

Approved: 10/14/08

**FERGUSON CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, October 7, 2008 - 6:00 P.M.
CITY HALL
110 Church Street**



A work session meeting of the Ferguson City Council was called to order at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday October 7, 2008 by Mayor Brian P. Fletcher, in the City Hall Council Chamber, 110 Church Street, Ferguson, Missouri. The following Council Members were present:

Mayor Brian P. Fletcher
Kynan Crecelius (arrived at 6:10 p.m.)
Michael Salant
James W. Knowles III (left at 8:10 p.m.)
Dwayne James
Peggy Faul
Fran Grecco

Also present were:

John Shaw - City Manager
Sam Anselm – Assistant to the City Manager
Debbie Matthies – City Clerk
Jeffrey Blume – Finance Director
Terry O’Neil – Public Works Director
Thomas Moonier – Public Safety Director
Steve Rosenthal – Assistant Fire Chief
Stan Kreitler – Recreation Superintendent
Rosalind Williams – Planning Director
Sonya Brooks – Human Resources

PRESENTATION ON PROPOSITION H (NOVEMBER 2008 BALLOT)

City Manager, John Shaw explained that Council consensus was to have Proposition H removed from this Work Session agenda and be added to the October 14, 2008 Council Meeting under Special Presentations.

PRESENTATION ON NEW MARKETING/PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

Assistant to the City Manager, Sam Anselm presented Council packets of some of the new marketing and promotional materials that staff developed, and are being developed by Administration and Planning. The main purpose was to provide Council with examples of what Staff is working on in terms of the City’s commercial corridors and business promotions.

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EMPLOYEE SURVEY INITIATIVES UPDATE

Mr. Shaw informed Council that from time to time, the different Departments have developed various strategies to address the concerns brought out through the Employee survey with the major resulting project in the rewrite of the Personnel Manual.

Human Resource Specialist, Sonya Brooks briefed Council on the progression of some of the employee initiatives and the status of the Personnel Manual project. The employees had concerns with communication and employee-based initiatives. The following initiatives have been or will be implemented:

Communications

The survey showed that employees would like to hear more from the City Manager/Administration. City Manager, John Shaw has made an effort to update employees regarding the employee survey, budget and has established a safety committee. Mr. Shaw now has a City Manager update in the Employee Newsletter.

Department Directors

The survey showed employees would like more communication updates from their Departments. Directors have now implemented Departmental Staff Meetings, update employees on relevant information from the weekly City Manager Staff Meetings, Public Works and Parks & Recreation Departments meet and review ongoing projects, Fire Department has implemented a Department Safety Committee, Police Department an Employee Advisory Committee and user groups were established regarding Information Technology (IT) and Public Relations (PR). All communication efforts are relayed to the employees through their departments.

Ms. Brooks further explained some of the employee-based initiatives which included the revision of the *Personnel Rules & Regulations Manual* – Staff will have a draft of the Manual by November 1, 2008, *Email Address availability* – Staff is evaluating options and distribution, *Retirement Seminar* – the City’s ICMA-RC Representative will meet with employees, *Health and Wellness Program* – Staff will have Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Seminars to educate and inform employees, *Employee Events/Activities* – Staff has encouraged employee participation with employee picnics, United Way Chili Cook offs, Holiday luncheons and kickball and softball leagues.

PARK SIGNAGE

Mr. Shaw explained that Park Signage was a topic that originated during the Strategic Planning meetings, with standardizing the signage of our different City facilities and Parks. The major reason for discussion at this time is for the two projects, Dade and the Dog Park., budgeted for this year. The remaining parks to be in next year’s budget. Council discussed the types of signage, and pricing. The possibility of building the directional signs in-house was also discussed and Staff will report to Council.

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Council agreed to the following PARK SIGNAGE:

Square sign with the *Community of Choice* Logo and “rules” sign, as presented.

What directional signs Staff can build in-house and Staff will report to Council.

Signs for the two parks project, Dade and the Dog Park, are in the current budget.

Budget for the remaining park signs for next year.

DADE STRATEGY DISCUSSION

Mr. Shaw explained the Dade strategy began with Council Member Dwayne James asking about a discussion on this area of Ferguson specifically, in a “Take Back Our Streets” initiative to address resident concerns with the area. Council Member James noted that he wanted to learn more about what Staff is doing in this section of town, and asked how the City Council and the residents could help in addressing major concerns.

Mr. Shaw further explained this part of town is going to be an important piece once NorthPark begins to acquire businesses, and would want it to compliment what the business park is going to do for the City.

Mr. Shaw commented that this area is something that Staff has spoken to in detail, on a number of different issues. As Council is aware, some major improvements have occurred in this area over the last few years. Staff knows there are some other “problem areas” in town, and saw this as an opportunity to focus on a specific area and to devote Staff time in attempting to address some of the larger issues. Mr. Shaw feels that this will then work as a learning tool when other “problem areas” are discussed in the future.

Mr. Shaw also recognizes that the City’s success is going to depend upon cooperation with neighboring municipalities and he has contacted both Kinloch and Berkeley on this area, as it is shared by the three municipalities. Mr. Shaw will then talk with the municipalities about the goals and strategies, and how the municipalities can work together. Both communities have already expressed an interest with a combined approach to shared problems in this area, and are looking forward to meeting.

Department Heads updated Council on what their Departments are doing in this area, as well as some of their newer ideas for initiatives. Mr. Shaw would like to achieve what the Council’s goal is going to be for the area, in both short-term and long-term. leading directly into the next topic of landbanking, as that may be one of the strategies employed to address the concerns.

Police Department Chief, Tom Moonier, discussed:

- Plaza Heights.
- Visitation Issue – residents from other municipalities compound the problems.
- Cut the beat plan down last year, to more focus on the area.
- Plan of the use of a Police Representative in that sector.

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Public Works Director, Terry O'Neil, discussed:

- Already have sectoring in place.
- Code Enforcement will work closely with the Police Department.
- Inspection Sweeps.
- Responsible Landlord Program.
- Administrative Search Warrants.
- Dangerous Structures.
- Maintenance Crews.
- Park Improvements.
- Suburban Reconstruction Project completed and Street Lighting to come soon.

Planning and Development Director, Rosalind Williams discussed:

- Have performed a limited amount of Landbanking.
- We know the Foreclosures.
- Weak Market Area.
- Who Owns the Properties.
- Neighborhood Plan – what they have said.
- Explain County Initiative on Foreclosures.

It was also discussed that Council can help to inform residents about the strategy and work of the departments by updating residents at neighborhood meetings by discussing what departments are doing and educating residents by spreading a positive word.

Council discussed responsible landlord procedures and the possibility of interior inspections and agreed that further discussion on occupancy permits and interior inspections was needed at a future Work Session.

Council agreed to the following DADE STRATEGIES:

To endorse Staff approach and to assist when possible.

Agreed with Staff that the four areas targeted for landbanking should be Dade/Plaza Heights, Downtown, Suburban/Maline Creek and Forestwood.

Agreed that landbanking should take place beginning around Dade Park as homes come up for tax sale, but not aggressively (or when simply up for sale).

Agreed that any assistance from County for foreclosures (Federal money for acquisitions/demolitions/renovations) would be focused on efforts in this area.

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LANDBANKING STRATEGY DISCUSSION.

Plaza Heights landbanking was discussed and Council now needs to think about the whole City, and come up with a strategy to determine what other areas Council wants Staff to focus on regarding the amount of money for property acquisition, demolition, and what funds to set aside. Mr. Shaw feels areas that are eligible for the Downtown TIF should be used from the Downtown TIF Fund.

Planning Director, Rosalind Williams reviewed the specific properties that the City holds and what Staff recommends be done with the properties at this time. Ms. Williams informed Council of the analysis of recently sold homes, constant turnover and developing data to systemically change the environment.

Council agreed to the following LANDBANKING STRATEGIES:

Four areas defined by Staff that were most important were, Plaza Heights, Downtown, Suburban/Maline Creek and Forestwood.

Staff to aggressively pursue Florissant Road properties and advise Council of any form of sale.

Pursue Plaza Heights area as discussed.

Begin to pursue other areas such as Forestwood and Robert Superior with different concentrated efforts similar to Plaza Heights.

COMMUNITY CENTER DISCUSSION.

Council consensus was to continue the Community Center Discussion to a future Work Session.

There being no further business to consider, Council Member Grecco, seconded by Council Member Faul moved to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

ATTEST:

Brian P. Fletcher - Mayor
City of Ferguson, Missouri

Deborah L. Matthies – City Clerk
City of Ferguson, Missouri