



**COMMUNITY HOUSING, NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT and
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Committee Members: Golden, Ewing, Alexander and Williams

Chaired by Council Member Golden

APRIL 4, 2017 – 10:00 A.M.

3RD FLOOR LOBBY CONFERENCE ROOM

MINUTES

Present:

Chairman Jeff Golden and Committee Members Chris Williams (joined the meeting at 10:10 a.m.) and Jason Ewing

Absent:

Committee Member Latimer Alexander

Staff Present:

Randy McCaslin, Deputy City Manager; Randy Hemann, Assistant City Manager; JoAnne Carlyle, City Attorney; Mike McNair, Director of Community Development; Richard Fuqua, Affordable Housing Manager; Lori Loosemore, Supervisor- Code Enforcement; Michelle McNair, Community Resource Manager; Alisha Doulen, Community Resource Specialist; Fanta Dorley, Human Relations Manager; Maria Smith, Deputy City Clerk and Lisa Vierling, City Clerk

Others Present:

Judy Stalder, (TREBIC), Ed Terry, High Point Realtor's Association

News Media:

No News Media Present

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

- *Community Housing and Neighborhood Development Committee, Discussion of Infill Housing Development Program for Small Builders*
- *Code Enforcement Inspection Districts*

Chairman Golden called the Community Housing & Neighborhood Development and Public Safety Committee meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

Presentation - Local Code Enforcement zones

Mike McNair, Director of Community Development, recognized Lori Loosemore, Local Codes Enforcement Supervisor. Ms. Loosemore advised a suggestion was made previously for inspectors to work in regions which has many benefits:

1. The inspector would be responsible for that area.
2. A monetary savings would be realized on the gas.
3. Better concentration of time.
4. Familiar presence in neighborhoods.
5. Establish relationships with neighbors in the communities in which they are assigned.

She shared a map that identified six areas for the Local Code Enforcement Zones. Taking into consideration data for the areas as well as the number and types of cases. She tried to evenly distribute the workload so that not one inspector had all housing cases, not one had public nuisance cases, etc.... The two highest areas of concentration (identified on the map as yellow and pink), had well over 400 cases.

Ms. Loosemore went on to say that each inspector would be proactive in their area as he/she is riding in the neighborhoods they are assigned to and would be on the lookout for public nuisance violations, houses that need to be secured, dilapidated properties where there are no current active housing cases, etc.... One inspector will be assigned to each of the six districts as identified and depicted on the Code Enforcement Inspection District Map. Staff hopes to have these in place by the middle of April.

Committee Member Ewing asked if staff had looked at maps and data from other departments such as the Police Department to coordinate efforts. Ms. Loosemore explained they did not because of the way housing cases have to be assigned in Accela. He also expressed concerns with assigning one person to cover each of these areas because of the amount of ground to be covered and questioned how this could be taking a proactive approach. He pointed out there were plenty of areas in North High Point where code enforcement could be proactively done although they may not be as drastic in nature as some of those in the core area. Mr. McNair agreed that it is a lot of ground to cover, but noted the statistics show that is not where the problems are because they are truly in the core. He shared that when inspectors are in North High Point oftentimes they are asked why they are there and not in the core and from his experience the people who live in the north end of High Point are highly intolerant and won't hesitate to call when they suspect a violation. Committee Member Williams agreed and felt more bodies are needed in the core because they would not make those calls to report the violations, but the violations need to be addressed. Ms. Loosemore explained that it would be part of the inspector's responsibility to go and investigate the alleged violation and there are more than likely more violations that are going unnoticed. She stated she was open to suggestions.

Chairman Golden felt this lines up with the recommendations from the Center for Community Progress and a larger area was acceptable to him. Ms. Loosemore suggested that staff could reassess it next year and make some modifications to the areas if necessary.

A brief discussion followed regarding the markings on the staff vehicles and if the people in the neighborhood know they are code enforcement inspectors when out in the neighborhoods. It was noted that the vehicles are marked only with the City Seal. Chairman Golden felt it would be beneficial for the vehicles to be identified as City of High Point Code Enforcement. Ms. Loosemore advised one of the responsibilities of the code enforcement officers is to attend some community meetings to learn the concerns in the neighborhoods and this would help with them being known and recognized.

Presentation - Small Builders Infill Housing Development Program

Mike McNair, Director of Community Development & Housing, advised that there has been quite a bit of discussion with small builders over the last few months as a result of the activity with the Bank of North Carolina. They are interested in getting involved. He reported on a previous program in 2004 that was targeted to small builders, but at that time Council strategically wanted to go for the bigger concentration for builders. The program offered reimbursements to builders to build affordable housing. Mr. McNair clarified that moving away from that program had nothing to do with the Bank of North Carolina, but it was more about the tax credits. Mr. McNair agreed it was because the program no longer strategically fit.

He felt there was now an advantage for the scattered sites because of the recently established Community Development Corporation (CDC) and the Receivership legislation that is now being considered by the Legislature. He also pointed out the adjustments to the Minimum Housing Code would be helpful and felt it was definitely worth reconsidering it and putting it back on the table. He mentioned a recent article in the Greensboro News & Record about a Housing Summit held in Greensboro, and of interest was that the City of Greensboro is offering a property listing and had someone promoting selling properties to investors that were scheduled for demolition. He felt this was something that could be potentially tweaked to create an inducement in that arena.

He went on to report that they had a meeting in November with some of the small builders in an effort to solicit their input and asked what it would take to get them involved. The primary responses were:

1. They wanted an incentive.
2. They wanted something done about the crime.
3. They wanted the neighborhoods cleaned up.

Mr. McNair advised the previous program was known as the Infill Development Program. The program was funded by the Council which made it very flexible because it did not involve federal funding. He noted that scattered site development is now more attractive and advised the issues staff ran into before was how to coordinate the construction with the small builders who only wanted to do one a year.

Mr. McNair solicited the Committee's input and asked how they would like to proceed and if they wanted to keep the incentive at \$10,000. He explained previously they provided the incentive at the back-end at closing, and it would obviously be riskier putting it on the front-end. The Council previously set aside \$120,000 for this program. Committee Member Williams asked if this money

would come from the money that has been allocated for blight. Mr. McNair suggested it would noting the money is already being used and the funds are programmed for other things. He noted the program could be set up similar to the Core City Homebuyers Incentive Program with no income requirement, just a purchase cap.

Committee Member Ewing felt it might be more beneficial to focus on the orange areas on the Heat Map for a specific Census tract in the most need for help rather than focusing on the entire Core City. Mr. McNair noted this could be done, or suggested the incentive could be varied based on the location. He advised there were different ways to approach it and noted staff could bring back a more developed proposal at the next Committee meeting.

Chairman Golden asked what the legal implications would be with the City recouping the dollars put into bringing a house up to code that was scheduled for demolition. Mr. McCaslin advised that the city would have to purchase the property and Chairman Golden expressed concerns that people would say the city is taking their property in those situations. Assistant City Manager Randy Hemann suggested buying the property through the city's CDC would be a fairly easy route to take. There was a question as to whether or not the city would be under the same provisions as with the Bank of North Carolina about not making a profit. City Attorney JoAnne Carlyle suggested it might be best to get this question answered by the attorney the city is working with on the CDC and noted we would still have that standard and it would have to have the reversionary clause.

Mr. McNair pointed out these were two different scenarios. Chairman Golden stated he was just trying to save properties versus outright purchasing them. Ms. Carlyle pointed out the transfer property restrictions come into play once the property is in the city's name, but the incentive program would not trigger all the legal restrictions. Committee Member Ewing felt this was more of the city subsidizing the difference between market value and the actual value in some of these areas, where there is a gap. He stated providing a cushion would allow investors to go in with a little less risk and suggested to focus on a couple of the Census tracts identified on the Heat Map. He suggested it was important to identify the target neighborhoods where the city could affect major change and improvement in creating the focal area and then look at some incentives and ways to motivate the initiative to rehabilitate the neighborhoods.

Mr. McNair noted that staff could bring something back at the next Committee meeting and identify the focus areas and shared that staff is working to develop the capacity to cross reference data to look at a site and see the code enforcement, police history, etc....

Prior to adjournment, Mr. McCaslin asked Chairman Golden for some direction as to adding the Public Safety aspect to his Committee and if he was looking for a report at every monthly meeting. Chairman Golden shared that he would basically like for it to function in the same manner as the previous Public Safety Committee. He noted he would not need a detailed report at every meeting, but in light of the recent happenings in the community and the spikes in crime, there have been a lot of questions with no answers. Committee Member Williams pointed out the report on how an investigation is carried out that the Chief presented at the community meeting would be a good example of what the Committee is looking for. It was noted that the Fire Department would also be a part of this.

Staff will try to have something for the May 2nd Community Housing, Neighborhood Development & Public Safety Committee meeting.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 10:33 a.m. upon motion duly made and seconded.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa B. Vierling, MMC
City Clerk

Jeff Golden, Chairman