



Community Housing, Neighborhood Development and Public Safety Committee

Chaired by Council Member Golden

Committee Members: Golden, Peters, Scarborough, and Williams

May 7, 2019 – 10:00 a.m.

3rd Floor Lobby Conference Room

MINUTES

Present:

Chairman Jeff Golden, Committee Member Monica Peters, and Committee Member Don Scarborough [arrived at 10:19 a.m.]

Absent:

Committee Member Chris Williams

Also Present:

Mayor Pro Tem Jason Ewing

Staff Present:

Randy McCaslin, Deputy City Manager; Randy Hemann, Assistant City Manager; JoAnne Carlyle, City Attorney; Mike McNair, Director of Community Development & Housing; Michelle McNair, Community Resources Manager; Lori Loosemore, Local Codes Enforcement Manager; Thanena Wilson, Assistant Director of Community Development & Housing; Jeron Hollis, Director of Communication & Public Engagement; Fanta Dorley, Human Relations Manager; Erica Talley, Human Relations Administrative Specialist; and Lisa Vierling, City Clerk

Others Present:

Judy Stalder, TREBIC

Jerry Mingo, Vice Chair- Citizens Advisory Council, Burns Hill Neighborhood Association

News Media Present:

Pat Kimbrough, *High Point Enterprise*

Chairman Golden called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

1. Discussion- Nuisance Towing Policy

Lori Loosemore, Local Codes Enforcement Manager, advised that staff has been working on the proposed Nuisance Towing Policy associated with the Junked and Abandoned Vehicles Ordinance. Bids were received on May 1st and they will be recommending a contractor soon. Staff is proposing a 5-year contract with an option to renew after the first year. She reported that due to the dollar amount, the contract would go before the City Council for approval. She pointed out the towing will not be on city streets—only cars that meet the definition of junked/abandoned vehicles on private property will be towed which will be vehicles that:

- ✓ Do not display current license tags
- ✓ Cannot be self-propelled, partially dismantled or wrecked
- ✓ Is worth less than \$500 (and at least five years old)

City Attorney JoAnne Carlyle advised that these are definitions/guidelines set forth in the N.C. General Statutes.

Ms. Loosemore advised that staff is currently handling these situations under the Disabled Vehicle portion of the Ordinance and they inform people they can only have one car that is disabled and no junk. She noted that most people comply in this respect, but staff does have some situations where the only recourse is towing. She explained that staff does not necessarily have a backlog list of vehicles in violation and prefers to ease into it and get the word out.

She reported that once a vehicle is towed, the city will charge a \$100 administrative fee and the owner of the vehicle will have to pay the fee to reclaim the vehicle when they go pick it up from where it is being stored. The city will pay the towing contractor to tow the vehicle (this cost will be reimbursed to the city by the owner of the vehicle under the administrative fee), as well as to store the vehicles. The owner of the vehicle will be responsible for paying the storage fee charged by the towing contractor for impoundment of the vehicle once the vehicle is claimed and picked up. The towing contractor can store vehicles up to 30 days.

Ms. Loosemore also advised that there will also be a provision in the policy that allows a property owner to sign a release form requesting a vehicle be removed from their property that would give the city permission to take the vehicles away.

Chairman Golden asked if the proposed Nuisance Towing Policy would help with the current issue with all the vehicles on Rosecrest and Ms. Loosemore explained it would not because that particular situation would be covered and cited under the zoning regulations. Chairman Golden also mentioned a location on Cedrow that has tractors, equipment, etc.... with no tags. Ms. Loosemore offered to take a look at it.

Deputy Manager McCaslin asked about people that park on the grass in front yards. Ms. Loosemore noted this would be a zoning compliance issue and they would receive civil penalties for violations, but the city would not be towing or impounding vehicles in this type of situation.

2. Discussion- Nuisance Housing Enforcement

Lori Loosemore, Local Codes Enforcement Manager, mentioned the matter that came before the City Council during last night's meeting for the property at 428 Ennis and noted staff's goal is not to tear down houses. She explained that there have been several occasions in the last 8-12 months where property owners asked for additional time to make repairs and did not completely follow through. Oftentimes, she noted they would get the repairs 90% complete and then stop doing any work and the house would just sit there. In those cases, the structure is not occupied, no utilities are being used, no one is living there and no one pays the taxes.

She shared some pictures showing situations where work was started and not completed on housing cases that were brought before the City Council. She mentioned one property owner has hired an attorney, but has been given fair warning that if the repairs are not completed, the city is prepared to move forward with the demolition. City Attorney Carlyle pointed out the adopted demolition ordinance can still be effectuated regardless of that the property owner does. However, it becomes a tricky situation if a case goes to court where a property owner has completed most of the repairs and the judge questions why the city allowed the property owner to continue putting money into it and still demolished the property anyway.

Ms. Carlyle noted these situations can be handled by writing a letter to the property owner outlining all the details and pointing out that the repairs have not been made in a timely manner although they agreed to make the repairs and putting the property owner on notice that any more work and money invested would be a loss on the property owner's part if the city follows through with the demolition. She noted these situations would still be handled on a case-by-case basis, but an internal deadline needs to be set for the property owner to have the repairs completed by. She recommended that Ms. Loosemore set the hard date for the deadline because they evaluate the property and bring a recommendation to Council based on that evaluation.

Ms. Carlyle explained nothing will really change as far as the process and how the cases come to the City Council, but a letter would be sent to the property owner from the Legal Department informing the property owner that although they would be given additional time to make the repairs, the City could still move forward with the demolition if 100% of the repairs are not completed by the date as determined by Ms. Loosemore because the demolition ordinance would still be in place.

Ms. Loosemore concluded her presentation by sharing some photographs of housing cases that staff has been working on where property owners have made some of the repairs, but have not yet completed the repairs.

There were no objections from the Community Housing, Neighborhood Development & Public Safety committee with Ms. Loosemore setting the deadlines moving forward.

Committee Member Peters inquired about the status of the Top 10% Crime and Disorder properties. Ms. Carlyle noted as she understood it, they were waiting on the Police Department to redo their scoring for the various categories of crime and stated the old list of properties was based on the old scoring. Mike McNair, Director of Community Development & Housing explained that he recently received the new scoring. Ms. Carlyle advised that she and staff would need to meet and review the information.

The committee members asked if it could be ready for review by the Community Housing, Neighborhood Development & Public Safety Committee at the June meeting.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m. upon motion duly made and seconded.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa B. Vierling, City Clerk

Jeff Golden, Chairman