



# ***CITY COUNCIL***

## ***Housing, Economic Development and Strategies Committee***

**Monday, February 4, 2013  
5:00 pm  
City Council Office**

**The Housing, Economic Development and Strategies Committee's responsibilities includes Housing Planning strategies, Building Code/Inspection, Economic Development, Citywide Economic Development Programs, Small Businesses, Business Improvement Districts and Enterprise Zones.**

**Committee Members:** Randy Corcoran (Chair), Marcia Goodman Hinnershitz (Vice-Chair) and Jeffrey Waltman

*Although Council committee meetings are open to the public, public comment is not permitted at Council Committee meetings. However, citizens are encouraged to attend and observe the meetings. Comment from citizens or professionals during the meeting may be solicited on agenda topics via invitation by the Committee Chair.*

*All electronic recording devices must be at the entry door in all meeting rooms and offices, as per Bill No. 27-2012*

### **I. Property Maintenance - R. Natale**

- 1. Review PM Monthly Report and QoL Monthly Report**
- 2. Update Certificate of Transfer - start date July 1**
  - a. Number of illegal units identified during inspections
- 3. Outcomes of MDJ Rulings on Codes Cases**

*Guilty, Not Guilty, Dismissed*
- 4. Update on Amnesty Program**

### **II. Update on Zoning Backlog and Start of Hearings - C. Peiffer**

*Number of letters mailed to properties that will be heard by the hearing master & City Council (See backlog plan attached)*

### **III. CD – L. Agudo**

- 1. Update on Microloan Program Loans (delinquent & current)**
- 2. Update on Implementation of Housing & ED Strategy (March)**
- 3. Status of Implementation of Market Value Analysis**

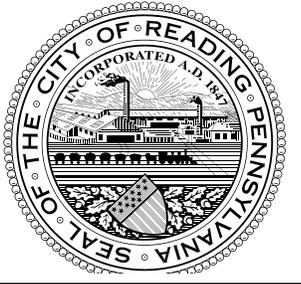
### **IV. Update on Comprehensive Plan (March)**

### **V. Update on Section 8 Vouchers and Voucher Program**

### **VI. Other Matters**

#### **Follow Up Items**

- Plumbing Code Amendment
- Report on disposition of Codes Cases at MDJ Hearings - ongoing
- Request receipt of monthly Codes Report - ongoing
- Review RFPs for Delinquent BPL and other fee/tax collection
- Resolution to fund Micro Loan Enterprise Program - complete
- Housing & Economic Development Strategy update
- End to end review of Housing process - complete
- List of Backlog properties and status
- Update on Comprehensive Plan – JANUARY
- Review of Section 8 Vouchers and Voucher Program - FEBRUARY
- Status on Implementation of MVA – JANUARY
- Update on Housing and QoL Amnesty Program - FEBRUARY



# *CITY COUNCIL*

## ***Housing, Economic Development & Strategies Committee***

### **Meeting Report Monday, January 7, 2013**

**Committee Members Attending:** R. Corcoran, Chair; M. Goodman-Hinnershitz; J. Waltman,

**Others Attending:** L. Kelleher, C. Younger, L. Agudo, C. Jones, C. Broad, B. Rivera

Mr. Corcoran, Chair, called the meeting to order at approximately 5:05 pm.

#### **Update on Main Street Application**

Mr. Agudo distributed several handouts to council members which included a Task Timeline, a power point, and a draft Mission and Vision Statements worksheet. He stated that in the past they had two unsuccessful attempts at obtaining Main Street Designation. There were several organizations that had already-developed plans for downtown such as Downtown 2020 and Ride to Prosperity.

Mr. Agudo explained that the Mayor was unable to attend this meeting due to an impromptu meeting regarding the planning of the Crime Summit that will be taking place later this month. However, he stated that the Mayor had asked to convey his input pertaining to three things that need to take place in order to obtain Main Street Designation:

- The Implementation of a 5-Year Plan
- Hiring a Main Street Manager
- Duplication of Efforts

That being said, Mr. Agudo stated that the Main Street Manager needs to meet certain

credentials and the need to fund a manager's salary for at least five (5) years is crucial. He is optimistic that by January 31<sup>st</sup> he will submit the application with all the requirements necessary.

Mr. Agudo stated that a "Visioning Session" would be taking place on Friday, January 11 and invited all present to attend. The PA Downtown Center is responsible for reviewing the application. Mr. Agudo has asked council to review the handouts, specifically the draft plan, and to provide their input on this process. He hopes to be able to answer any and all questions relating to the process. That being said, on January 22 he will be introducing the 5-Year Plan at the Committee of the Whole, which is a requisite in obtaining Main Street Designation.

### **Task Force**

Mr. Broad indicated that several committees are developed under the Main Street Program and that those committees are already in progress. He stated that the Downtown Improvement District Authority sent him to designated training sessions and said that in the past, the state provided \$50,000 in funding for the Main Street Manager's salary that unfortunately is not being provided anymore.

Mr. Agudo stated that these committees have had meetings and that this Friday will be their 4<sup>th</sup> meeting discussing item by item what is needed to be completed, under DID.

Mr. Broad stated that the Designation would put us in a better position for future grant funding. He explained that usually the Designation happens before putting together the committees under the program; but we have committees already in progress and that puts us at an advantage.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz asked if Ms. Reed is aware of where we are in this process.

Mr. Broad responded that Ms. Reed is aware.

Mr. Corcoran stated that council will also meet as a Committee of the Whole to further discuss this process.

Mr. Broad stated that the original Main Street area was too large and that now there are four areas around downtown that would qualify for the Elm Street Program and they are hoping to proceed with the application for that as well.

Mr. Agudo explained that once we have the application submitted, we can then apply for the various grants which are described in the handout.

Mr. Broad shared that they submitted an Identity Profile Survey (a perception of Downtown Reading) and stated that 650 people took the survey which is the largest response they've had. This is very encouraging as it will help to identify the areas that need improvement.

Mr. Corcoran asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Waltman asked why the Reading Railroad isn't mentioned when talking about Downtown Reading. It seems as though the Railroad "branding" isn't used and he feels it should be implemented somehow. He also mentioned that there is substantial downtown office space available and that this vastness can and should be promoted. He believes that there are huge opportunities to be had but feels that we must get back to "branding".

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz commented that she has worked in the downtown area since 1975 and has seen many changes. She stated that we need to look at all the aspects, including safety concerns, in order to move this process forward.

Mr. Corcoran thanked Mr. Agudo and Mr. Broad on their presentation and all the information that was provided. He looks forward to receiving the proposed 5-Year Plan.

Mr. Agudo stated that he met with several division managers while on retreat to RACC. In that, they have been working to consolidate a report with highlights, much like a board packet to make it easier for council to review.

Mr. Waltman agreed that a report with detailed highlights would make it much easier to review.

#### **Update on Microloan Program Loans**

Mr. Agudo stated that all loans are current and that there are no delinquencies at the moment.

#### **Update on Land Bank Legislation**

Ms. Kelleher stated that she has put together a draft with PFM.

Mr. Agudo stated that there is hope to have an internal goal by March 1 as there are many moving components. He has asked Mr. Kromer to create a document based on what we have been doing and outlining what still needs to be done.

### **Update on Implementation of Market Value Analysis**

Mr. Agudo stated that this is still a work in progress and he will continue working with the Managing Director to move this forward.

### **Update on Comprehensive Plan**

Mr. Agudo stated that he is moving forward on this together with the Managing Director

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz commented that she felt the structure seems more proactive in the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Agudo stated that the plan requires substantial community input and a very good RFP. We need to ask the right questions in order to obtain the information that is vitally needed.

Mr. Waltman agreed with Mr. Agudo in that a good RFP is crucial as execution is our biggest shortcoming.

Ms. Kelleher stated that the first Comprehensive Housing plan was implemented in 1748 and was used for 150 years. The Plan for Hampden Heights was created to address overcrowding and density. She stated that two things are necessary in the implementation of a Comprehensive Plan: Capital Program and CDBG.

Ms. Kelleher asked Mr. Agudo regarding an update on the Housing Amnesty.

### **Update on Housing Amnesty**

Mr. Agudo stated that it is in progress but cannot provide an updated form at this time. He will work toward getting that completed for council to review.

Mr. Corcoran asked if there were any questions or comments and there were none. He adjourned the meeting at approximately 6:10pm.

*Respectfully submitted by Bea Rivera, Legislative Aide*

## **FOLLOW UP ISSUES**

- Plumbing Code Amendment
- Report on disposition of Codes Cases at MDJ Hearings – ongoing
- Request receipt of monthly Codes Report – ongoing
- Review RFPs for Delinquent BPL and other fee/tax collection
- Resolution to fund Micro Loan Enterprise Program – complete
- Housing and Economic Development Strategy update
- End to end review of Housing process – January
- List of Backlog properties and status

## Suggested break-out of Backlog Hearings

1. **Independent hearing officer** - hearings for properties in the low density residential zones with 1, 2, 3 and 4 units – approximately 571 Hearings (*hearings for properties in R1 and R2 will be referred to Council's conditional use hearings*)
2. **One or two members of Council** (splitting the hearings) hearings for properties with 5 and 6 units – approximately 66 Hearings or 33 per Councilor
3. **Full Council** – hearings for properties with 7 units (including rooms) and above and all properties in R1 and R2 low density zones– approximately 50 Hearings

### Conditions to Qualify for Zoning Administrator Approval Without a Conditional Use Hearing

#### **§11-104. Application for ~~Registration and Issuance of~~ a Rental Housing Permit.**

2. *Special provisions for properties with a valid "Housing Permit" issued prior to December 31, 2007 but lacking valid zoning permits for Multiple Dwelling or Rooming House use.*
  - A. *Any property previously registered with the City of Reading Property Maintenance Division and holding a valid "Housing Permit" issued by the Reading Property Maintenance Division prior to December 31, 2007 and has remained current shall be required to apply to the Zoning Administrator for a zoning permit prior to submitting an Application for a Rental Housing Permit. The Zoning Administrator shall make an initial determination as to whether the subject property is located within a zoning district where multi-family rental use is legally permitted as an allowed use or a use previously approved as a Conditional Use pursuant to subsection D of §27-1203 of the Zoning Ordinance, as amended.*
    - (i) *If the Zoning Administrator determines that the subject property is located within a zoning district where multi-family rental use is legally permitted in accordance with the foregoing provisions in Subsection A it will be granted a zoning permit as a legally permitted use under the applicable zoning, subject to subsection B hereunder, and it will be required to comply with all of the provisions of this Chapter and any other applicable chapters as verified upon inspection by the Property Maintenance Division.*

- (ii) If the subject property had a valid Housing Permit as of December 31, 2007 but is determined to be located within a zoning district where multi-family rental use is not legally permitted in accordance with the foregoing provisions in Subsection A it will be granted a zoning permit as a prior "non-conforming use" by the Zoning Administrator within the meaning of subsection B of §27-607 of the Zoning Ordinance and remain eligible for a Rental Housing Permit provided it conforms to the remaining requirements of the City of Reading Codes and Codified Ordinances.*
- B. The Zoning Administrator shall make a secondary determination as to whether the number of dwelling units present exceeds the number of units previously recorded for the premises in City records. A Rental Housing Permit will be denied until the property is modified to comply with the number of units previously recorded.*
- C. A zoning permit issued by the Zoning Administrator in accordance with Sections A and B hereinabove shall satisfy the requirements of §11-104 1.G. and the issuance of a Rental Housing Permit shall be subject to compliance with the remaining provisions of §11-104 1.*