

MINUTES
Central City Revitalization and Housing Committee Meeting
December 4, 2013, 3:30 p.m.
Council Conference Room – 2nd Floor City Hall

The Central City Revitalization and Housing Committee met on Wednesday, December 4, 2013, at 3:30 p.m., 2nd Floor, City Council Conference Room, City Hall.

Committee Members in Attendance: Chairman Todd Pierceall
Councilman Walter Kimble
Mayor Pro Tem Brenda Craig

Guest: Ms. Melanie Stines

Staff in Attendance: Mr. Ed Munn, City Manager
Mr. Ash Smith, City Attorney
Ms. Melissa Magee, Assistant City Attorney
Mr. Jason Thompson, Director of Planning
Ms. Rachel Bagley, Managing Executive
Mr. Flip Bombardier, Assistant City Manager
Mr. Rusty Bost, City Engineer
Mr. Thorne Martin, Assistant City Engineer
Mr. Brian Pruett, Building Codes Administrator
Mr. Drew Pearson, Zoning Services Administrator
Mr. Larry Wood, Assistant City Manager
Mr. Chuck Dellinger, Director of Parks & Recreation
Chief Phil Welch, Gastonia Fire Department
Assistant Chief Billy Thompson, Gastonia Fire Department
Chief Stacy Conley, Gastonia Police Department
Fire Marshal Billy Glover, Gastonia Fire Department

Chairman Todd Pierceall welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. Chairman Pierceall advised that **Item 2** regarding the **2014 Summer Concert Series**, would be moved to **Item 1** on the agenda.

ITEM 1: 2014 Summer Concert Series:

Chairman Pierceall recognized Ms. Rachel Bagley for staff's presentation. Ms. Bagley acknowledged Ms. Melanie Stines, who coordinated the 2013 summer concert series. The Committee discussed the information provided by Ms. Bagley and Ms. Stines on the City's involvement and funding of the previous summer concert series. The Committee asked questions about the turnout and response to the 2013 series. Possible options and associated costs for events for next summer were also discussed.

Committee Recommendation: The Committee voted unanimously (3-0) to instruct staff, with the assistance of Ms. Stines, to develop options and alternatives for the 2014 summer concert series and present them at the next Committee meeting in January, 2014.

Necessary Council Action: No action is required at this time as additional information will be presented to the Committee at the January, 2014, meeting.

ITEM 2: Update on Building and Development Task Force Requests:

Chairman Pierceall recognized Mr. Flip Bombardier for staff's presentation. Mr. Bombardier stated that at the November 6th meeting of the Committee, a private sector group identifying themselves as the Gastonia Development Task Force presented items of concern for consideration as recently reported to the full Council. The Committee directed Staff to:

1. Clarify the rules for building and zoning use inspections, including the recent State law limiting inspections for existing buildings;
2. Attend a Homebuilder's Association meeting to explain 'vested rights' and other grandfathered rules and limitations;

3. Survey other jurisdictions within the region regarding their permit and fee structure; and,
4. Provide a report covering all these issues at the next Committee meeting.

At the December 4th Committee meeting, Staff presented a detailed memorandum in response to the concerns of the Task Force, as well as responding to the specific directions of the Committee listed above.

Staff stated that, as a matter of policy, they only enforce those rules that are established by Council, the State, or the Federal Government. However, Staff further stated that there will always be instances of miscommunication or variances in interpretation of the regulations. Staff also conveyed is two primary objectives: (1) Customer Service as noted in the City Customer's Bill of Rights; and (2) Administration of the laws of the State and City Ordinances.

In concluding its presentation to the Committee, Staff provided a series of recommendations as follows:

1. The City should continue to communicate regularly with the Task Force, the Gaston County Home Builder's Association and others on specific issues, working toward mutually agreeable solutions.
2. Staff will provide more information about 'vested rights' at a later date with interested parties.
3. The City will continue the policy of providing specific code/ordinance references where major differences exist between the City and Builders/Developers' interpretation of the NC Building Code, NC Fire Code, State Fire Code and/or the Subdivision Ordinance.
4. Staff will implement a standard procedure to notify developers/owners when there are significant issues in the subdivision construction process.
5. Additional 'grandfathering' consideration will be given for previously City-approved subdivision construction plans that are now being 'reactivated' for current development. One consideration may be that no newly-adopted or more rigorous City Standards be applicable unless otherwise required under State law. These changes could be done through modification of the Unified Development Ordinance.
6. Staff would continue working with developers under the existing ordinance regarding the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Land Dedication and/or Payment in Lieu Development Program and provide assistance during the preliminary inquiry phase as to what option best suits their needs.
7. With regard to the Building Permit and Water/Sewer Expansion Fees, no changes are recommended to the current rate structure.
8. Staff is currently considering amendments to the existing ordinance standards for Planned Residential Development (PRDs) that had been previously approved by the City. Also, Staff is reviewing engineering standards and specifications to determine if the City is consistent with other communities, while simultaneously maintaining the quality of public infrastructure improvements.
9. Staff is willing to meet with developers, realtors and contractors at any time to discuss ways the City can administer City Ordinances and State regulations in an effective and efficient manner.

The Committee further discussed, in detail, 'user fees' including those associated with building permits, utility system expansion, and park/recreation needs. Both the financial impact these have on developers/contractors, as well as the City's revenue stream were discussed. It was noted that the City Council can adjust these fees at any time.

Committee Recommendation: The Committee voted unanimously (3-0) to accept this item as information pending feedback from the Building and Development Task Force. (Chairman Pierceall was

not present for the vote as he excused himself at 5:33 p.m. to attend an MPO meeting, therefore, his vote counts in the affirmative.)

Additionally, the Committee requested that Staff provide further information on alternatives/options to the current fees and/or programs to present at the next Committee meeting in January, 2014.

Necessary Council Action: No action is required at this time pending feedback from the Building and Development Task Force. Also, Staff will provide alternatives/options to the current fees and/or programs at the next Committee meeting in January, 2014.

ITEM 3: Other Related Matters:

Having no other matters to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.