

MINUTES

COUNCIL-MANAGER BRIEFING

February 14, 2011

The Council-Manager Briefing was called to order by Vice Mayor Terrence Senger at 6:05 p.m. at the Fairfield Municipal Building, 5350 Pleasant Avenue. The following Councilmembers were present: Terry Senger, Mitch Rhodus, Mike Oler, Tim Meyers, and Mike Snyder. Staff present: Angie Johns, Dave Crouch, Tim Bachman, Art Pizzano, Dennis Stuckey, Carol Mayhall, Rick Helsinger, and Dave Butsch.

Goal Update – NEAT, Property Maintenance, Residential Retention

City Manager Pizzano explained this item came from the Council retreat. Development Services Director Tim Bachman recapped property maintenance noting not every inspection is a violation. He discussed the increase between 2008 and 2009 for inspections as well as violations were due to the start of the NEAT Program as well as the FUZ (Follow Up Zoning) Program. He stated the violations were also up in 2009 as a function of the inspections, but also because of various properties with a lot of inspection activity including Heritage Glen. He noted inspections as well as violations dropped in 2010 as result of not being in Heritage Glen as much as in 2009 and due to fewer personnel. Mr. Bachman explained inspections vary by person and the average was 700-800. He discussed that foreclosures are tracked and are visited to make sure the properties are being kept up. He discussed the number of cases open in 2008 was 218, which dropped in 2009 then jumped back up in 2010. He explained 12 of those started in 2008 are still active. He discussed for just December 2010 how Ohio which was 1 for every 483 housing units compared to other states. He further discussed for Fairfield foreclosure rates were 1 in every 883 housing units and in Butler County, which is 1 in every 675 units. Mr. Bachman reminded everyone that the vacant properties hotline is still being answered by staff. He commented for two weeks in mid-March all property maintenance inspectors will concentrate only on the vacant properties and the weeds. Mr. Bachman discussed the total number of vacant structures that the City maintains and the number of new vacant structures introduced for the year and the ones carried over from another year. Mr. Bachman explained the number of new vacant properties being maintained is going down, but in 2010 quite a lot carried over in 2009 as a maintenance issue. He explained the dollars charged will go back on the tax as a lien and will be paid for when the property is sold in foreclosure. He discussed the NEAT Program, which was introduced in 2009. He explained in 2009 there were 2,939 addresses inspected and 12.3 percent in violations and in 2010 there were 2,668 inspections with 10.9 percent violations. Mr. Bachman explained there was a different person doing inspections and also they are done by priority of the zoning violations and property maintenance inspections of the year prior. He further explained in 2009 the areas with the most violations and in 2010 they were the second worse and in 2011 they will be the third. He stated they anticipate about 2,800 addresses for 2011 and will start in the next few weeks. Mr. Bachman discussed the involvement of Public Works and the Police for this program. He displayed a map that showed the areas covered for each year. Mr. Bachman stated FUZ began in 2009 for the repeat offenders. He explained in 2009 they inspected every 2008 offender twice for approximately 976 plus inspections. He further explained in 2010, due to the number of offenders they decided to inspect every offender once a year for a total of approximately 1,188 inspections. He explained with one less building inspector for 2011 they will inspect those that have been an offender in 2008, 2009 and 2010 for a total of 285 inspections. He stated the average violation percentage by inspection is about 14.3 percent for the first two years. Mr. Bachman briefly discussed the need to publicize the hotline, which had 154 calls in 2010 with 100 calls decreasing from 2009. He stated it did spike when featured in the newsletter. Mr. Bachman stated Brian Rose is now in Public Works and the decision has been made to not fill his position. He explained Brian Rose performed 700 inspections through November 2010, which will be split between certified electrical inspector Dave Hensley and certified building inspector Mike Piatt. He explained there will be a monthly metric decrease with regard to property maintenance inspections because he is going from 1,100 FUZZ inspections to 285. He briefly discussed the new metric including benchmarking the number of inspections from the previous year. He explained efficiency of the two inspectors and the quality of inspections given the increased work load will be looked at. He stated in 2010 there were 2,823 building, electrical and mechanical inspections performed. He explained in 2011, there will be an additional six inspections per day per inspector at the 2010 levels. Building and Zoning Superintendent Rick Helsinger commented they are all cross trained to handle the inspections being asked of them, but we want to make sure they have enough time to perform the inspections. Mr. Bachman discussed the number of multi-family inspections from 2007 to 2010. He explained the high number is partially not being in Heritage Glen as much and taking some of the multi-family tasks and putting them into property maintenance. He stated the court cases are the ones that could not be solved through typical means. He stated this is from the start to the time that is it fixed on average per case. He explained the plan to reduce the time on the letter and better job getting cases set. He commented he thinks it is a process that people do not have the money to make the improvements, but inspectors will improve what they do at their end. Law Director Clemmons briefly discussed changes made in 2007 or 2008, which cut the court time. Mr. Bachman commented Heritage Glen was not included in these numbers. Mr. Clemmons further explained second offenders add to the court time since those individuals want time to get a lawyer and have a trial. Mr. Bachman discussed the number of days for case management, which he explained is much better for the cases that do not go to court. He reviewed the 2010 work plan he presented last year including continuing the FUZ program; inspecting 2500 homes through the NEAT program; keeping the days per case average between 30 and 40 days; meeting the mandates as set by the court for Heritage Glen and continuing proactive multi-family inspections; benchmarking People Working Cooperatively program which will assist in retention of elderly citizens and looking at using County Community Development funds for neighborhood stabilization. He briefly reviewed the 2011 work plan including continuing the FUZ program,

looking at effectiveness of fewer inspections; inspecting 2500 homes through the NEAT program; keeping days per case average between 30 and 40 days; looking at court case management; remediating issues at Heritage Glen and continuing proactive multi-family inspections; and benchmarking inspectors time and quality of inspections. A brief discussion was held regarding the Beautiful Fairfield Award, which is city wide.

Adjournment

The Council/Manager Briefing adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Angela Johns
Clerk of Council