

MINUTES OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
August 12, 2016 – 8:00 AM

Committee Members Present: Councilor Jon McCallion
Councilor Marty Dumont
Councilor Dale Sprague (Arrived @ 8:04 AM)
Councilor David A. Witham

Administration/Staff Present: City Manager Bob Belmore
Director of Planning & Community Development
Shanna B. Saunders
Code Compliance Officer Joe Devine
Deputy City Clerk Elise B. Brelis

Councilor McCallion called the meeting to order at 8:01 AM

PAST MEETING MINUTES

Councilor Dumont, seconded by Councilor McCallion, made a motion to accept the minutes of the 06/30/2016 meeting. Councilor Witham abstained.

FORMER POICE STATION SITE

City Manager Belmore reported that they are waiting for an assessment report from the DES after doing a walkthrough of the former police station site; they expect to hear before the end of the month. Hopefully it will be a simple clean up and then they will decide the next step.

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE UPDATES

Code Compliance Officer Joe Devine reported monthly activity for June and July. A re-written “Courtesy Letter” is being sent to property owners when violations are discovered, in an attempt to soften the first step of the process. A second letter will be a “Violation Letter.” Joe Devine said he is concentrating on known trouble areas, also commenting that little things like paint and fixing siding and fences can make a big difference. Councilor Dumont said that insurance companies are also sending letters to get properties maintained. Councilor Dumont asked for copies of the Historic District Commission minutes which Mr. Devine will provide. Councilor Sprague wants the department to be on the lookout for a number of things. The committee members agreed that they were concerned about parking on city sidewalks. The City Manager said he has talked to Chief Kretschmar about this. Councilor Dumont thanked Mr. Devine for his work, saying it is appreciated. Councilor Sprague said that the Council needs to be behind this property maintenance effort to give it teeth. Joe Devine left the meeting at 8:47 AM.

MICRO FLATS/MICRO BUSINESSES

The City Manager spoke about the Overlay District ordinance which is on the agenda for the next City Council meeting. They will consider adding “multi-dwelling” and “elderly housing” to the list of Additional Permitted Uses in Chapter 19, Section 30.E. The maximum density allowed will be 10 units per acre. Pros and cons of a possible Compact Micro Business Overlay District was also discussed after Shanna Saunders spoke briefly about the possibility of increasing density allowances to accommodate both micro-flats and micro-businesses, possibly 20-30 units per acre. They would need to define it, but it would be more units than are currently allowed. Councilor Witham liked the idea of increased foot traffic but said that parking would be a downside. Councilor Sprague expressed hesitancy and concern about micro-flats, but said he is okay with micro-businesses. Chairman McCallion said that millennials want to live, work and play within a quarter mile. Councilor Dumont thinks we probably want more structural things in place before we do this. Chairman McCallion wants to see a new ordinance (for discussion). Director Saunders said that they can draft one and see; perhaps requiring owner occupancy.

The City Manager reminded the committee that they will need to be a public hearing on the Hilltop Overlay Ordinance either at the first or second September meeting.

Chairman McCallion asked staff to put (it) together and bring it back to the committee.

ERZ MEETING RECAP

Director Saunders reported on the ERZ meeting held on June 30, 2016:

HILLTOP OVERLAY DISTRICT

See previous discussion: Micro-Flats/Micro-Businesses.

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

Language for SB-146 was drafted at the State and is not due to be effective until next year. The City Manager said we may want to wait to see what issues come up and then have it go through the Planning and Zoning Boards. Councilor McCallion wants to get ahead of it and hash it out in Committee. Councilor Witham said his biggest concern is parking. Councilor Dumont advocates hanging back and letting it play out. Chairman McCallion wants to get in front of it.

MISCELLANEOUS

Various projects were discussed. CM Belmore has been to Sober Sisters and said they have done tremendous work there. There is an open house in August.

Councilor Sprague wants to reconsider setbacks in the Riparian Wetland ordinance. The point system doesn't make sense to him. He thinks these (setbacks) are super aggressive and can prohibit sales of property (for businesses, etc.) Director Saunders said that the purpose is to create a buffer which could prevent, for instance, wet basements. There was some agreement that the language should be cleaned up. The City Manager asked Shanna Saunders to take it to the Planning Board and Conservation Commission. Councilor Sprague

said he would lean toward Director Saunders cleaning up the language and bringing an ordinance change back to Council.

Councilor Dumont, seconded by Councilor McCallion, made a motion to adjourn. The motion passed, 4-0, and the meeting adjourned at 9:46 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Elise B. Brelis, Deputy City Clerk