

CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
CITY COUNCIL
MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE
JUNE 28, 2010
6:00 PM

ATTENDANCE: Council members: Vizzo-Paniccia; co-chair, Taylor-Moye, Silva, Brannelly, Walsh

NON-COMMITTEE: Council member Baker

CITY STAFF: Don Eversley, Director OPED; Larry Osborne, Labor Relations

CITY ATTORNEY: Mark Anastasi

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia called the meeting to order at 6:24 pm.

Approval of Committee Meeting Minutes of June 1, 2010. (Special Meeting)

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SILVA MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

88-09 Resolution concerning the Private Sale of City Owned Property Below Market Value.

Attorney Anastasi updated that his item pertained to a property that was mentioned in the newspaper. The matter involved an old map that was severely outdated, so the property will be re-surveyed to assess the actual value. He suggested tabling the item to find out the results.

Council member Walsh questioned what they should do going forward. He stated that he was told it was a mistake.

Attorney Anastasi said that based on the outdated maps that go back a decade, the Tax Assessor acted on the maps that were available. He commented that the city council approves every sale. He further noted that OPED is the directive for the sales.

Council member Walsh questioned how they sold the piece of property for \$200.00 and then determined that it wasn't worth \$45k. He thought they needed to address this issue.

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia asked if the committee should request that the Tax Assessor attend the next meeting to give an explanation.

Council member Walsh said that if they don't have a better explanation of why it shouldn't happen in the future, then it wouldn't matter what the Tax Assessor has to say.

Attorney Anastasi said they were getting appraisals and a couple of the properties were sold at the assessed value. Council member Walsh disputed whether or not they should do this with slivers of property.

Council President McCarthy said that since the last meeting, Max Perez provided a listing of other properties with slivers of parcels. The numbers were based on not going below a certain percentage. He further stated that if they don't have the proper appraisals, then it makes it hard for the ECDE Committee to move forward.

Council member Walsh said at the minimum, they should have the city council rule on the issue. He further questioned how they could assure that it wouldn't happen again.

Council President McCarthy stated that they rely on the Tax Assessor's information and the appraisers in the Economic Development Department. However, he added that if they had an appraisal, they would have seen the big piece of land and questioned it. It should have been apparent that \$200.00 was appraised in error for a big piece of land.

Council member Brannelly asked when they would get the appraisal, is it the assessed value or the tax part of the appraisal. Barry Piesner was present as a member of the public and he responded yes, it's the tax part of the appraisal.

Council member Brannelly stated that they needed to protect the residents. And in this case, if it's an appraisal and they chose to sell it for \$200.00; she didn't understand why

the person buying the property couldn't be told what the taxes were on the property before the closing. She stressed that there was some level of responsibility upon the person buying the property. She agreed they should have an appraisal.

Attorney Anastasi clarified that the Council member Walsh's concern was if the tax assessment was valid. He commented that they got hosed on the deal and it turned out that the Tax Assessor's office and OPED were working on different property values. He suggested perhaps running the numbers of the address in the future, to detect any problems. He mentioned that the good news was over taxation and that they don't give away a piece of property for value on the dollar.

Don Eversley, OPED stated that in the vast majority of cases with a sliver property; generally, when the property reaches a certain size, an odd sliver isn't any value to anyone and it doesn't have any real market value. He further stated that often, sliver sales are administrative clean-ups. They reduce the job of policing the parcels. He felt they should leave the matter in the purview of the ECDE Committee. He agreed that this case was an abhorrent situation with faulty maps, the matter should have been coordinated so all the pieces locked up.

Attorney Anastasi commented that there was clearly an error with the assessment company.

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia asked if the city went with the map in hand to visually check the numbers on the property; to see if they matched for follow up purposes. She further commented that an oversight like this only hurts the city, when someone doesn't follow up on the work.

Attorney Anastasi responded if that was done, what would have been seen was a sliver. Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia was adamant that the work has to be checked though, in protection of the taxpayers. Attorney Anastasi reiterated that they would have only seen a sliver property that often doesn't have an address. He said the reality was that a visual inspection would have only shown a sliver property with a number.

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia said the city needs to be more proactive inter-department and share information with the city departments and then move forward.

Don Eversley explained that normally, it would be a red flag if the number was out of whack.

Council member Baker agreed that the city needs to be more proactive and aware that the current system isn't working. And regardless of whether it's a small or large sliver, they need to do their due diligence. He questioned why they couldn't hire an assessment company to assess properties. The thought they needed to put something in place to assess the properties properly. He further noted that he receives numerous complaints about properties that have been assessed too high.

Council member Walsh stated that he wants clarification of what the rules are; whether codified or otherwise. He requested that the city attorney and OPED clarify what the rule is and how it should be codified. Council member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if they should table the matter to request that information.

Attorney Anastasi recalled that as Council member Brannelly suggested, in a case where there is an appraisal, the document should include the tax assessment for the parcel. He thought this would avoid the same type of situation from happening and to prevent repetition.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER WALSH MOVED TO TABLE**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER SILVA SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

97-09 Proposed Workers' Compensation Stipulation with Charles Fereira.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SILVA MOVED TO TABLE**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

*It was noted that the claimant wasn't present to address the committee.

104-09 Proposed Settlement Agreement with International Association of Firefighters, Local 843.

Attorney Anastasi stated that this matter was being handled by Attorney Mitola, who was unable to attend the meeting tonight. There was a request to table the item.

Council member Brannelly asked if the item was time sensitive. Attorney Anastasi said no.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER WALSH MOVED TO TABLE
** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

103-09 Resolution request that the City Department and Staff Directory be made available in document form.

Council member Baker stated that he was the maker of the resolution. He explained that it was put together, because when he first started serving on the city council, he was given a helpful directory to navigate through city contacts. He found the directory has become obsolete over the years. He noted that there is a computerized directory only. He thought that access to all the departments should be put up on the website. Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia asked if there should be two different lists; one for the city council and one for the public. She said the information was already listed in the phone book and itemized. She didn't think a resolution was necessary, since the city already has access to it. Council President McCarthy responded that the information should be available.

Council member Baker asked if they could make the request. And if it's not carried out, then they could go with the resolution. Council President McCarthy said there should definitely be access on the website. He commented that the BOE put in the same system as the city, but then they had to change the phone numbers. Currently, the council doesn't have the phone numbers, so they need to make the request again. He questioned if they would be satisfied with a computerized or written format. Council member Baker said he would like both options. He suggested that the matter be coordinated with an IT contact.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SILVA MOVED TO TABLE FOR THE PURPOSE OF REQUESTING THE REQUIRED INFORMATION FOR A COMPUTERIZED AND WRITTEN FORMAT OF CITY DEPARTMENT CONTACTS. IF THE REQUEST ISN'T FULFILLED, THEN THE COMMITTEE WILL REVISIT THE RESOLUTION THAT HAS BEEN CRAFTED.**

***It was noted that the information should reflect actual access to department phone numbers.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER WALSH SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY MOVED TO ADJOURN
** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Graham
Telesco Secretarial Services