

LAUDERDALE CITY COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, October 25, 2005

7:30 p.m.

Mayor Dains called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m. and asked the Administrator to call the roll. Council members Karen Gill-Gerbig, Karen Doherty, Moose Giannetti, Clay Christensen and Mayor Dains were present. City Administrator Brian Bakken-Heck and Deputy City Clerk Heather Butkowski were also present.

7:35 Mayor Dains asked for any additions or corrections to the agenda. Administrator Bakken-Heck requested the addition of an item related to a health insurance program for city staff. Council member Giannetti requested addition information on the City Halloween party. There being no further changes to the agenda, Council member Giannetti moved and Gill-Gerbig seconded approval of the agenda and the motion carried with all members voting yes.

7:38 Mayor Dains asked the council if there were any changes to the minutes for the October 11, 2005 city council meeting. There being none, Mayor Dains called for a motion to approve the minutes as recorded. Council member Christensen moved and Council member Gill-Gerbig seconded and the motion carried with all voting yes.

7:40 Mayor Dains invited those who wished to address the council on items not on the agenda to do so.

Joe Sax, representing neighborhood kids, addressed the council and addressed the issue of construction of a skateboard and bicycle park. He stated there is a park in St. Anthony, however; the park does not allow bicycles. Mr. Sax went on to state there is a need for such a park and having a park would draw kids from neighboring cities. He said skateboarders, bikers and even rollerbladers could use the park.

He mentioned a few ways to generate funds to help pay for the park, such as a bake sale, spaghetti dinner, donations, etc. He suggested placing the skate park in the open area near the hockey rink and added that if this location does not work, they would research and find a different spot.

He stated there are two types of parks; wood and concrete. From his research, he stated that wood might be more expensive due to the rising cost of lumber. He was told a concrete park 30' by 80' is estimated to cost \$70,000.

Mr. Sax finished by saying such a facility would be a great asset for the community.

Council member Christensen asked about insurance. Mr. Sax said he researched the web and could not find any information.

Mayor Dains and the council thanked the boys for the excellent presentation. Mayor Dains went on to say that issues involving the park are presented to the park committee and the committee then reports to the council with suggestions and recommendations.

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He invited the boys to the next park committee meeting to discuss the topic with this group.

7:50 Council members and the mayor mentioned the Halloween party to be held on Monday, October 31, 2005 at City Hall and invited all kids to attend the free event. The council and mayor also thanked all the residents who made donations for the event.

7:55 Katrina and Russ, attorney's from Hughes and Costello, presented information on domestic assault to the council. Hughes and Costello is the law firm the City uses for prosecution.

8:15 Administrator Bakken-Heck presented an update on the budget. He indicated revenues are behind projections for the year, but that the city has not received the second half tax settlement. He said expenditures are running below projections and that overall the status of the finances for the city are doing well.

8:20 Action Items.

- A) Open Burning Ordinance. Administrator Bakken-Heck updated the council on the revisions and indicated the revisions bring the ordinance into compliance with the International Fire Code, which the City of Lauderdale adopted. Specifically, the ordinance extends the distance from combustible materials and structures from 10' to 25' and restricts the height of the fire from 3' to 2.'

Council member Gill-Gerbig asked what constitutes combustible material. She queried if this included trees, shrubs and/or bushes. She felt a bit more was needed in the definitions. She moved to table consideration of the ordinance until staff could resolve the issue related to the definitions. The motion died for lack of a second.

Council member Christensen moved adoption of the ordinance on open burning as amended. Council member Giannetti seconded the motion and it carried with Council members Gill-Gerbig, Doherty, Giannetti, Christensen and Mayor Dains all voting yes.

- B) November Meeting Dates. Due to the election on Tuesday, November 8, the council discussed moving the council meeting to alternate dates. Council member Doherty moved and Gill-Gerbig seconded changing the dates for the meetings in November to Tuesday, November 15 and Tuesday, November 29. Motion carried on a roll call vote with Council members Gill-Gerbig, Doherty, Giannetti, Christensen and Mayor Dains all voting yes.

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- C) Amendment to Ehlers Agreement for consulting work on Larpenteur Avenue project. Council member Gill-Gerbig moved and Doherty seconded the motion to approve the agreement amendment with Ehlers and Associates. Motion carried on a roll call vote with members Gill-Gerbig, Doherty, Giannetti, Christensen and Mayor Dains all voting yes.
- D) SCORE Grant. The city is receiving a grant for recycling in the amount of \$4,378. Council member Christensen offered and moved resolution #102505A – A resolution Accepting 2006 SCORE Funding from Ramsey County for the Lauderdale Recycling Program. The resolution was seconded by Council member Giannetti and carried on a roll call vote with Gill-Gerbig, Doherty, Giannetti, Christensen and Mayor Dains all voting yes.

8:35 Administrator Bakken-Heck presented an update to the council on the progress of finding an alternate provider for the city's health insurance program for employees. Bakken-Heck said he and Heather Butkowski met with Mr. Jim Alt and received answers to some questions raised by the council at the previous meeting. Bakken-Heck requested council authorization to complete application with Blue Cross / Blue Shield of Minnesota for employee health coverage. Moved by Christensen to authorize the Administrator to make application for coverage through Blue Cross / Blue Shield, second by Gill-Gerbig and carried with Gill-Gerbig, Doherty, Giannetti, Christensen and Mayor Dains all voting yes.

8:45 The council moved into a work session to discuss the first draft of the Rental Licensing Ordinance and the six month review of the City Administrator.

Bakken-Heck introduced the Rental Licensing Ordinance for council discussion and comment. He stated the provisions for licensing rental property were included in an existing ordinance covering maintenance requirements for multi-family property.

Mayor Dains asked for general comments from the council on the concept of licensing. All council members agreed with the concept and the mayor asked for specific comments on the draft language.

Giannetti asked about the inspection timing and the fee. She wants to make sure the license fee is adequate to cover the cost of administration. Bakken-Heck said that the period of licensing has not been specifically addressed. He stated it could be calendar so that all units come due at the same time, or based on 12 months from the date of issuance thus staggering license expiration. He also said the license fee is not indicated.

Butkowski stated she is gathering information on fees from other cities and will include this in the review. She stated St. Anthony assesses a \$7.00 per unit fee. Staff will check with other cities licensing fees.

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Gill-Gerbig stated the fee needs to be reasonable and provide for covering the costs of administration. She then commented on the process needed to get landlords to improve property if they are not to code and questioned if this type of program could be expanded to include non-rental property in the city. She wondered about making a landlord bring a home up to code before being able to rent it, but not an owner occupied dwelling.

Mayor Dains indicated he would like to hear from a smaller city that has instituted a similar program to find out what they experienced in adopting and implementing such a program.

Resident Marcia Hoffman requested permission to speak on the issue. Ms. Hoffman's main concern centered on the number of unrelated individuals who could reside in a dwelling and she used her neighbors as an example and also stated a provision in the existing City Zoning Ordinance restricting the number of roomers in an R1 zoned area.

The council then discussed the number of calls to a building. Christensen suggested there be a staggered number based on the number of units a building has. He did not feel it equitable that a building with 50 units be held to the same level as a single-family unit used as rental.

Following further discussion, Bakken-Heck summarized his understanding of the areas staff needs to conduct further research. He outlined them as follows:

1. Fee structure for the license.
2. Fine schedule or administrative fee for non-compliance with the ordinance or license provisions.
3. Suggest number of police calls for the building/unit.
4. Acquire information from a small city with licensing provision to get information on their experience.
5. Can the city require landlords to conduct background checks on prospective tenants?
6. What methods can the city use to ensure landlords remove problem tenants?
7. Can the city have a license fee based on the landlords' place of residence (i.e. landlords who reside in Lauderdale have lower fee)?

9:30 Administrator six-month review. Overall, the council felt the Administrator is doing a good job. All stated the Administrator needs to take a bit more time and pay a bit more attention to detail.

There being no further business, the council adjourned at 10:20 p.m. on a motion by Christensen and a second by Gill-Gerbig.