

The Houston City Council met for the Board of Appeals at 5:30 p.m. in Houston City Hall. Present were: Mayor Connie Edwards, Kevin Knutson, Tony Schultz, Matt Schutte and Cheryl Sanden. Also present were: Chris Peterson, Audrey Hegland, Randy Thesing, Ed Jacobs, Dan Smith, Cindy Cresswell, Liz Gibson Gasset, Dave Breault, Jay Wheaton, Marlene Schultz, Ellyn Baumann.

Ms. Cresswell presented the 2015 County Board of Appeal and Equalization report which addressed property values. There were no questions or comments, so the public hearing was adjourned at 5:56 p.m. Mayor Edwards called the Public Hearing to order at 6:00 p.m. to approve the 2014 Basic Code Update with additional revisions to Chapter 113 "Peddlers, Solicitors and Transient Merchants" and Chapter 151 "Zoning.". There being no questions or comments from the public, the public hearing was adjourned at 6:03 p.m. Mayor Edwards called the City Council meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

2015 Ordinance 217 – MN Basic Code 2014 Version with revisions.

Peterson said the Planning Commission reviewed the updated sections pertaining to Zoning, and discussed the new language relevant to garages and dwelling units. In the Code there are no specific definitions of a garage. It was defined in the old Code but did not have specific dimensions cited. It is now proposed that:

Definitions (151.04): GARAGE/PRIVATE. An accessory structure or accessory portion of the principal building which is primarily intended for and used to store passenger vehicles and trucks (not exceeding 12,000 pounds gross weight) owned and operated by a resident upon the premises. The size of garage(s) on a parcel shall not exceed 125% of the footprint of the principal structure (house) or 1,200 SF whichever is less.

R-1 (151.21)

E. Lot Requirements and Setbacks:

1. Only one dwelling structure is allowed per parcel.

F. Building Requirements:

1. No dwelling unit shall be less than twenty (20) feet in width at its narrowest side in any district except as provided for under a Manufactured Home Park Conditional Use Permit.
2. All dwellings shall be built upon, placed upon, or affixed to a permanent foundation.
3. The roof of the structure shall be pitched or hipped and shall be shingled or utilize roofing materials approved for residential construction.

Discussion was held on the 1200 SF size of garage; including noting that most lots in Houston are smaller than the newer ones, such as those in Prairie Meadows. Another consideration was that there are no basements in Prairie Meadows lots so extra storage would be needed. MOTION MADE BY SANDEN, SECONDED BY KNUTSON TO INCREASE THE SIZE OF THE ALLOWABLE GARAGE FROM 1200 SF TO 1300 SF, REMOVE THE PORTION "NOT TO EXCEED 12,000 POUNDS GROSS WEIGHT", AND KEEP THE REST OF THE PROPOSED LANGUAGE THE SAME; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Lot Requirements: If two lots are purchased, in order to build a garage on one of the parcels and a house on the other, the owner must go to the County and merge the two into one parcel.

Licensure for Peddlers: Already in place is an ordinance where peddlers must apply for a permit at City Hall; this process provides the City with time to check references and backgrounds. The proposed code has optional sections 113.03 through 113.07 pertaining to licensing. It was suggested the City retain Section 113.07 of the optional sections; Peterson will work with Chief Breault on this ordinance. Any transient merchant would be prohibited unless they are operating during a festival under an agreement with organizers of the event.

Ordinances specific to Houston were retained. Six were sent to the Council for their review: Storm Sewer, Mailboxes (current ordinance deals with damage to mailboxes), Drug Sites, Outdoor Woodburning Furnaces (this ordinance was adopted before the adoption of the Basic Code, and can be removed because it is already covered in the current Code), Parking on the Street, and Unhooked Trailers. Chief Breault stated he would prefer to keep 48-hour parking to prevent indefinite parking.

The individual City ordinances will be incorporated into the Basic Code, placed on the City web site, and published in the Banner. MOTION MADE BY SANDEN, SECONDED BY SCHULTZ TO ADOPT THE BASIC CODE (2014 VERSION) WITH THE CHANGES PRESENTED; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

2015 Ordinance 218 - Fee Schedule: Represents Fee Schedule sections included in the Basic Code. After discussion, MOTION MADE BY SCHUTTE, SECONDED BY SCHULTZ TO APPROVE THE 2015 FEE SCHEDULE AS PRESENTED; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. The fee schedule will be published in the Banner.

Flood Levee Re-Certification: To remain eligible for FEMA funding in the event of disaster and to avoid the need for flood insurance, the City levee must be recertified. The Army Corps of Engineers requires an independent review by a qualified consulting firm to conduct the recertification, which will consist of three phases. Mead & Hunt Consultants is a local and very experienced firm who will do Phase I for \$23,530, to be followed by the two other phases. Peterson will stay in constant contact with Mead&Hunt to assist them and monitor the process. If actual construction work must be done, it will add to the amount that is quoted. The three phases must be completed in 2015. MOTION MADE BY SCHULTZ, SECONDED BY SCHUTTE TO HIRE MEAD & HUNT TO COMPLETE PHASE I OF THE LEVEE RECERTIFICATION; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Seasonal Maintenance Staff: Knutson stated the City hires seasonal staff for summer lawn mowing. Interviews with applicants have been conducted by the Personnel Committee, and their recommendations given to the Council. MOTION MADE BY MAYOR EDWARDS, SECONDED BY KNUTSON TO EMPLOY KEN CARRIER AND LEONARD OLSON FOR SUMMER HELP, NOT TO EXCEED 15 HOURS PER WEEK AVERAGE; MOTION CARRIED WITH SANDEN ABSTAINING.

Nature Center – Staff and Website: Preliminary 2016 proposed budget was presented. Due to Karla Bloem's transferring to the Owl Center full time, Connie Verse has been handling the programming and staffing at the Nature Center. Peterson stated that a back-up person and also someone who will help the City with some of its marketing are needed, and an intern or part-time person would be a good solution. Peterson requested Council approval to advertise for this position for a six-month period of time at \$9 per hour, to be reevaluated after that time. The Council directed her to post the position and the Personnel Committee will bring their recommendation for hiring the individual to the Council at their next meeting.

The Nature Center web site has been maintained by a volunteer and is out of date. Part of the money available must be spent upgrading the web site and develop a marketing plan for the Nature Center and the City, and could also incorporate the Chamber. This matter will be put on next month's Council agenda. Peterson has spoken with a company from Winona who has submitted a proposal to develop the web site; their quote was \$3,000. Peterson will check with the Friends of the Nature Center to see if they would help with this expense. A recommendation will be brought to Council at their next meeting.

Business Retention and Expansion Study: AcenTek will partner with the City to bring this Study to Houston; the cost may be approximately \$3,000, depending on how much time is spent (hourly billing). It will consist of a survey of local businesses and some personal interviews of businesses identified by the EDA, and designed to help promote the business community. MOTION BY SCHULTZ, SECONDED BY SCHUTTE TO APPROVE THE SHARED EXPENSE OF UP TO \$1500 EACH FOR THE CITY AND ACENTEK TO HIRE CEDA TO CONDUCT THE BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION STUDY; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Food Shelf Remodeling: Remodeling is underway; front door ordered, an interior wall and handicapped accessible door will be installed. Thrivent donated \$750 which was put toward the new furnace expense. MOTION MADE BY SCHULTZ, SECONDED BY SANDEN THAT THE CITY APPROVE UP TO \$700 TO COMPLETE THE REMODELING; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. A lease agreement has been drafted by the City attorney for approval by the Food Shelf Board. This is a City-owned building and as such, will be maintained by the City. MOTION BY SANDEN, SECONDED BY KNUTSON TO ACCEPT THE LEASE AS PRESENTED, CONTINGENT UPON THE FOOD SHELF BOARD'S APPROVAL; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Water Main Extension – 7th Street E: Possible homeowners would prefer to put in their own well. A policy should be developed as to when it will be required to hook up to City water when it becomes available. This matter will be put on hold as part of the larger plan on water project.

Valley View Nursing Home Foundation Gambling Permit: MOTION MADE BY SANDEN, SECONDED BY SCHUTTE TO APPROVE THE GAMBLING PERMIT FOR THE VALLEY VIEW NURSING HOME FOUNDATION; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Benches: Schultz and Sanden have researched benches made of varying materials to replace those outside area businesses that are aging and in poor condition. They recommend the City purchase five benches for \$740 each that come with a 10-year warranty. To offset the cost, they will be offered to the community to purchase a bench as a memorial or in honor of; a plaque will be placed on the bench with this information. MOTION MADE BY SANDEN, SECONDED BY SCHULTZ TO ORDER FIVE ANOVA BENCHES FOR \$740 EACH; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. Schultz and Sanden will talk to the Hometown Pride group to enlist their help in this effort.

Minutes: MOTION BY SANDEN, SECONDED BY SCHUTTE, TO APPROVE THE MARCH 9 COUNCIL MINUTES AS PRESENTED; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Financial Report: MOTION BY SCHULTZ, SECONDED BY KNUTSON TO PAY THE BILLS; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

EDA/Planning Commission Minutes: Included for Council review.

Department Reports:

Library: Gibson-Gasset provided an overview of Library activities including a circulation report that shows the excellent usage of the Library. Question was posed as to whether the Friends of the Library would sponsor one of the new benches ordered that could be placed in front of the Library.

Police: Chief Breault has been attending LETG training this week and will be leaving for mandated Chief's Training in St. Cloud.

Maintenance: Thesing reported that water mains will be flushed next week and will be hauling sludge. He will be fertilizing Central Park, which will be a \$200 cost.

MOTION BY SANDEN, SECONDED BY SCHUTTE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:40 P.M; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.