

LAUDERDALE CITY COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
MARCH 14, 2006

7:30 P.M. CITY HALL

Mayor Dains called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and asked the Administrator to take the roll.

Members present: council member Karen Gill-Gerbig; council member Denise Hawkinson, council member Karen Doherty; council member Clay Christensen and Mayor Jeff Dains.

Staff Present: Brian B. Heck, City Administrator; Jim Bownik, Assistant to the City Administrator; and Heather Butkowski, Deputy City Clerk.

Mayor Dains requested discussion items 10 A. Animal Control Ordinance and B Personnel Policy Manual be moved to the work session. There being no further additions or corrections to the agenda, council member Christensen moved approval. Council member Gill-Gerbig provided the second and the motion carried.

Council member Gill-Gerbig moved approval of the minutes for the February 28, 2006 council meeting. Council member Doherty seconded and the motion carried.

Mayor Dains asked the council if there were questions regarding the claims. There being none, council member Christensen moved and Doherty seconded the payment of claims totaling \$41,572.91. Motion carried.

Council member Gill-Gerbig moved and Doherty seconded a motion to approve the consent agenda approving seal coating plans and timeline for quotes and work. Motion carried.

The mayor asked if there were any comments from the public regarding anything not on the agenda. There being none, the mayor introduced the next item, a public information session on the proposed ordinance licensing rental property in the city.

Administrator Heck provided a brief background on the development and purpose of the ordinance.

The mayor provided a few comments on the conduct of the meeting and his perspective on the general issue.

Mr. Mike Tracy addressed the council. He owns property on Eustis Street and informed the council and staff that the information on St. Paul and Roseville is incorrect. He said these cities do not license single-family homes and duplexes; they register them. He said there is no inspection of the property required. He agrees with the goal of improving the housing stock and feels the maintenance code should apply to all property as Roseville is doing. He also asked the Council to focus on the "bad" landlords and leave the "good" ones alone.

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Council member Gill-Gerbig stated she generally agreed with him on some comments. She added that residents of rental property have physically threatened long-term residents and she is looking at taking a long-term approach at community viability. She said that this is one place to start.

Brian Malzer addressed the council next. He lives in Lauderdale and rents a home on Malvern and Larpenteur. He indicated he just began renting not too long ago and found that when a bad tenant moves in, it is very difficult to remove them. He feels the city needs to create something that will empower the landowner to more easily evict the tenant. He also asked about a truth in housing type program for all residential structures.

John Chen spoke to the council. He said he owns a town home in the community. He wanted to know if he rented it to a relative would the license requirement still apply. He also reaffirmed what some of the other speakers addressed to the council. His main points were that the problem appears to be the individuals and not the property and the city should try and target the problem tenants/resident, not the responsible landlord.

Michelle Upham, a resident, said she has a roommate and wanted to know if she would have to get a license for renting a single room.

Jeff Hermez spoke to the council. He said he owns two properties in Lauderdale and does extensive background checks on his tenants. He also stated he has invested over \$50,000 over the past five years to both properties. He commented that he lives in Wright County but due to his job, is in the area much of the time and felt the resident agent provision should be reconsidered. He felt the idea is a good one, but the city should not go overboard.

Council member Christensen stated he sees more single-family homes being converted to rental units when the parents or other relatives move or pass away. He is looking at this program as a way to get the first time landlord some help in being a responsible landlord. He does not see this as a club, but a device the city can use when it is needed to gain compliance.

Mr. Tracy made some summary comments. He reiterated improving and maintaining the housing stock is a very good idea. He suggested the council develop a program that targets the problem properties/owners rather than the broad brush approach.

The mayor thanked all who attended and provided comments. The mayor recessed the meeting for 5 minutes.

The mayor reconvened the meeting at 8:50 p.m. with all members present.

Chief John Ohl, St. Anthony Police Department, presented the 2005 Annual Lauderdale Police report. He stated the city saw a decrease in part I crimes and an increase in part II crimes. The increase is attributed to an increase in the number of DUI arrests.

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Council member Hawkinson asked the Chief about the Citizens Academy. Chief Ohl stated they will be holding spots open for Lauderdale and Falcon Heights residents and hope to have the program start in September.

Mayor Dains asked Chief Ohl about the proposed speed cart. Chief Ohl said the speed cart is an educational tool used to increase awareness and to promote self-compliance. He said the cart can keep statistics and other data but it does not act as a "photo cop".

The Council entered the work session part of the meeting at 9:36 p.m.

Bownik outlined the process the PCIC used to develop the list of projects to consider for the park. He suggests looking at projects 1) reconstructing the tennis courts and 2) installing fencing around the east and west ends of the hockey rink.

Committee members commented on the projects and said they looked at the length of time the projects have been under consideration by the city as a factor in establishing the priorities.

Bownik suggested the city apply for the DNR grant this year and if not awarded, apply for the grant again next year with the intent to complete the tennis courts even if the grant aswere not awarded. Heck suggested the council make the decision to do the tennis courts this year regardless of the grant outcome.

The council and PCIC members discussed the various projects and relative priority. Following all the discussion, staff was directed to prepare a formal council agenda item listing the tennis courts as the project for completion this year, with the option of also doing the basketball courts as suggested by council member Doherty, and the hockey rink fencing. Staff is also to check on the liability of using volunteers for some of the work and to list projects based on the discussion for the next two years.

Due to the late hour, agenda items 10A regarding the Animal Control Ordinance and 10B regarding the Personnel Policy Manual were moved to the March 28<sup>th</sup> city council meeting. The meeting adjourned at 10:36 on a motion by Gill-Gerbig and a second by Doherty.