



MINUTES

COMMUNITY HOUSING, NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT and PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Committee Members: Golden, Ewing, Alexander and Williams

Chaired by Council Member Golden

MAY 2, 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

Also Present:

Council Member Cynthia Davis

Staff Present:

Randy McCaslin, Deputy City Manager; Randy Hemann, Assistant City Manager; Mike McNair, Director of Community Development & Housing; Richard Fuqua, Affordable Housing Manager; Michelle McNair, Community Resource Manager; Tommy Reid, Fire Chief; Kenneth Shultz, Police Chief; Mark Walker, Local Codes Enforcement; JoAnne Carlyle, City Attorney; Jeron Hollis, Director of Communications & Public Engagement; Maria Smith, Deputy City Clerk; and Lisa Vierling, City Clerk

News Media:

Pat Kimbrough, High Point Enterprise

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

- *High Point Police Department Crime Statistics*
- *High Point Fire Department New Vehicles (Apparatus Replacement Plan)*
- *High Point Attorney's Office- Review of the Proposed Ordinance Regulating Abandoned and Junked Motor Vehicles*
- *Comm. Dev. & Housing Department- Southside Housing Development Contract with Community Housing Solutions*
- *Comm. Dev. & Housing Department- Small Builders Incentive Program*
- *Comm. Dev. & Housing Department- Southside Pedestrian Bridge & Fairview Food Park Project*
- *Comm. Dev. & Housing Department- Traffic Calming Project (Graves Avenue)*
- *Comm. Dev. & Housing Department- Core City Homebuyer Incentive Program*
- *Comm. Dev. & Housing Department- Abandoned and Deteriorated Properties Training Academy (May 31 – June 2, 2017)*

Presentation on Specific Crime Stats by High Point Police Department

Chief Shultz reported provided information on how the Police Department addresses crime and monitors data as it comes in. He shared a Weekly Data Report of statistics for Week 18 (4/30/2017). He advised that he looks at the data on a daily basis which allows him to lift and shift resources as necessary.

The stats show a 300%+ increase in homicides as compared to 2016 (two homicides) versus 2017 (eight homicides); aggravated assaults are down 38% as compared to this time last year; and the total violent crimes are down approximately 35%. Although for the year it is showing an increase of 34%, but the chart indicates some good progression specifically since they have made the final arrests. Property crimes are down 8% as compared to this time last year. Overall the crime rate is up about 9%.

Chief Shultz pointed out some of the spikes in crime and noted that the weather is very impactful on crime. He advised that he is very pleased with the numbers for the month sum up comparing the 2016 stats to 2017 and noted the department is making substantial headway. Although the overall homicide rate is high, the stats indicate that the violent crime rate is down. Property crimes are down traffic stop citations are down, as well as arrests.

The Chief reported that the heroin overdoses continue with the biggest spike happening in 2014 (116 overdoses) and this number dropped down to 77 in 2015. He attributed this to arrests that were made for major distributors. However in 2016, the overdoses rocketed with 191 and there already have been 110 for 2017. He reported there were seven deaths for the year already compared to 9, 6 and 14 the previous three years. The Police Department continues to use Narcan and has already used it sixteen times this year. He advised that they do track the children that are present for those that overdose, as well as tracking opioid-related traffic accidents.

Chief Shultz shared that he would be meeting with the Attorney General in Raleigh next week to discuss the heroin issues from a statewide viewpoint and they still enjoy good partnerships with the SBI, DEA. Approximately 417 pounds of marijuana was confiscated recently during a traffic stop off Business-85 by a High Point drug interdiction officer.

The Chief excitedly reported that he had the opportunity to go to Fort Bragg this past Friday at the invitation of the 16th Military Police Brigade. They remembered a presentation on the Domestic Violence Program that the Police Chief did while at the IACP, International Association of Chiefs of Police, Conference held in San Diego last fall and are looking at utilizing the High Point model to address domestic violence in the military. The Department of Justice, Office of Violence Against Women, also paid a visit to High Point recently and they are still looking at the replication sites and will be pulling in three that they will be running through John J. College with national network in an effort to replicate High Point's Domestic Violence Program.

At this time, the Chief entertained any questions/concerns.

Regarding the heroin issues, Council Member Ewing mentioned in previous years there were more outsiders than insiders and noted the numbers seem to be close this year (56 as compared to 53). Chief Shultz stated it is currently about 50/50 and pointed out heroin is not only a High Point issue, and a statewide inclusive Program.

Council Member Alexander asked if the time of day has shifted for when the levels of police activity are occurring because he has heard that much of the crime is now taking place during daytime hours. Chief Shultz replied that the department does use the Heat maps, crime statistics, and offered to share this information with the Committee.

Chairman Golden mentioned the spike in homicides recently and asked if they got a lot of calls from the community to report it or if the community was silent. Chief Shultz explained that it is a mix and noted that they are dealing with gunshot victims who are refusing to share information as to who did it or what happened. Another important point he wanted to make was that he did receive an invitation to attend a recent NAACP meeting, but was unable to do so because of a prior commitment in making a presentation in Fort Bragg. He explained some mothers of victims were upset and concerned because they felt the Police were not sharing enough information, but it was helpful that he was able to talk with them to explain the process and how investigations work. He hopes to have the media start doing some case summaries and focus on the mothers' plea for people to come forward and talk to the Police.

Chairman Golden reiterated the issues with the heroin overdoses and asked Chief Shultz about the department's needs. The Chief explained the biggest thing needed is the treatment for the addiction. He reiterated that they need to look at it from a statewide standpoint. He advised the police officers are having to deal with mental health issues because of the decline in mental health funding and lack of local resources. Council Member C. Davis reported that drugs are openly sold at the first four to six houses off Green and Cliffside and agreed this is a major concern and needs to be addressed. When things like this are observed, Chief Shultz encouraged them to make contact with Jeff Boyd or Brad Tenant, outreach officers for the north and south beats.

Presentation on New Fire Vehicles by High Point Fire Department

Chief Reid presented an overview of the Fleet Replacement Program that was approved in 2015, which basically follows the NFPA standards that mandates fire apparatus in a 15-year cycle go to a reserve status. The Chief reported that his department is dealing with some trucks that are over 20 years old. He advised that six apparatus engines and trucks were purchased in 1998 and having to replace them all at once creates a problem due to the cost of the trucks.

Committee Member Ewing asked about the price point for the retired fire trucks on govdeals. Chief Reid replied that they could only get about \$8,000 - \$10,000 because of all the wear and tear and generally they have no value because they are used up when they get through with them.

He shared some photos of some of the department's recently purchased trucks. He advised once the trucks are ordered, it takes 12-16 months for it to be delivered; pumpers take about 9-10 months. The trucks are managed, maintained and rotated to keep the costs down and prolong the life and usefulness. The fire trucks are purchased through the HGAC (Houston Galveston Area Council Contract), which is one of the biggest purchasing cooperatives in the United States.

Committee Member Alexander asked how the updated training facility was working out, and if the stations are strategically located to meet the response times. The Chief stated it is one of the top notch training facilities around. He replied that the stations are in the right locations and explained that the response times directly impacts the ISO and Accreditation ratings with a goal to be anywhere in the city within five minutes of receiving the call from 911 Communications Center.

Chairman Golden asked the Chief if he had adequate personnel and the Chief replied that eleven firemen were recently hired and would report to work on May 22nd.

Update on Southside Housing Development- Contract with CHS

Richard Fuqua, Affordable Housing Manager, presented a proposed contract with Community Housing Solutions (CHS) for the next fiscal year. CHS is one of the Community Housing Development organizations that is building in the Southside area. CHS was designated as a CHDO in 2015 and have completed two homes at 809 George Place (for sale) and 811 George Place (sold). Currently they have two homes under construction at 805 and 807 George Place and have the capacity to build additional homes.

Mr. Fuqua shared an aerial view map of the Southside area identifying homes completed by Unity Builders, homes completed by CHS, properties under construction, properties proposed in the CHS contract, as well as those properties owned by the city of High Point.

Regarding the proposed contract with CHS, some of the highlights were noted as follows:

- ✓ *Includes construction of 5 homes that would be offered for sale or lease-purchase.*
- ✓ *Term of the contract is July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018.*
- ✓ *Amount of the contract estimated around \$625,000 for these five homes which would be related to the construction/hard costs.*

Committee Member Alexander asked if and when the properties are sold if the money is recycled back through the Community Housing & Development Department and how much is added to the top of this amount each year. Mr. Fuqua explained most of the \$625,000 is from the program income the city receives from the homes that were built with HOME funds in the past and it depends on those homes that are sold as well as the anticipated sale of the lease purchased homes. Staff anticipates having these funds to use in the next year. Mike McNair, Director of Community Housing & Development shared there are also several houses on Mobile Street that are in the lease purchase mode, so they are anticipating a wave of program income coming.

Committee Member Alexander inquired about how the grants are forgiven. Mr. Fuqua explained it is actually a part of the purchase and provided an example of someone taking advantage of the \$7,500 Homebuyers Incentive Program, these dollars would be forgiven over a five-year period and as part of the purchase, the \$7,500 would show up as monies going into the purchase price which would help reduce the first mortgage the buyer would have. Mr. McNair explained it comes out of the Core City Homebuyer Incentive Program, which is funded in the General Fund and the cash is "looped" back to the city after everyone is paid.

Mr. McNair advised that this would go to the Finance Committee next, then it would come to Council on May 15th.

It was the CONSENSUS of the Committee in SUPPORT of the proposed contract with CHS and that it be forwarded to the Finance Committee with a favorable recommendation.

Committee Member Alexander pointed out the lack of landscaping around these houses and landscaping would increase the curb appeal as well as enhance the neighborhood. The following suggestions were made:

- ✓ *Partner with the Garden Club*
- ✓ *Have Parks & Rec Assist*
- ✓ *Come up with a program that coincides with the Teaching Garden at the Library*
- ✓ *Should be enough nurseries in High Point that could be cumulatively used*
- ✓ *Contact Lowes or Home Depot to see if they would be willing to donate a certain number of plants*

Mr. McNair explained staff has had some inquiries from real estate groups for small grants and this might be a possibility. As a matter of information, he shared that they do contribute a shed for the residents to use to store tools, etc....

Review of Pilot Infill Development Program Targeted Towards Small Builders

Mr. Fuqua advised this program was actually instituted in the late 90s, early 2000 where the city provided an incentive to small builders to build new construction throughout the city. During this period of time, the city invested \$500,000+ in incentives that built and sold 55 homes. He shared a map identifying areas characterized by scattered sites and pointed out it was not focused in areas of greatest need with pre-Core City Plan designs. He noted the focus at that time was on new

construction, but now staff is proposing to also incorporate rehabilitation of homes in an effort to bring some of the abandoned homes back into use.

The purpose of the Small Builders Incentive Program is to:

- ✓ *Promote more homeownership in areas of greatest need.*
- ✓ *Improve existing housing stock in areas of greatest need.*
- ✓ *Encourage private sector participation to:*
 - *Rehabilitate existing housing for purchase by homeowners*
 - *Build new housing for homeownership*

*Mr. Fuqua highlighted some of the **Program Elements**:*

- ✓ *Builders receive incentive when home is sold*
- ✓ *Incentive Amount up to \$15,000*
- ✓ *Funding source: Core City Redevelopment Funds*
- ✓ *Focus area: extremely weak housing markets (shown in RED on HEAT map)*
- ✓ *Homebuyers can use CCHBI and/or NCHFA down payment assistance*
- ✓ *No household income requirements.*

***Reimbursable expenses** were identified as follows:*

- ✓ *Lot acquisition*
- ✓ *Building permits*
- ✓ *Site preparation*
- ✓ *Water/sewer tap*
- ✓ *Construction loan interest*
- ✓ *Driveway curb cut/driveway*
- ✓ *Landscaping*
- ✓ *Rehabilitation costs (emphasis on energy efficiency)*

Program Requirements are:

- ✓ *Site/Location*
 - *Site plans, elevations, floor plans and work write-ups approved by city.*
 - *Zoning must allow single-family residential use*
- ✓ *New construction*
 - *Minimum 3 bedrooms and 2 full bathrooms*
- ✓ *Application*
 - *Homes with building permits issued prior to application are not eligible.*
 - *Upon approval, contractor must begin construction or repairs within six months.*
- ✓ *Certificate of Occupancy is required for all homes.*

Program Requirements for Selling/Reimbursement:

- ✓ *Shall not be sold for more than its appraised value (selling price shall not exceed \$200,000).*
- ✓ *Buyer must obtain loan from a participating lender to qualify for down payment assistance.*
- ✓ *Builder must document reimbursable costs with city.*

- ✓ *Reimbursement made after closing of sale of home.*

Committee Member Alexander asked if staff has ever looked at building duplexes where you have a homeowner who resides on one side and leases the other side out to a tenant. Mr. McNair stated that staff has not considered duplexes because the focus has been on homeownership and although this could be a slippery slope, it could be a possibility. Council Member C. Davis commented that she did not like the idea. Committee Member Alexander shared that many people are purchasing much smaller homes from an affordability standpoint because many cannot afford a \$100,000 home. Council Member C. Davis expressed concerns and noted that it was important that they the landlord and tenant be familiar with their rights. Mr. McNair pointed out most of the demand is from people above the income guidelines. Council Member C. Davis felt this is why the tiny houses would be great to allow in the city as infill.

Committee Member Ewing felt staff should identify small Census tracts they really want to focus on and utilizing the 1031 exchanges would be a great opportunity. Mr. McNair explained the former program did not accomplish what staff wanted, but now that the footprints are there, the builders can come in and fill some of the gap. Chairman Golden asked how staff is getting the word out for the program. Committee Member Ewing mentioned he would be attending a meeting with investors in Greensboro and would mention the program to them which would hopefully solicit some interest.

Chairman Golden asked if the builders would get interest on their investments while the homes are on the market to sell. Mr. Fuqua noted construction loan interest is a reimbursable expense. Committee Member Ewing felt this program could be suitable in different sectors of the city where the structure is already demolished and the city owns the property. Committee Member Alexander felt the green, yellow and orange areas would result in much faster success than the red areas. He stated he would like to see some fast success because school systems will benefit most from homeowners moving into neighborhoods and stimulation in the right places could stabilize the whole neighborhood by taking care of one or two bad spots. Mr. McNair commented this is a pilot program and it does take time to turn a neighborhood over. Committee Member Alexander mentioned the future widening of Lexington Avenue in the Five Points area and pointed out these homes have very deep lots and are close to the road. He suggested development in this area could be a real incentive for these property owners.

Regarding the new construction and the minimum of 3 bedroom/2 bath homes, Council Member C. Davis asked if consideration was given to retirees and empty nesters who no longer need 3 bedroom/2 baths and mentioned the affordability. Committee Member Ewing pointed out from a resale standpoint, they are better off doing a 3 bedroom/2 bath and possibly doing a development for 55 and over seniors.

Committee Member Ewing MOVED to forward this matter to the Council with a FAVORABLE RECOMMENDATION. Chairman Golden made a second, which carried by a 3-0 unanimous vote of the Committee. [Committee Member Williams was absent]

Review of Ordinance Regarding Junked and Abandoned Vehicles

City Attorney JoAnne Carlyle advised this is a complete rewrite of the former ordinance because it did not reflect the requirements of the State Statute. Input will be solicited from this Committee, as well as additional input from Mike McNair and Lori Loosemore as they will be charged with enforcement of the ordinance.

The purpose and finding is required in the Statute. Ms. Carlyle advised a big difference in the proposed ordinance was between “abandoned” vehicles and “junked” vehicles. Aesthetics can be applied to the “junked” vehicles. The Community Housing Director or his designee will be responsible for going out to investigate and enforce the ordinance.

Council Member C. Davis stated that she and Committee Member Alexander had some concerns regarding auto repair establishments that have fences and vehicles along the edge of the fence that have not been touched. She asked if this ordinance would address this. Ms. Carlyle replied that it would not because there is an exception in the statute for legitimate auto repair businesses. She further elaborated that there are actually two exceptions set out in the statute:

- 1. Dealing with the business, and*
- 2. Whether or not a vehicle is used on a regular basis for business or personal use.*

Committee Member Alexander asked how many cars would be allowed and pointed out oftentimes the lots are completely covered with old pieces of junk. He noted that the definition of a legitimate business is in the eyes of the interpreter. He asked if there would be a way to limit how many vehicles could be confined within a specific space. Ms. Carlyle explained that it would be based on this scenario, she felt the inspector could look at the purpose of the business and if some of the vehicles have been sitting there forever, they are not being used for the purpose of that business. She pointed out this would certainly require much more investigation, gathering of evidence, etc She further explained that salvage yards are protected under the statute.

Council Member C. Davis mentioned large rats that have been spotted at the auto repair business located at Green and Tryon and felt the difference would be if it is an “auto repair” business versus a “salvage” business. Ms. Carlyle advised the powers through the nuisance regulations could help and pointed out in the old ordinance “nuisance” vehicles were defined.

Deputy City Manager Randy McCaslin asked if the proposed ordinance would allow the city to tow cars parked on the grass on their property. Ms. Carlyle explained there are “abandoned vehicles” and “abandoned junked vehicles” and the old ordinance put a value of less than \$100 and she was recommending this be increased to \$500 in the proposed ordinance for junked vehicles. She pointed out there would be a lot more leeway with the junked vehicles. Mr. McCaslin explained although Council has adopted an ordinance prohibiting people from parking on the grass in their front yards, there is no way to enforce it. He asked if Council should repeal it. Ms. Carlyle advised that this ordinance could be enforced with fines, but it could not be enforced through the junked and abandoned vehicle ordinance. She pointed out this was a completely different area of law.

In response to a question regarding the amount of the fines, Inspector Mark Walker shared that the fine starts out at \$25 for the first offense and increases to \$50, \$100, then it maxes out at \$200. Committee Member Ewing suggested \$200 for the first offense and \$500 for the second offense.

Committee Member Alexander inquired about vehicles parked in front of a house with flat tires and no tag. Ms. Carlyle advised this would be an abandoned motor vehicle and it would be covered in the proposed ordinance. The ordinance would allow for removal of the vehicle, but there are notification requirements and a probable cause hearing would be required in district court.

A brief discussion followed regarding the disposal of abandoned/junked vehicles and the ability to get a title. Ms. Carlyle explained that the statute does not direct the city to get a title. She advised that this proposed ordinance does give the city more teeth for enforcement. Mr. McCaslin questioned what authority this proposed ordinance gives the city as compared to the current one. Ms. Carlyle reiterated that an increase in the value of junked/abandoned vehicles from \$100 to \$500 and since the city was not really following the law, now there are more coverages including the notice of probable cause hearing.

Council Member C. Davis stressed that something has to be done about the “salvage” issue. Mr. McCaslin felt this is a Planning & Zoning issue and staff may have to look at some type of amortization which could be discussed at next month’s meeting.

Committee Member Ewing asked if it might be possible to get the original ordinances for the Junked/Abandoned Vehicle Ordinance as well as the Minimum Housing Ordinance for comparison to the proposed ordinances.

Discussion of Vacant, Abandoned and Deteriorated Properties Training Academy May 31 – June 2

Mr. McNair provided information on this training academy sponsored by the Center for Community Progress. He advised that he would be participating and making a presentation at one of the workshops. Others from High Point that will also be attending will be Lori Loosemore, Patrick Harman, and Donald Belton.

Update on Pedestrian Bridge Project in Southside

Mr. McNair reported that a pre-bid meeting took place this past Friday for the Pedestrian Bridge Project. Bids are due on May 17th. Neighborhood Stabilization Funds (NSF) will be used to fund the project; there will be no General Fund money involved. He noted this would allow the land that is now all city right-of-way to be connected to the park for expansion of the park. The second part of the project entails working with the Urban AG people to put in an orchard. The bids for the project would possibly come to Council on June 5th, no later than June 19th for award of the contract and it is anticipated that the pedestrian bridge would be completed in November.

Update on Traffic Calming project in the Graves Avenue area

The Community Development & Housing staff is working with the High Point Transportation Department to do some traffic calming in the Graves Avenue area and they have identified some areas where they want to slow the traffic down. Transportation Department crews will be installing speed cushions in this area, which will slow the speed down to 15-20 mph. The estimated cost for the speed cushions in this area is \$12,000; installation should be complete within 30 days. Funding for the project will come out of the Community Development & Housing budget. It was noted that this would be a great test case and under the right conditions, the life of the speed cushions should be 5-10 years. Mr. McNair noted a petition from the neighborhood was required.

Update on Core City Homebuyer Incentive Program

Mr. McNair advised that 52 applications have been received thus far (43 have closed; 6 are pending; 3 have been withdrawn). The average age of the applicants is 40 and the average household income is 96% of AMI. Council Member C. Davis stated she would like to know how many new applications the city received this year and noted she would like to see a breakdown according to the year. Mr. McNair estimated about 35-40 have been received for 2017.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m. upon motion duly made and seconded.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa B. Vierling, MMC
City Clerk

Jeff Golden, Chairman