

**WORTHINGTON CITY COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING, MARCH 21, 2018**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. in City Hall Council Chambers by Mayor Pro Tem Chad Cummings with the following Council Members present: Larry Janssen, Alan Oberloh, Amy Ernst, Mike Harmon. Mayor Mike Kuhle (excused)

Staff present: Steve Robinson, City Administrator; Jason Brisson, Director of Community Development, Planning, Zoning and Building Services; Todd Wietzema, Public Works Director; Troy Appel, Public Safety Director; Brett Wiltout, Sergeant, Public Safety Department; Myra Onnen, Community Service Officer; Rod Odell, Rental Housing Inspector; Mindy Eggers, Assistant City Clerk..

Others present: Karl Evers-Hillstrom, The Globe; Darlene Macklin.

**BLIGHTED AND NUISANCE PROPERTIES**

Mayor Pro Tem Cummings stated that included in the packet of information were letters and ordinances pertaining to the Blight & Nuisance Ordinances. Steve Robinson, City Administrator explained that staff wanted to inform Council of the City Codes & Ordinances in Chapter 98 that was adopted in 2005 that specifically addresses the exterior property, exterior structure, occupancy limitations, and structures unfit for human habitation. In 2006 the Rental Housing Ordinance was adopted and essentially has the same criteria but includes the rental registration regulations. One of the challenges that the City has is that the way the current codes are written the enforcement is somewhat cumbersome and can procedurally take a lot of time. What staff would like to do is step up the enforcement so that we can ensure good living conditions for our residents.

Mayor Pro Tem Cummings asked with what steps the City has in place now that we aren't using, that says this is not acceptable. Mr. Robinson stated that he feels this is where staff has fallen short, as we do have ability to do enforcement, we just haven't in some cases. Council Member Alan Oberloh stated that the Myra Onnen, Community Service Officer takes care of the exterior of the nuisance properties and Rod Odell, Rental Housing Inspector addresses the issues on the interior of properties.

Troy Appel, Public Safety Director stated that after officers have responded to calls at the Thompson Hotel, they note in their reports are about the unsanitary conditions, water damage, mold, bed bugs, and cockroaches, which has led to hazardous conditions for the officers when responding to emergencies. Sergeant Brett Wiltout said that in the last twelve months the police have been called to the Thompson Hotel fifty-six times for various types of calls, since July 2010 there have been 441 calls to the hotel.

Mr. Appel explained the County no longer has a Public Health official and after checking there is no available help from the state. Mr. Robinson said that it is a local issue and the City will have to find a way we can take on a bigger enforcement authority.

Discussion was held on if the city should purchase the buildings or whether it can be cleaned up

while people live there, there are thirty-nine units in the hotel so it would have a significant effect on many people, any way that it is dealt with. Council Member Oberloh asked if a substantial fine could be imposed and if the property could be tagged and given ten days to comply.

Jason Brisson, Community/Economic Development Director stated that the city has approximately 1400 rental units and staff is taking a look at how effective our rental housing ordinance is and would like to tweak it so situations can be handled in a more timely manner. He said in another city he has looked into, the City imposes a fine if the landlord does not grant access into the property and if not paid it would get assessed to the property taxes. In another example the City of Minneapolis has a tier system and depending on your past history dictates how often your property gets inspected and how much you pay. This would be another option the City could impose against a landlord that isn't in compliance and also be a benefit for the ones that continue to comply.

Mr. Appel said they could have officers fill out a form that identifies potential problems in rental housing as they respond to calls and then forward it to Rod Odell, Rental Housing Inspector for further action.

Council Member Janssen stated that staff should consult with Mark Shepherd, City Attorney before moving forward with any procedure at this time. Council Members agreed and directed staff to consult with the City Attorney.

### **RE-IMPOSING A LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX**

Steve Robinson, City Administrator said in continuing the discussion on the proposed Future Local Option Sales Tax, the following projects have been identified to be completed with the sales tax dollars.

The list is as follows:

Public Works Facility	\$3.0 M
Field House Recreation Center	\$1.5 M
Outdoor Swimming Pool Improvements	\$3.5 M
Ice Arena Improvements	\$1.5 M
Lakefront Improvements	\$4.0 M
Trail Expansion	\$1.0 M
Collaborative Athletic Complex	<u>\$2.0 M</u>
Total	\$16.5 M

Discussion was held on the list and the cost estimates. Mr. Robinson stated that there has not been any formal estimates on each project at this point but staff will get realistic estimates for the projects listed. Mr. Robinson noted that the list does not have to have the dollars assigned to them when it goes for approval. Council Member Oberloh suggested taking the Trail Expansion dollars out as

there is always grant dollars available for trail projects.

Council Member Ernst stated that daycare is not on the list, and asked if it was eligible. Mr. Robinson explained that it is eligible but the problem is an operational cost problem considering the amount of regulations that go with operating that type of business.

Mr. Robinson stated that staff suggests to move forward with the Public Works project, the Field House/Recreation Center and the entertainment project, bonding for the dollars ahead of time and if it would happen to not pass then be put into the general tax levy. Council Member Oberloh cautioned starting any project before the sales tax is passed.

Mr. Robinson stated that staff will continue to move forward with obtaining cost estimates and will update Council at each work session from now until June.

Mayor ProTem Cummings updated Council as an informational item that the County has approved a loan for the fairgrounds road project and the School Board has also approved \$50,000 towards the project, Council will be asked to address this in the future as well.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The motion was made by Council Member Oberloh, seconded by Council Member Harmon and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 5:26 p.m.

Mindy L. Eggers, MCMC  
Assistant City Clerk