

**MINUTES
CITY OF GAINESVILLE
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
200 South Rusk
Gainesville, Texas 76240
June 20, 2017**

The City Council of the City of Gainesville, Texas met in regular session on June 20, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. with the following persons in attendance.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Jim Goldsworthy, Keith Clegg, Carolyn Hendricks, Ken Keeler, Steve Gordon, Mary Jo Dollar

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tommy Moore

STAFF PRESENT: Barry Sullivan, City Manager; Bill Harris, City Attorney; Caitlyn Huddleston, City Secretary; Kevin Phillips, Chief of Police; Dan Parker, Finance Director

OTHERS PRESENT: Rudy Paschal

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Jim Goldsworthy called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

DISCUSSION ON RENTAL INSPECTIONS

City Manager Barry Sullivan began the discussion by announcing that prior to his arrival as City Manager in Gainesville, City Staff considered enforcing rental inspections, but decided not to. He noted that 70 substandard structures had already been demolished this year. Because of the large number of structures demolished as part of the program, it has become harder and harder to find structures to bring down as many have residents living in them. Research was conducted to find out how other cities treat rental residential properties. Sullivan prompted council to answer, "What do you want us to inspect?"

Councilmembers discussed what is currently inspected and by whom, either Gainesville Fire Department or the third-party inspection services the city contracts, and how long the proposed rental inspections would be in effect for, i.e. change of occupancy, every three years, etc. Councilmember Gordon noted that he attended the discussions years ago and suggested there may be some pushback from landlords in town. Mayor Goldsworthy clarified that the intent is not to make it hard for landlords, but to provide livable and reasonable standards for our renting residents. Mayor Pro Tem Keith Clegg serves on the Gainesville Housing Authority Board and noted that the Authority currently requires inspections on the properties that are part of their voucher program and does not see an issue in asking everyone else to do the same. He suggested the inspection be required with occupancy change.

City Manager Sullivan then asked the group to define which properties would require the inspection. The response was all, including duplexes. After more discussion, Sullivan advised that a database would need to be created based on registration by landlords.

The group also discussed how the inspections would be funded. It was proposed that landlords pass the fee on to their renters, but there was some concern with tenants not wanting to pay that additional fee. Mayor Goldsworthy summarized that the goal of the inspections is to eliminate

homes that are unfit, and hopes that when the new Liberty Apartments are open and leasing to renters, tenants in some of the rented properties will move to the apartments, then their previous homes would be available for other renters, and the standard of rental housing available will naturally improve.

The group further discussed landlords that have multiple properties and the impact to them, as well as the process to bring substandard structures “up to code.”

DISCUSSION ON TREE ORDINANCE

City Manager Barry Sullivan presented the current tree ordinance and the one used prior. He began the discussion by asking the group if they would like to re-adopt the tree ordinance that was in effect in 2006. It was noted that the 2006 ordinance was thought to be too strict, and the more recent 2010 ordinance too lax. Councilmember Gordon suggested that if the 2010 version created problems, then why not revert to the 2006 one. Councilmember Mary Jo Dollar then asked for real instances.

Sullivan referred to the construction of Bosco’s Gym at the corner of Main St and Grand Ave. Since most of the property was used for the construction of the foundation and parking space of the gym, several large pecan trees were torn down. Other cities would have required Bosco’s to replace the trees or deposit funds to a “tree fund” the city used to plant new trees around town. Another instance referred to was the construction of a new hotel and gas station on the I-35 frontage road. Sullivan explained that other cities would require submission of a map indicating current tree type, size, and location with their request of a building permit, then require replacement of said trees.

Council was in agreement that they did not want to re-adopt the 2006 version. Sullivan asked a series of questions regarding mitigation of trees, size ratios, height from ground, and if this rules should apply to residential or commercial only.

ADJOURN

With no further business to come before the City Council, the meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Caitlyn Huddleston, City Secretary

Jim Goldsworthy, Mayor