

MINUTES

COUNCIL-MANAGER BRIEFING

April 23, 2012

Mayor D'Epifanio called the Council-Manager Briefing to order at 6:00 p.m. at the Fairfield Municipal Building, 5350 Pleasant Avenue. The following Councilmembers were present: Jeff Holtegel, Adam Jones, Debbie Pennington, Terry Senger and Mike Oler. Staff present: Angie Jolivette, Mark Wendling, Dave Butsch, Rick Helsing, Mark Parker, Greg Kathman, Tim Bachman, Mary Hopton, Arthur Pizzano, Dave Crouch, Tom Hedge, Carol Mayhall, and John Clemmons.

Property Maintenance & Other Initiatives

Development Services Director Tim Bachman introduced Building & Zoning Inspection Superintendent Rick Helsing, Economic Development Director Greg Kathman, and Development Manager Mark Parker. Mr. Bachman displayed and discussed the recap for property maintenance activity for the past five years. He noted inspections and violations were higher in 2009 due to the Heritage Glen inspection process. He explained the decrease in inspections and violations are due to the follow-up zoning inspections and two less people in the department doing inspections. Mr. Bachman discussed the current foreclosure status. He advised 12 of the 218 cases open in 2008 are still open. He stated 159 cases were opened last year, which is the lowest in the past four years. He explained the foreclosures are tracked because those properties become part of the property maintenance inspections. Mr. Bachman advised in Ohio one in every 609 homes is in foreclosure, in Butler County one in every 377 homes is in foreclosure and in Fairfield one in every 606 homes is in foreclosure. He stated the county is in worse shape than the state and Fairfield. Mr. Bachman stated there are 18,800 housing units, with about 10,300 of those being single family homes. He explained calls from the zoning hotline go into the Zoning Division where the calls are prioritized in terms of the property maintenance problem. He advised the number of calls in 2011 was 74, which is down 80 calls from 2010. Mr. Bachman noted calls spike when the hotline is featured in the newsletter. Mr. Bachman discussed maintenance the City provides for vacant structures in the City in which a contractor takes care of the addresses during the entire growing season and the price charged is back charged as a tax lien on the property. Mr. Bachman explained the City works with the County on managing mosquito dunks the County adds to pools. He discussed the number of new vacant structures and the absorption of these homes from 2007 to 2011. He advised 2008 was the worst year for the number of new vacant structures the City maintains. Mr. Bachman explained the Neighborhood Enhancement Action Team (NEAT) is a program created in 2009 and is a proactive tool, which takes a section of the City to check for violations. He stated Mark Parker is handling this program. He briefly overviewed the number of addresses inspected each year. He stated the goal is every four years to touch a single family home within the community. He briefly discussed the process in which notices are sent to the property, a survey card is distributed, inspections are done and any violations found are sent to the property owners. Mr. Bachman explained property zoning violations are placed on a map and where the dots cluster, personnel check those areas. Mr. Bachman discussed the multi-family inspection program and the numbers for inspections, violations and court cases for the past four years. Mr. Bachman advised the average number of days it takes when someone has to be taken to court for not complying. He further advised the average number of days was 181 days in 2010 and was reduced to 161 days in 2011. He discussed the duties of the inspection personnel. Dave Hensley was hired as and is an electric inspector and now also handles gas piping, fire alarm and residential HVAC; Mike Piatt was hired for all building inspection and is now handling commercial building, all sprinkler, and commercial HVAC. Mr. Bachman explained these two no longer have time to help with zoning, which was not the case two years ago. He stated in 2011 two inspectors performed 2685 inspections with over 510 more than 2010 and in 2010 there were three inspectors. Mr. Bachman stated Mr. Hensley and Mr. Piatt are being re-assigned and are being taken out of property maintenance. He further explained Mark Parker was hired for all site reviews and inspections, but has now been given the NEAT inspections also. Mr. Bachman discussed the number of days for voluntary compliance case management with 2011 as 23 days, which is better than it was three to four years ago. Mr. Bachman discussed the 2011 work plan summary. He noted that the Follow-up Zoning (FUZ) program will no longer be continued because no longer have the time for the zoning inspectors to do this program, about 2600 homes were inspected through the NEAT program, the days per case average was better at 23.27, inspections at Heritage Glen and remediation of issues occurred in 2011 and the inspectors time and quality of inspections were benchmarked. Mr. Bachman advised for the 2012 work plan - 2600 homes will be inspected through the NEAT program, the days per case average will be kept between 25 and 30 days, inspection of the Creekside Village (formerly Heritage Glen) will continue and inspectors' time and quality of inspections will be benchmarked and compared building permit fees with competing communities. He noted an uptick in construction for the first quarter.

Mr. Bachman discussed a new initiative, which is on the Agenda for first reading tonight, for the prohibition of internet cafes or internet sweepstakes. He explained this would create a new chapter 517.01 (ggg) and 517.16. He commented House Bill 195 was introduced a little more than a year ago to regulate internet cafes and sweepstakes and was stymied in committee. Law Director John Clemmons explained these are usually operated in conjunction with the sale of some type of non-cash supply, a phone card is the typical one, a token or code is given by which you can play a terminal on their premises. Mr. Clemmons explained the Ordinance he has written says if operating a sweepstakes, a sweepstakes terminal device cannot be used. He stated Attorney General DeWine has said they are the equivalent of slot machines. He further discussed the operation of these sweepstakes devices. He explained HB 195 is more of a regulatory licensing instead of prohibition, but Mr. Clemmons is recommending prohibition. Mr. Holtegel asked if Internet Café is the common term. Mr. Clemmons explained the promoters use the terms Internet Café and the Ordinance clarifies the

term and that an Internet sweepstakes terminal devices being used in conjunction with a sweepstakes. Mr. Clemmons stated we do not have any in the City, but we have been approached. He further stated some cities are prosecuting them as illegal gambling.

Finance GIS Project Applications

Mr. Pizzano introduced Income Tax Administrator Tom Hedge. Mr. Bachman explained income tax files are being tied to the Geographic Information System (GIS) layer for better compliance. He explained this tool will make it easier to maintain with building permit and water account data and will better allow buying power/cost benefit analysis. He explained much of this information is confidential. Mr. Bachman advised this is a new tool and they are not aware of other cities doing this. Mr. Meyers asked for clarification regarding the compliance. Mrs. Hopton stated this is for business, not residential. Mr. Bachman advised tying the financial files together is complete; the data will be tweaked through June with the data being dumped into GIS this summer. He further advised hopefully there will be a working platform by the fall of 2012. Mr. Bachman displayed an example of what this will look like and discussed. In response to Councilmember Holtegel's question, Mr. Bachman explained they are already able to locate vacant business properties. Mrs. Hopton explained because information is confidential, general information by ward is available, information is protected. Council and staff discussed the security and encryption of the data.

Mr. Bachman showed Mayor and Council the business card size flash cards that will replace the DVDs with videos about Fairfield that were used by Development Services for economic development. The flash cards will contain the same videos as the DVDs, will drive people to the website and are writable, so specific information can be added as needed for Economic Development. Mr. Bachman briefly commented on the expense of the initial 250, but noted if more are ordered the cost will be less. Mr. Pizzano noted the same videos were used.

Adjournment

Council/Manager Briefing adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Angela Jolivette
Clerk of Council