



COMMITTEE of the WHOLE

CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES
June 2, 2008
5:00 P.M.
Council Office

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

V. Spencer, S. Marmarou, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, D. Sterner, M. Baez, J. Waltman

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

D. Cituk, M. Reese, R. Hottenstein, M. Mayfield, L. Kelleher, S. Katzenmoyer, M. Vind, W. Heim, L. Lee, J. Khokhar, B. Reinhart

Vaughn Spencer, President of Council, called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

I. Parking Authority

Mr. Spencer reviewed the issue regarding booting. Mr. Lee noted that he has discussed the issue regarding abandoned vehicles with Chief Heim. He noted that Vince's Towing has an issue with K & J Towing.

Mr. Spencer questioned if, after reaching the maximum on open tickets, a vehicle would be booted. Mr. Lee noted that it would be. It is his hope that lowering the number of open tickets from ten to five will help to curb poor parking behavior. This would remove additional vehicles and would assist in the overall parking situation throughout the City.

Mr. Spencer questioned if K & J Towing was a State licensed salver. Mr. Lee noted that K & J Towing is currently not a State licensed salver. However, he noted that K & J Towing is forming a new partnership and with a State licensed salver.

Mr. Spencer noted that the owner of Vince's Towing, Vince Gagliardo, attended the last meeting. He questioned why the Parking Authority began using K & J Towing and could not cooperate with Vince's Towing. Mr. Lee noted the Parking Authority solicitor's opinion that they could contract with their own towing company and did not have to use the company contracted through the City. He noted that several

Parking Authority boots were damaged and stolen due to lack of timely service by Vince's Towing. He noted that the Parking Authority cannot afford this type of service. He noted that the Parking Authority has been using K & J Towing since January 2006 with excellent response and service.

Mr. Waltman noted that Council must explore the legal issues of the City's contract before amending this ordinance.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if the union issues had been resolved. Chief Heim noted that they had not. Mr. Lee noted that he has met with Chief Heim and this is a joint recommendation. This is the simplest route to separate the two procedures. He noted that the Parking Authority and the Police Department working together will get more abandoned cars off the City streets.

Mr. Spencer questioned when a legal opinion would be available. Ms. Mayfield noted that she would have the opinion prepared for Monday.

II. Housing Permit Update

Mr. Hottenstein noted that six temporary workers were hired in codes and zoning to expedite the process.

2,941 applications were processed
1,836 letter were sent requesting additional information
4,777 applications were received

Mr. Khokhar noted that applications have gone through a phased process. He noted that the Codes processing is complete. To date 1,400 properties have been approved by the Zoning Hearing Officer.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the memo generated listing properties without housing permits and/or business licenses. She questioned if these memos will be used to enforce illegal properties. Mr. Hottenstein noted that they will be used. Mr. Khokhar noted that Codes will be prepared to enter the next phase (enforcement) by the end of July.

Mr. Spencer questioned how long the temporary employees will be retained. Mr. Hottenstein noted that three have already been let go.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned how Codes would be systematically addressing finding those without permits and/or licenses. Mr. Waltman noted the need for a committee to begin discussing this issue.

Ms. Kelleher questioned if Codes is verifying the information supplied by the property owner and the number of properties owned through the Berks County parcel search. Mr. Reinhart noted that they are not. He noted that they will begin this process as part of the enforcement phase.

Mr. Marmarou again noted the memos generated by Council staff. He questioned why these monies were not being pursued, yet tax increases and job cuts were being

considered. Mr. Hottenstein noted that he understands Council's concerns. He will be checking the memos to get some numbers tallied. He reiterated that enforcement will begin in July.

Mr. Waltman reminded all of the time taken to establish the process for the housing permit applications. He noted that it is now time to begin discussing the next phase. He noted the need to be methodic and consistent. Mr. Khokhar noted his enthusiasm about beginning the enforcement stage. He welcomed guidelines from Council. Mr. Waltman commended Codes for accomplishing this huge undertaking.

Mr. Sterner noted his support to meet and discuss the next steps. He noted the need to locate those landlords operating outside the housing permit process. He also noted his hope that these monies will be pursued.

Mr. Spencer requested that additional questions and comments be submitted to Ms. Kelleher.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

By: _____
Linda A. Kelleher, City Clerk