered all the data and entered into an excel spreadsheet while State Code

Enforcement was going out and taking pictures and came up with 379 properties that they would have to go and visit.

Viewed properties

- Out of the 300 properties, 76 are not there anymore

Things to consider:

- is the house vacant
- is it occupied
- does it appear to be repaired
- is there a structure
- is it visible collapsing

After that, Ms. Loosemore would then begin to prioritize which properties would need to look at first to delete off the list. She gave 513 White Oak as an active case and as to what it would look like current. She gave some good news to 1608 Rocket which was an old case but actively working on.

Committee Member Ewing asked at what point would we cross reference with the foreclosure or the tax lien, and Mr. McNair replied those would be the first to cross reference with the tax delinquent. Committee Member Ewing was concerned if someone was on that list with violations but were tax delinquent and were to take it and save some time. Mr. McCaslin suggested that if we were to take it then our obligations were also not to stop and then at that point we would still have to clear it, mow it, and would still stay on our list for years at that point. Committee Member Ewing, commented once we would control it we would be able to dispose of it and then come up with a strategic plan where there are areas for the marketability to target. Mr. McNair also reported on that list were properties that are tax current.

Chairman Golden was concerned with the situation at last night's Council meeting with the safety concerns with a particular property in a neighborhood, he asked if there was anything we could do in those type of situations. Council Member C. Davis suggested that there would if we were to adopt what was in that briefing that Council received. Mr. McCaslin shared that he did follow up with that neighbor after the Council meeting and was not sure if that would qualify under the top 10. Committee Member Williams asked about lining out a specific district area and Mr. McCaslin confirmed that they would be pursuing and Council Member Williams believes that part of Burns Hills would qualify. Mr. Hemann reported that the area could be specified on calls just for service. Ms. Loosemore noted due to other violations or exterior seeing issues they could use that to request an inspection.

Chairman Golden suggested to hear from City Attorney JoAnne Carlyle. Ms. Carlyle reported to the CH & ND Committee that she is currently working on a rewrite of the demolition ordinance and would like to bring to the Committee in December. Depending on the time restraints, Ms. Carlyle may not be able to include the community progress information with some of the options. She suggested looking at the options of what they currently have and to move as quickly as possible and is not sure as to how much that would include but would the demo ordinance would be included. Committee Member Ewing suggested to eliminate the vacate and close to put more emphasis on the repair. Ms. Carlyle agreed that the one change would need to be done and bring to Council as whole. Council Member C. Davis remarked that there was an extension where the vacate and close for people that are stressed on finances so there was an exception in there to do and to allow to have a do the first and to have an exception for the latter. Committee Member Ewing asked how would that affect existing cases if you were to bring Council the ordinance changes and then it was to be brought through Council and wanted to know if it would become retroactive. Ms. Carlyle confirmed it would not be retroactive and would be perceived under the ordinance it began under.

Ms. Carlyle suggested to divide Council into groups and take out to the site to the Pit area (seeing it compared to viewing it on the map) is much different. She explained that the encroachments that other

people have on to the property and while standing on the bottom level and seeing it can really shock you and that what Ms. Carlyle has suggested to view it in person.

Mr. Hemann asked if viewing at the 50 percent threshold as they discussed and asked if that would be part of this as well and Ms. Carlyle agreed. He also asked if there had been guidance discussed at committee as well, and she replied it has not but would come back to committee.

Committee Member Ewing wanted to know if we had historical data on all the orders that have been done in the last 10 years where we could identify the percent of repair to value was. He wanted to know if that was in one database or without having to go back and look at each case. Committee Member Ewing further explained if we ordered the demolition and it were to exceed 50 percent of the value and to increase that threshold to 60-70 percent. He wanted to know if there was any historical data that we could view some of those past cases to see how close they were and if were to had increased it up to 60 percent and would that have saved us 2 percent and where would that threshold create the most benefit. Would it be a 60 percent or 70 percent. Ms. Loosemore stated that it would depend on the neighborhood and repairs and if percentages raised the number of demolitions would go down.

Council Member C. Davis asked Ms. Loosemore since she has been in her new position how it has been progressing. Ms. Loosemore responded that it has been going well, and how they had started at 279 and her monthly report now is at 170 and some of those are still at demolitions.

Update on Core City Homebuyer Initiative

Mr. McNair expressed that Council to increase the homeownership in the Core and was approved by Council in 2014 and wanted to establish and attract younger higher income homebuyers into the Core City. He reported how the program started slowly but saw recently that the State Employees Credit Union would not accept Core City Homebuyers Assistance. He explained that in their underwriting according to the debt to ratio, they still viewed it to debt but when the State came out with their program they had to reconciled.

Toni Jackson, Housing Specialist, gave a brief review of the list with a slow start with the programs beginning since August of last year.

- Total of 28 applications.
- Of those 28 applications and all but four have been four in the Core City.
- The others were City-Wide properties.

Millennials

- Millennials, total of 16 and four are 35 years old and remaining six are genetics and baby boomers.

Committee Member Ewing inquired if the citywide were the county programs, and Ms. Jackson stated how they were outside of the Core, but still within the city limits. Mr. McNair commented how that was for people that were income eligible and that was Federal dollars. He also shared anything over 80 percent they considered medium income. Council Member C. Davis asked the limit of the homes and Mr. McNair shared they are \$200 and the State is at \$245 and expressed how the people are coming in are a diversified group and primarily younger people.

Committee Member Ewing asked about the HOA pending lawsuit. Ms. Jackson shared that there is a lawsuit pending with the HOAs for that particular condo unit and with a lawsuit that they could not go past and could not get their underwriting to approve that until after the lawsuit was settled. The homeowner is still waiting.

Mr. McNair shared for #28 that was a city employee. Ms. Jackson reviewed the map of the City that indicated all of the applications that have been received (green/closed, yellow/pending, which includes the HOA lawsuit and, red/withdrawn). She reported that two that are on the list that are not on the map had received two additional applications. She explained that everything is scheduled to close this month for the exception of Delmont. She also shared how they have been recently inundated with phone calls from Realtors, Lenders, and buyers. She expressed if this map was current-to-date, they would have one more yellow dot in Southside and in Emerywood area.

Committee Member Ewing raised the question if we are currently tracking these people who have applied, closed, or pending as to how they heard about it or solely through the City or through another organization. Ms. Jackson replied that they do track how they have heard about the program and NSP program and suggested to retrieve more information from that. Committee Member Ewing would be interested in reviewing which avenue we have been using.

Committee Member Ewing asked how are we on the fund balance. Mr. McNair replied that we have used up most of the funds that were allocated and with Councils concurrence and start reaching into the other funds to continue this forward. Committee Member Ewing wanted to know the status on the Federal dollars and Mr. McNair shared how they set aside \$45 million dollars for five Counties. Ms. Jackson reported how it was enough for Toni \$3,000 and the first time was for 1,000 for the loans and it lasted for 6-9 months. She found out that one of them are currently pending and approved made an offer and was not aware of the \$15,000 from the state was available so they pulled back and now will reapply.

Preliminary feedback on Operation InAsMuch

Mr. McNair continue with an update from Operation InAsMuch (OIAM) and introduced Gene Brown, Executive Director, Community Housing Solutions along with Sofia Crisp, Executive Director, Housing Consultants, to give a brief update from OIAM. Ms. Crisp pointed out how the weather cooperated with OIAM. She noticed how the Burns Hill had a set of bleachers that were full of volunteers, with a better breakfast, with both City Council Members Williams and C. Davis there, Mr. Mingo and a great kick off.

➤ Hands + tools + inspiration = Service

Mr. Brown expressed how they started out the day with 11 home repairs and actually completed 12 homes. With Ms. Crisp's outreach they had approximately with the Burns Hill neighborhood had about 25-30 phone calls interested in the project with incomes above 80 percent of the median income and some had renters that were trying to call to see if they could receive assistance. Mr. Brown also reported that some homeowners had more work that needed to be done that could not be completed within one day so they were referred through the City's programs.

Mr. Brown reviewed the addresses along with the Volunteer groups (three new groups being the City of High Point, Baldwin's Chapel, and First Christian Church-42 volunteers).

Volunteers Groups

- Baldwin's Chapel
- Caring Services
- City of High Point
- HP Communities Against Violence
- First Christian Church
- Forest Hills Presbyterian Church
- Parkwood Inspections
- Unitarian Universalist Church

Mr. Brown expressed how the homeowners served were approximately 75 percent elderly and most were widows. Mr. McNair challenged Mr. Brown to keep the work to one day and proceeded to look at projects that could be done in a day and looked low and high. He reviewed the examples of repairs:

- modifications ramps
- grab bars
- railings
- steps
- heating system repairs or replace (*four people did not have heat*)
- kitchen cabinet repair
- minor plumbing repairs
- painting

Mr. Brown reported that the new video would be out by early December and the volunteers cannot wait until next OIAM event.

Ms. Crisp reported on some of the feedback they received:

- 79 percent felt it was excellent
- Fellowship and helping in ways that matter
- Teamwork and empowering homeowners contributing to our community

Asked what they did not like:

- Breakfast was not needed
- 46 had no dislikes
- People wished there were more people involved
- Wished there was more for those of us to do that are not mechanically or carpentry inclined

Surveyed the Homeowners:

- Homeowners were happy
- Thought it was great for volunteers to come out to help them
- City is on the right track

Ms. Crisp reported that they sent out over 60 letters and only received feedback from 25 homeowners and trying to engage the homeowners so they feel that this is not a scam. She would also like to make sure that City staff is more involved.

She shared how First Christian had 12-13 year olds volunteering and showing each other how to paint. She expressed how this shows children being involved and setting the example. She is excited about the next one, getting started earlier and getting the community engagement to have a larger event.

Mr. McNair reiterated how he would like to reach out to the church groups. He believes this is an opportunity and leveraging resources and continue OIAM and other agencies.

Mr. Hemann expressed the potential nonprofit or CDC organization that would include Mayor Pro Tem Golden as Chairman of this Committee or include Mr. McNair or others. He shared that Mr. McNair and he are already working in this area and would like Council's approval from a legal stand point from a closely held organization or the properties held be tax exempt. He also stated how they would need to seek legal advice that would specialize in nonprofit to be empowered to get it rolling and bring it back to Council. Chairman Golden agreed with Mr. Hemann's idea and to explore the idea with the blight issues and other issues, and Committee Member Williams was also agreement.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 10:59 a.m. upon motion duly made and seconded.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maria A. Smith
Deputy City Clerk

Jeff Golden, Chairman

DRAFT