

**WORKSHOP
OAKDALE CITY COUNCIL
February 12, 2019
5 PM**

Attendance

The City Council held a workshop on Tuesday, February 12, 2019, at Oakdale Municipal Building, 1584 Hadley Avenue North, Oakdale, Minnesota.

Present: Mayor Paul Reinke

Council Members: Jake Ingebrigtsen
Susan Olson
Colleen Swedberg
Kevin Zabel

Also Present: Susan Barry, City Clerk
Bart Fischer, City Administrator
Jen Hassebroek, Senior Community Development Specialist
Alyssa MacLeod, Communications Specialist
Bill Schmitt, Chief Building Official
Bob Streetar, Community Development Director
Dallas Pierson, Planning Commission

Keith Miller, Environmental Management Commission Chair
Gretel Drainville, Environmental Management Commissioner
Nick Kantola, Environmental Management Commissioner
Bonnie Wilson, Environmental Management Commissioner

Environmental Management Commission

Environmental Management Commission Chair Miller provided an overview of the commission's priorities for 2019.

In response to a question from Council Member Ingebrigtsen, Mayor Reinke offered that outlets for electric vehicles for a recent project cost \$650. He added that he would like the new police department to offer a few electric vehicle outlets.

In response to a question from Council Member Ingebrigtsen, EMC Chair Miller noted that he was a solar power expert for 3M. On the subject of solar, Chair Miller indicated that the cost for solar power has been going down and that the city was already seeing a significant payback from its solar garden subscription.

Senior Community Development Specialist Hassebroek noted that solar garden subscriptions differ from solar panels in that subscriptions offer immediate payback.

Planning Commission Chair Pierson shared that he, too, can offer expertise on solar power. He also shared his experience with a solar panel installation company.

Mayor Reinke noted that he would provide the Commission with information on the use of a vegetable based slurry to treat roads during the winter in order to use less salt.

WORKSHOP

February 12, 2019

Page Two

Environmental Management Commissioner Drainville commented that the commission would be looking at ways to increase participation in the city's adopt-a-wetland program.

EMC Chair Miller reviewed the responsibilities of the participants.

Council Member Zabel suggested that the city give away native plants for residents to plant around wetlands; the program would be similar to the Arbor Day tree giveaway.

Council Member Swedberg announced that the city would be hosting a native plant expo on June 8.

Council Member Zabel suggested that the EMC provide residents with a few tips on how they can maintain the health of the city's wetlands.

EMC Chair Miller agreed and noted that the main tip is keeping leaves, grass, and debris from entering storm sewers.

Building Inspection and Code Enforcement

Chief Building Official Schmitt provided an overview of building inspections, code enforcement, and the rental housing licensing program.

Following discussion, staff was directed to bring back a recommendation to increase the \$100 administrative law judge fee to cover staff time.

Council Member Zabel shared that a commonly asked question is why vehicles violating the city's winter parking regulations are not towed.

Chief Building Official Schmitt explained that police officers go to the home to try to have the vehicle moved; if no answer, a ticket will be written but the vehicle not towed.

In response to questions from Council Member Olson, Chief Building Official Schmitt indicated that he did not have any data to compare Oakdale's code violations to communities of a similar size. He also noted that code violations are both complaint-based and sought out and that information is provided by other city staff, such as police and public works personnel.

Council Member Olson expressed discomfort with the city policing private property.

Chief Building Official Schmitt talked about the importance of a community working together on maintenance.

In response to a question from Council Member Zabel, Chief Building Official Schmitt stated that an additional code enforcement officer was not needed.

Council Member Ingebrigtsen asked about any of the city's ordinances that may be irrelevant.

Chief Building Official Schmitt was not aware of any at this time.

WORKSHOP

February 12, 2019

Page Three

Rental Housing License

Greg McGrath, 2363 Gresham Avenue, reiterated a request made at the city's Truth in Taxation meeting that the city offer a reduced license rate to landlords that receive no violations for a set number of years.

Mayor Reinke explained that the matter would be discussed and then brought back to the City Council at a future meeting.

Chief Building Official Schmitt reviewed survey data from 36 communities relating to their rental housing inspection programs. He also detailed the city's inspection process and the benefits of having an annual inspection program in place. Chief Building Official Schmitt indicated that the license fee equates to \$11 per month for landlords.

Council Member Ingebrigtsen supported a reward system provided all factors are taken into account, particularly software costs and existing staff efficiencies. He asked about data on any issues in communities that do not inspect property on an annual basis.

Chief Building Official Schmitt was not aware if such data was available.

Council Member Zabel commented on the city's history of being flexible and noted that in instances where there have been no violations, a lower license fee could be put into place and when a new tenant moves into the property, the rental fee rate would reset.

Chief Building Official Schmitt provided some scenarios that supported the importance of having an annual inspection of rental property, particularly in identifying code issues such as non-functioning smoke detectors.

Council Member Olson suggested that that annual inspections continue but reduce license fees for some landlords.

Referring to the rental housing survey, Council Member Zabel asked to be provided with details on how each community responded.

Mayor Reinke reiterated that the matter would be brought back for additional discussion.

Open Meeting Law

Attorney Thomson provided an overview of the "Open Meeting Law". He explained that the law applies to the city council and to any committee, subcommittee, board, department, or commission of the city, but does not apply to the city administrator or city staff. Attorney Thomson talked about the importance of not using "reply all" but, rather, to respond only to the city administrator who would then forward the comments to all members.

Adjournment

WORKSHOP
February 12, 2019
Page Four

The meeting adjourned at 6:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Barry,
City Clerk