



CITY COUNCIL

Housing, Economic Development and Strategies Committee

Monday, March 4, 2013

5:30 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 & D. Kersley

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

V. Update on Section 8 Vouchers and Voucher Program

From the RHA:

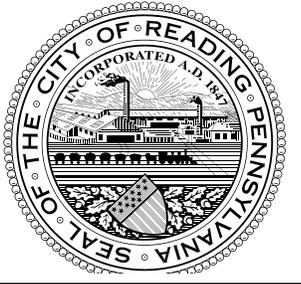
- **There are 499 RHA Vouchers under lease (privately owned rentals) in the City of Reading**
- **There are 202 Portable Vouchers from other jurisdictions administered in Reading by RHA**
- **Therefore there are a total of 701 active Section 8 Vouchers in the City of Reading.**

VI. Other Matters

Committee of the Whole – Trash and Recycling Billing

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**



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Housing, Economic Development & Strategies Committee

Meeting Report Monday, February 4, 2013

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

Others Attending: L. Kelleher, R. Natale, C. Peiffer, B. Rivera

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

I.- UPDATE ON PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

- **QoL Report**

Mr. Natale distributed handouts stating that he received the QoL Report from Mr. Kersley for council to review. He also distributed a PMI Metrics Summary sheet for council to look over.

Mr. Corcoran asked if there were any questions or comments on either the QoL Report or the Metrics summary. None were posed.

- **Certificate of Transfer**

Mr. Natale stated that they had 63 inspections last month with one pending application.

Mr. Waltman stated that although he's not so focused on numbers, he understands their importance in these matters. He stated that he just really wants to know how Mr. Natale thinks matters are moving along.

Mr. Natale stated that he feels everything is going well at this point. He pointed out that there are two open positions and that he would prefer to transfer one of the positions from inspector to clerk. He will be bringing council an ordinance to request this transfer of positions. He is confident that the department will be able to meet their target with less people.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz asked if they get calls from Children and Youth (CYS).

Mr. Natale responded that PMD calls them more than CYS calls PMD.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz asked if Mr. Natale would be interested in a training session on hoarding.

Mr. Natale responded that they have actually had training on hoarding as it is becoming more prevalent than it had been and he brought up the example of the animal hoarding case that was in the newspaper recently.

Mr. Waltman stated that he likes being given these summary report handouts and thinks it is helpful for council to see them.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz agreed with Mr. Waltman on that point.

Mr. Corcoran asked if there were other questions before moving on to the MDJ Rulings and none were asked.

- **MDJ Rulings**

Mr. Natale pointed out that there were eleven (11) guilty; six (6) not guilty; and one (1) dismissed last month.

Mr. Corcoran asked if there were any questions and none were posed.

- **Update on Housing Amnesty Program**

Mr. Natale stated that the program generated approximately \$404,000.

Mr. Corcoran asked if out of that \$404,000 only about \$100,000 has been collected. Mr. Natale responded affirmatively, adding that the difference is being collected through payment plans.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz commended our processes in the Amnesty Program and stated that we could certainly be an example in the way these processes have been working in the city's favor. She reiterated by stating that this process really shines and would be a positive example for others.

Mr. Natale agreed with Ms Goodman-Hinnershitz and stated he would speak with Mr. Kersley regarding this. He also mentioned that this would be a great story for the newspaper.

Mr. Corcoran asked what the deadline is for the Amnesty Program.

Mr. Natale responded that the deadline is February 15.

Mr. Acosta stated that he is concerned with people knowing the process and taking advantage of this program. Are people being made aware of what they need to do to fully take advantage of the Amnesty Program?

Mr. Natale responded that the Property Maintenance department has been very proactive in terms of awareness and he feels confident that people are being given the information that is needed. Letters were mailed to all having delinquent housing related fees.

Mr. Corcoran thanked Mr. Natale for a very good report and asked if there were any questions in order to move on to the Zoning Update. None were posed.

II. UPDATE ON ZONING BACKLOG

Mr. Peiffer stated that they Zoning has an intern from Berks Technical Institute and she may be making rounds to different departments in case anyone wonders who the new face is. He stated that the Backlog number is close to 2,700 and of those, 2,000 can be administratively approved. A hundred of those have already been started and cleared and will be going toward council.

Mr. Waltman stated that he is a little confused about the number on the backlog. He feels that the 2000 figure is a little high.

Ms. Kelleher mentioned that Mr. Kersley stated that number to be 1,500.

Mr. Waltman asked how many of those properties didn't qualify and placed on "fast track" and if they were single-family units.

Mr. Peiffer responded that if they are single-family units, they would be approved administratively.

Ms. Kelleher stated that the conditions to qualify are attached to the agenda and began to read portions of it for council.

Mr. Acosta stated that the question should really be how this number went from 1,500 to 2,700.

Mr. Peiffer responded that 2,400 was the original number. The number Mr. Kersley gave was inaccurate so those numbers were then discarded.

Mr. Waltman stated that 60% to 70% were expected to be approved but he feels uneasy about the difference in these numbers and would have liked for Mr. Kersley to be present as he may be able to explain this difference.

Mr. Peiffer stated that he continues to work closely with Mr. Kersley and that everything can be validated; however, Mr. Kersley would be the person to explain these differences in numbers as he is the person who determined they were inaccurate.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz asked who monitors the data entry and Mr. Peiffer responded that he actually does that himself.

Mr. Acosta asked how many people have access to that input.

Mr. Peiffer responded that anyone in CD has access. He stated that the format being used to digest 680 parcels is working and they are currently preparing letters for property owners.

Mr. Corcoran asked if there were any questions for Mr. Peiffer and none were asked. He proceeded to mention the Market Value Analysis.

Mr. Waltman stated that he is somewhat confused about what MVA means to us. There was some discussion regarding how this came about and how the presentation given on MVA explained its importance.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested that we ask Mr. Janssen, who gave the presentation on MVA, to come back and show us what the “practicality” of an MVA is to us as a city.

At this time, certain issues in the Open Government Committee surfaced requiring all of council members present to shift their attention to those issues. Housing Committee adjourned at approximately 6:05pm.

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 – complete
- List of Backlog properties and status - MARCH
- Update on Comprehensive Plan – MARCH
- Review of Section 8 Vouchers and Vouch Program – MARCH
- Status of Implementation of MVA – MARCH
- Update on Housing and QoL Amnesty Program - MARCH

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.*