

CITY MANAGER REPORT

MAY 10, 2007

FOR CITY COMMISSION MEETING MAY 14, 2007

1. **WORKSHOP ON SANITATION – MONDAY, MAY 14 – 4:30 P.M.**

The issue is whether the City should pursue unified sanitation service in annexed areas or continue with a bifurcated system of collection by the City and the County.

2. **SPOONER DRIVE**

Construction of Spooner Drive is scheduled to start next week. The project should take not more than 30 days to complete. The neighbors have asked that the speed limit be 15 miles per hour. The lowest the City can go is 20 miles per hour following a traffic study. The best time to conduct the traffic study would be following completion of construction of the roadway which we will do.

3. **FIRE LINE CHARGES**

Commissioners have questions concerning the City's policy concerning this. I have assigned the matter to Martin Wisgerhof who has reviewed the consulting engineer's recommendations and is conducting a survey in other communities. He has not had sufficient time to complete this work plus the preliminary budget work I have requested him to do. I consider the latter a greater priority.

I want to have enough preliminary budget work by the end of the month so that we may inform you as to what we think the potential budgeting impacts of tax reform will be. This will provide important information to convey to our legislators so that they may be aware of the impacts of roll-backs in the event funds are not off-set by another source.

We will plan to finish the fire line charge report for inclusion in the City Manager Report for the meeting on May 29.

4. **PENDING RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS**

Enclosed is a report from the Planning Department which shows 3,524.5 acres have been annexed with the number of residential units proposed at 8,811.

5. **BING ROOMING HOUSE**

Heart Construction of St. Petersburg, Florida has completed most of the work contained in their contract including demolition and removal of deteriorated front porch, posts, second floor deck, steps, and first floor flooring; replacement of

studs in exterior and load-bearing interior walls, installation of a new concrete foundation; first phase of plumbing rough-in; repair and replacement of floor beams, floor joists, and sub-floor; replacement of second floor decking, posts and stairwells; repair and selective replacement of exterior lap siding; replacement of windows and exterior doors; roof framing and decking repairs; installation of roof covering; and painting of the exterior (90% completed).

Work still to be done includes installation of locks on doors, installation of screen doors, installation of screens on windows, leveling of the area around the building, and cleanup. It is anticipated that the remaining work will be completed by May 30th. **However, it is anticipated that the contracted work will be completed for approximately \$30,000.00 less than the \$341,220.00 contract price.** Staff will be contacting state historic preservation staff for authorization to use that balance to do the electrical and mechanical rough-ins and complete the plumbing rough-in.

Amounts which have been expended to-date include:

Stephanie Ferrell	\$ 30,684.77
Architectural/Engineering - \$23,807.77	
Grant preparation - \$ 6,877.00	
Heart Construction, LLC	\$ 267,521.06
Administrative	\$ 5,087.72
Legal Advertisements - \$2,389.44	
Travel (re: State Grants) - \$1,543.28	
Surveys - \$ 725.00	
Sign - \$ 430.00	
Total	\$303,293.55

The Improvement League has been award a grant in the amount of \$42,300 under the State Historic Preservation Acquisition and Development Grant Program to complete renovations of the building's interior. Revenues generated from the Improvement League's funding raising efforts are being used for the local match.

6. FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY HOUSING--REGULATORY TOOL BOX

The Florida League of Cities Institute for Community Housing hosted the fifth of a series of seminars designed to put affordable housing tools and resources in the hands of city governments. This seminar, entitled "Regulatory Tool Box" was held at the Buena Vista Palace Hotel and Spa in Lake Buena Vista on Friday, March 16th. This seminar examined the impact of governmental regulations on the cost and delivery of affordable housing. Gladys Schneider, Technical Advisor, Florida Housing Coalition was the workshop presenter.

There is direct linkage between the housing supply and the economic life of a community. “The housing supply determines to a certain extent what goes on with the economic life of the city; and the economic life of the city is intimately related to the demand for housing. And you can’t possibly understand that if you’re going to try and treat them as being separate.” (Edward L. Glaeser, PhD., Harvard University). A city grows fast but declines slowly. A shortage of housing ultimately affects the economic life of a community causing it to decline. An artificial shortage is being created by the current median sales price of a home, which is much more than the cost to produce it.

During the past four years, housing supply and income levels have not been moving in unison. Housing costs, both rental and ownership, have increased dramatically by 80%, while median income only went up 1.4%. As a result, many in the workforce can no longer afford housing in communities in which they work. Housing costs exceed 50% of income for over 25% of the population. In accordance with the state’s definition for affordable housing, it is desirable that no more than 30% of income be paid for housing costs.

Factors making housing unattainable for so many in the workforce include cost of land, cost of construction, cost of permitting, and cost of regulatory barriers. There is no shortage of land; there is a shortage of zoning. Originally, zoning separated incompatible uses. Today, zoning functions to exclude uses and segregate society by income.

Complying with regulations has direct and indirect impacts. Direct impacts include governmental fees, consultant fees, and costs for applications and submittals. Indirect impacts include time, frustration, and lost opportunities. It is estimated that regulatory barriers increase the cost of housing by 30%. Included in the regulatory processes are land use and zoning, subdivision regulations, infrastructure, environmental, building code, hearings and approvals, and multiple agency approvals. These administrative procedures have a direct cost, ranging from \$100 for a clearing permit to over \$5,000 for rezoning, comprehensive plan amendments, or development orders, as well as indirect costs associated with the time required to complete the procedure and obtain the permit. In the development of affordable housing, “time is money.” Also impacting housing affordability are impact fees for roads, parks, fire and police protection, emergency services, libraries, and public infrastructure.

An often overlooked cost of housing for the consumer is the cost of transportation. The true cost owning a vehicle often exceeds \$5,000 per year for financing, insurance, taxes and fees, fuel, maintenance, repairs, and depreciation for a modest used car. The costs for parking and commuting should also be factored into housing costs. “Free parking” isn’t truly free. It results in wasted land, increased automobile usage, and increased development costs. Commuting is measured in terms of travel expenses and time expenses. Fannie Mae estimates

that commuting increases housing costs to 45% of income for many families. Suggested ways to curb the cost of parking at include:

- Revise minimum standards with a lower number of required spaces
- Provide options to unbundle the cost for parking from the housing costs
- Provide incentives for mass transit
- Allow for shared parking among developments

A study commissioned by Lee County in 2002 concluded that the unmet need for affordable housing was costing the citizenry over \$249 million annually in lost economic opportunity, transportation infrastructure, and direct and indirect social costs related to education and health care. It is anticipated that this lost will grow proportionally with the unmet housing need. These costs include:

- \$158.8 million in lost jobs and wages as result of workers inability to secure affordable housing
- \$78.6 million in lost economic opportunity for goods and services as a result of families having to spend too much for housing
- \$3.3 million in lost property tax revenue that would have been generated by development of the needed housing
- \$3.2 million for the development and maintenance of transportation infrastructure required by workers who had to travel great distances to get to work
- \$5.4 million for education and health care indicators--such as need for supplemental academic instruction, absenteeism, teen pregnancy, and asthma.

Suggested strategies of overcoming regulatory barriers to affordable housing encompass examining and modifying land use and zoning regulation, streamlining policies and procedures, providing for mass transit and transportation, and developing incentive programs.

In reviewing the comprehensive plan and land development regulations, the housing element should be used to strengthen the case for affordable housing. Simultaneously, density incentives should be provided in the future land use element. An ombudsman or gatekeeper should be identified to shepherd affordable housing projects through the development process. Administrative relief, such as fewer public hearings, expedited administrative review and permitting, support for partnerships, coordination between housing providers and developers, and payment or exemption of impact fees, should be instituted for affordable housing. Additionally, incentives should be provided for mixed-use developments. Revisions should be made to parking provisions to reduce development costs.

Provisions for mass transit and transportation should include financing for needed capital improvements, development of designated bike paths, and encouragement and support for the traditional neighborhood design. Concurrency requirements

for transportation should be waived when the housing development is in close proximity to employment centers.

The carrot and stick approach should be effectively utilized in structuring an incentive program. Incentives should be customized rather than use a one size fits all formula. Effective rewards include:

- density bonus allowing the developer to exceed specified density limitations if the project provides housing units with income and cost restrictions such as 80% of area median income and/or price;
- transfer of development rights from one site with excess capacity to another site that is lacking capacity;
- modification of site standards to allow flexible or zero lot lines, reduction of flexibility in setback requirements, reduction of up to 50% of the required open space, reduction in onsite parking requirements, and allowance for mixed uses;
- financial incentives such as direct subsidy, donation of land, wavier or exemption of impact and developmental fees (in HB 1375), and tax increment financing support if site is within CRA

The stick approach includes the adoption of an inclusionary land use ordinance that mandates that affordable housing be included as part of any market-rate development. Likewise, non-residential developments may be charged a linkage fee based upon the demand for affordable housing created by the development. For example, a major hotel development creates a demand for 100 affordable housing units. A set fee, such as \$100 per unit of demand, would be charged the developer. In this case, the fee would be \$10,000 (\$100 x 100). This fee would be placed in an affordable housing trust account to support the development of affordable housing. Prior to implementation of either measure, a thorough research of market conditions is essential to ensure that they are not counterproductive to the development of affordable housing.

A vibrant, sustainable community needs all kinds of people, and that means making room for different types of housing in various price ranges. Research has shown that, at all levels of government, regulatory reform is an efficient method that may be utilized to encourage housing development at an affordable price where it is needed. Yet, this reform must be properly tempered so that any new development will not result in negative impacts such as decreased property values, higher crime rates, greater congestion, and increased taxes to pay for the growth in the community.

7. EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

Kim Polo – the City received a complimentary letter outlining Kim’s helpfulness, knowledge, kindness and courtesy with their first permit process. The letter writer stated this level of professional customer care has made their visit to Plant City a memorable one.

Frank Coughenour and Patrick Murphy - have received a Certificate of Training for successfully completing the 24 Hour Incident Management/Unified Command (ICS-300 Equivalent and Compliant) presented by the Texas Engineering Extension Service and the Department of Homeland Security.

Tanya Turner - has received a certificate for the completion of a self-study course from Michigan State University, Supervisory Management in Water/Wastewater Field. This is a required training course for qualifying to sit for the Class “A” Water and Wastewater Operation exams.

Wayne Abercrombie - has received his Class “C” Wastewater Collection Technician certification from the Water & Pollution Control Operators Association.

William Russell - has received his Class “C” Wastewater Collection Technician certification from the Water & Pollution Control Operators Association.

Billie Garcia - has received a certificate from California State University, Sacramento for completion of a program in Water Distribution System Operation and Maintenance.

Jon Stroud - Foreman II, has received recognition for the month of March, 2007, for his performance, attendance, and outstanding productivity and dedicated services.

Dustin Cannoy, James S. Longoria, Debbie McMurtry, Charles Nichols and Zoe’ Anglin - These Plant Operators at the Utilities Operations received a Certificate of Achievement of Completion of the NIMS training classes IS-0010.PW and IS-00700.

Patricia Hendricks – of the Utilities Operations Division has met all requirements for certification as a FDEP Class ‘C’ wastewater operator and has been promoted from a Plant Operator I to Plant Operator II.

Bobby Wilmer - Plant Operator IV, Utilities Operations Division, has met all requirements for certification as a FDEP Class ‘B’ wastewater operator.

Kelvin Fulger - Plant Operator IV, Utilities Operations Division, has met all requirements for certification as a FDEP Class ‘A’ water operator.

Frank Swartwood - has received a certificate for the training class Water Treatment Class 'C' from the University of Florida. This is a preparatory course to qualify for taking the Class 'C' water operators exam.

Shawn Longoria - has received a certificate for the training class Operation of Wastewater Treatment Plants Volume I and II from California State University, Sacramento. These are preparatory courses to qualify for taking the Class 'C' wastewater operators exam.

Elizabeth (Eli) Matthew - Plant Operator III, Utilities Operations Division, has passed the FDEP Class 'B' water operator examination. She is projected to have the required hours for certification as a Class 'B' water operator accrued in July 2007. In November 2004 she passed the FDEP Class 'C' Wastewater exam with the highest score in the state (92%). On February 23rd of this year she passed the FDEP Class 'B' Water exam with a 93% - - the highest score in the state.