

City of Harrington
MINUTES
City Council Workshop
November 3, 2014

A workshop with the Harrington City Council was held at Harrington City Hall, 106 Dorman Street, on November 3, 2014 and was attended by the following: Mayor Anthony R. Moyer; Vice Mayor Cheryl J. Lahman; Council Member Duane E. Bivans; Council Member Fonda Coleman; Council Member Amy L. Minner; Council Member Charles W. Porter; Council Member Kenneth W. Stubbs; Norman Barlow, Chief of Police; William Pepper, City Solicitor; Teresa Tieman, City Manager; Dean Gary, Accountant; and Kelly Blanchies, Clerk of Council.

Also present: Beverley Ireland, Administrative Assistant; Joseph Collison; Nathan Minner; Gary Harrington; Barbara Bullock; Charles Carr; Aubrey Brown; Sandi Holloway; and Jennifer Antonik.

Public Comments

Joseph Collison stated very few people use the alleyway he lives on in Harrington Manor, and there are not speeders. It is not worth spending money on speed bumps.

Gary Harrington stated that he has never seen anyone speed through the alleyway. Shaw Avenue has speeders though. Stop signs would be ok. The alley is partially grown over with weeds.

Nathan Minner agrees with Mr. Harrington.

Barbara Bullock stated that the speed bumps are an unwarranted expense since there is little traffic.

Aubrey Brown stated that the alleyway between Gordon Street and Center Street Extended has heavier traffic and speeding. It is getting a lot of wear.

Sandi Holloway stated that she is there representing Doris Fry and the alley that she lives on is only used by residents, and there is no speeding.

Mayor Moyer called the meeting to order at 6:41 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was given.

Harrington Manor alleyways proposed stop signs and speed bumps

Council Member Porter asked who put this item on the agenda. The City Manager stated that complaints of speeding had been received, so the Public Works Supervisor prepared an estimate for the cost of eight stop signs and eight speed bumps, which would be one thousand eight hundred eighty-four dollars (\$1,884).

Council Member Minner asked if there was any response to the letters that were sent to the residents. The City Manager stated that there was one response today and that there are people in the audience about the alleyways.

Vice Mayor Lahman stated that there are no speed bumps in any other alley and that they would be a plowing issue. There are stop signs at the ends of some alleys and stop signs could be installed at the ends of alleys citywide.

Council Member Porter stated that the Council should listen to citizens, and they do not want the speed bumps.

Mayor Moyer asked if the City is liable if there are no traffic signs and an accident happens. The City Solicitor replied no; state law requires someone emerging from an alleyway onto a public road to stop. The Chief of Police stated that stop signs are not a bad idea. There have not been a lot of complaints though.

Mayor Moyer stated that there is a safety issue and more information is needed like a traffic count. The City does not want to spend money if it is not going to solve anything.

Yard award

Mayor Moyer stated that the City Council has discussed getting the public more involved through some kind of landscaping or decorating award.

Council Member Bivans stated that if the City is doing a yard award, it should be split between renters and homeowners. Businesses can also be spotlighted for community involvement.

Mayor Moyer stated that the accolades could be a picture in the newspaper. The businesses could be a different program.

Mayor Moyer stated that it is not clear when driving down the road which houses are rentals or owner occupied. Council Member Bivans stated that renters should have an equal way to participate.

Council Member Minner stated that it is good to acknowledge all the work people put into yards.

Ordinance 14-15 – Adding Chapter 255, Mobile Homes and Trailers

Council Member Minner stated that mobile home is not a term that is used anymore and that it should be manufactured home. Council Member Minner read the following definition for manufactured home from the Kent County Code:

A manufactured home, in one or more sections transportable over the road with proper hauling permits from the State, which is built on a permanent chassis and designed to be used as a dwelling, with or without a permanent foundation, when connected to the required utilities and includes the plumbing, heating, air conditioning, and electrical systems containing therein.

The City Solicitor stated that a problem with the definition is that the City needs to differentiate between permanent placement and those that can be moved. Those on a permanent foundation are going to be taxed as real property as opposed to being subjected to a license fee.

The City Manager stated that one of the main goals was to hold mobile home park operators accountable for notifying the City when mobile homes move in and out. It has been difficult to collect real property taxes. A license is a different way of collecting revenue for services provided in lieu of taxes. The mobile home can be stickered as a means of verifying that they are registered.

Mayor Moyer asked how much is owed in taxes by mobile home owners. The City Manager stated that even after collection efforts, six thousand eight hundred sixty-three dollars (\$6,863) is owed from FY 2012, six thousand five hundred dollars (\$6,500) from FY 2013, and twelve thousand seven hundred forty-seven dollars (\$12,747) from FY 2014. Mayor Moyer stated that the City is paying to try to collect those back taxes through the legal system, and the rest of the taxpayers are covering the cost.

Council Member Minner asked why the mobile home owner is outlined in the ordinance. The City Manager stated that the land owner is responsible for taxes on the land, and the mobile home owner is responsible for the fee for the mobile home. The City Manager stated that the mobile home owner is also responsible for acquiring the placement permit.

Council Member Porter asked about the license fee. The City Solicitor stated that it would go in Chapter 180, Municipal Fees, and would be adopted by a separate ordinance.

Council Member Minner asked about the requirements for the license. The City Solicitor stated that the title from the Department of Motor Vehicles, or bill of sale if it is from out of state, would be required.

Mayor Moyer asked if the City receives transfer tax when a mobile home is sold. The City Solicitor stated he does not believe so, because it is not realty.

Council Member Minner suggested adding a requirement for a permission letter from the mobile home park for the placement permit.

Council Member Porter asked what the repercussion would be for not getting a license. The City Manager stated that there would be a fine.

The City Manager stated that the mobile home would no longer be taxed and would pay a license fee instead.

Mayor Moyer asked if there would be a permit to remove a mobile home. The City Manager stated that she does not believe that is necessary.

Council Member Minner asked if it was possible to hold the mobile home park responsible for collecting the taxes in the rent. The City Solicitor stated that has not been done before.

Mayor Moyer asked if the mobile home park could evict someone if they do not renew their license with the City. The City Solicitor stated that probably they could, but a fine would be used if the license is not renewed. Mayor Moyer asked about adding language to hold the mobile park operator responsible for allowing a mobile home to remain that is not licensed.

Council Member Minner asked about licensing manufactured home installers and inspecting the installation of mobile homes. The Accountant stated that the State does not inspect mobile homes.

2015 holiday schedule

The City Manager stated that an alternative to the traditional schedule would be to switch Columbus Day for Christmas Eve next year. Mayor Moyer stated that he would like the department heads to have the authority to allow the employees to leave early on the day before Thanksgiving and on Christmas Eve.

Thanksgiving and Christmas employee luncheon

The City Manager stated that the employees have a Thanksgiving and a Christmas luncheon and typically the offices are closed for an hour and a half. The on-call number is still available for emergencies.

Employee health insurance

The City Manager stated that the State of Delaware has opened up its healthcare plan to municipalities. Between the health insurance and the dental coverage the

State coverage would save the City a very small amount of money and have better coverage and adds an employee assistance program and a wellness program. The State insurance can begin in February. The State said that their insurance will be changing in July because of the Affordable Care Act but guarantees that the cost will not go up more than ten percent a year. All six plans that the State has would be available for the City employees to choose from.

Mayor Moyer asked if the employees want the State health insurance. The City Manager replied yes.

Vice Mayor Lahman asked about health savings accounts.

The City Manager stated that the State will run a health fair for employees and administers the program so that takes the burden off of the City.

Public Comments

Barbara Bullock stated that in a town she was visiting in Virginia, the businesses offered trick or treating as a way to interact with the community.

Sandi Holloway stated that it would be good to involve the businesses.

Mr. Collison asked if yard awards would include houses and businesses together and suggested a house of the year.

Ms. Bullock stated that in North Carolina the age of mobile homes was limited.

City Council Comments

Council Member Bivans stated that it would be good to recognize people that rent that take care of their homes.

Council Member Minner asked if the mortgage companies of those with senior discounts were notified of the lower tax amount. The City Manager replied yes.

There being no further business, the City Council Workshop adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelly Blanchies
Clerk of Council