

**MINUTES
CITY OF LAKE WORTH
CITY COMMISSION
WORK SESSION
MAY 10, 2016 – 6:00 PM**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Triolo on the above date at 6:00 PM in the City Commission Chamber, located at 7 North Dixie Highway, Lake Worth, Florida.

1. ROLL CALL:

Present were Mayor Pam Triolo, Vice Mayor Scott Maxwell, and Commissioners Andy Amoroso Christopher McVoy (arrived at 6:22 p.m.) and Ryan Maier. Also present were Interim City Manager John Borsch, City Attorney Glen Torcivia, and Records and Information Manager Deborah Andrea

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

The pledge of allegiance was led by Commissioner Amoroso.

3. UPDATES/FUTURE ACTION/DIRECTION:

- A. **Code Enforcement update:** Mark Woods gave an update on Code Compliance and what they do and to give performance measures. He showed maps that will show their efforts. He went over the staff of Community Sustainability and showed that they have a full staff except one position. They are guided by statute 162 FS. He showed programs and responsibility, nuisance abatement, criminal activity based on calls to service, chronic nuisance gives notice to owners and they have to reply, nuisance remediation demolitions, board and secure, lot clearing and abandoned vehicles. He went over the daily activities, code officers are out in the office from 8-9 and out in the field from 9-4 each day and they come back to the office and return calls. Seven zones in the city each with their own officers who are moving away from data collection and getting the performance issues. Ultimate goal is to bring properties into compliance. They don't believe they will have as many vacant buildings this year as in the past. They are not revenue generating. They want the cases to be legally enforceable. Going forward they want to increase staff training, they are using standardized operating procedures.

Code Department states they have no silver bullet. They would like a 70% rate and right now they are at 48% educate, communicate, initiate and further the code compliance initiatives. William Waters showed the maps of the area of where all the code issues are in the City. There are 1,200 open cases for various violations of the zoning code. Not on the map yet are the nuisance abatement properties that are handled by Palm Beach Sheriff's Office. There are vacant properties, abandoned and foreclosed properties or unimproved

vacant lots enforcement is not where he wants it to be but it is better than before. The Remedial Services Map shows where we have spent money to remediate these properties. Most properties have not paid and the money owed for remediation is now going on the tax bills. We have spent more than \$200,000.00 so far this year.

Martin Welfeld, He is interested in the types of calls and a breakdown of revenues within each district

Theresa Miller, asking about sober homes and use and occupancy. How can we find out how many people can live in each property? Would like to know how many code cases are based on complaints vs. inspectors finding issues by driving through the neighborhood.

Brendan Lynch, he left the CRA meeting the code division has gotten better but behind his house there was a needle and we need a higher levels of code enforcement.

Chip Guthrie, he is targeted, code has been better than they have been but it seems to him that code acted quickly, seems in other municipalities they would have stuff removed immediately. It doesn't seem to happen fast enough.

Aino Lautsio she has been a homeowners for 28 years and she got a notice because her grass has dried, and now has until July. She doesn't want to hire someone but she doesn't want to be cited. She can't sleep because of this.

Eric Fischer owns and manages units. He speaks about codes there is a sense of targeting, areas where areas are enforced and some where they are not enforced. It starts with crime and he does not see patrol cars, he believes that landlords will sell off their property perhaps to sober homes if Code Enforcement doesn't stop the harassment of landlords in the City.

Edwin Arocho, We have to do something, they drink and urinate in front of stores, selling food that is not inspected. He would like to volunteer, it is filthy it looks like Central America. Selling liquor to minors.

Anna Maria Windisch-Hunt, she in in an area with the other side of the tracks, has a problem with a neighbor, termite problems, new windows, what is going to happen, the place is a dump, she has called there is no roof, she feels it is a fire hazard. Code has come each time she called. She has attended the Magistrate meetings.

Mayor thinks we have been asking for this meeting for a long time, she has seen some successful situations and some others not so successful. She wants us to remain respectful and to have honesty. We are asking people to

cut their lawns while we don't keep our properties and whatever message we are sending we want consistency. The second thing is hearing from people that the department is not answering properly to the people. She wants better customer service. Change the culture of the code experience, she wants consistency. Different areas have different problems, worst first. Life endangerment, public safety. Where are we at and how do we handle it? We have to come up with a policy and what does the commission need to do to reach the goals.

William said they always have to deal with citizen complaints, sometimes they deal with chronic complainers, they can't always get to the most chronic cases, our city writes a combined case per property instead of each issue as done in West Palm. Some have come into voluntary compliance, there needs to be a better understanding with the sheriff's office as to who has to deal with what issue. Mark said it is the same in every city some complain that we do too much and some that we do too little.

Commissioner McVoy doesn't want people doing bad things in the neighborhoods but he would like to propose a solution in terms of process. If we are not doing worst first, it looks bad to the public. He wants to deal with citizen's complaints and he wants them to give him a list of the complaints and the commissions get to prioritize the list. The commissioners give it back to Code and code lists it on the website and if calls come in, they are shown to not be a top priority to the commissions. He doesn't know if it is legal to have different priorities throughout the city.

Vice Mayor when he thinks about priorities, he wants our priorities based on curb appeal. Everyone who gets cited thinks they are getting selected we have even code inspectors going out to chase the complainers, maybe we could get the code inspectors to have a specialty, more experienced, for two months have them respond according to their specialty. He would like to change posting a property after 5 days after the certified letter see it posted at the same time as it was before 2013. He wants to know if we can move nuisance abatement properties based on calls for service. William is proposing changes to nuisance calls, 3 calls or 7 calls over 6 months with crime activity. Sheriff's office if they find no activity they are using the address of the place where the call comes in instead of the address of the property being addressed. Vice Mayor wants to do more about chronic nuisances. He wants us to do whatever we can do legally but Mr. Torcivia said it has to be chronic and wants it more than three times a month. William responded that if we have a vacant registry we have to have a point of contact. William had a change of staff in 2015, but they are up now.

We need to reinvest the money back into the community. All money is general fund money. All the Code officers have level one training and more. Couple of funding for neighborhood program to educate and he is looking to for best policies-compliance ratio he has cases cited vs cases closed. They

have a new way to document a case and how to keep following up based on SOPs, helps with citizens understanding. William attended a meeting with Lois Frankel about sober homes about what cities can do. If the sober homes can show that this is changing the character of the neighborhoods, there is some direction coming out in August but William wasn't overly thrilled. The Vice Mayor said he thought there were not going after people for dry grass, Mark said they don't cite for dry grass but they cite for no grass. Vice Mayor Maxwell wants to know if we can get the landlords to do background checks for their tenants. Some landlords have tenants that are bad and we have to come together, Mr. Torcivia thinks we have to have voluntary compliance. What are we doing to pinpoint the properties that keep changing names, is it possible to research addresses to see if there are code violations, by owner and/or case number? The Vice Mayor wants to have a process how cases are being handled. He wants some type of tribunal or some type of mediation. They are governed by 162 FS but he is talking about personnel issues and Mark said they are trying to get more training for staff about customer service.

Commissioner Maier spoke about Florida yards and neighborhoods, it strikes him as strange that some of the same issues they want we have a code against it. Our code doesn't have a provision for zero landscape. William would like to look at changes to xeriscape, he would like to make the changes.

Discussion was held about fees for vacant registrations, abandoned cars and why are we different from West Palm, various applications in other cities and we are not doing it here for tracking overdoses. William wants to know if they can get calls from the Fire Dept. but he is not sure this can be done. The LDR changes made last year allowed an application through the whole application process, Reasonable accommodations, catching and documenting is difficult for overcrowding. Getting witnesses is difficult but people are afraid.

Commissioner Amoroso thanked Yolanda Robinson, Code Compliance Officer he tries to attend the Special Magistrates meeting and he is seeing houses being sold so they are being brought into compliance. He wants it looked at with different eyes, wants training, he also likes special jobs for certain officers. William said it sometimes overwhelms the officer. He agrees with Commissioner Maier, he wants Florida landscape. He doesn't want it overgrown but if it is just brown grass, we should just do curb appeal. Commissioner Amoroso sees lots of bad players at the Magistrate hearings and he wants to see what can be done about foreclosures, it is hard to explain to residents that there is nothing that can be done about compliance. Mr. Torcivia said the number one issue is a bank ahead of us and we will have to buy a property and be second to the bank. Vice Mayor is it possible to use other people's money to foreclose on these properties, the question becomes can we sell our liens. Mr. Torcivia is not sure this is a good idea as we will give up our lien rights and they might not comply the property.

Commissioner McVoy fears that homeowners are concerned and people are putting their property up for sale and leaving and we are not doing our jobs due to sober homes and vacation rentals, he wants to know what we hear from neighbors and PBSO and he knows there are limitations. He doesn't want the complainant's address in the database and wants to be able to have anonymous information to protect the safety of residents. He would like to give good landlords kudos.

Commissioner Amoroso wants the maps and we cannot target and we have to be consistent. Mayor wants to be cautious about talking about sober homes. There are different levels of medical staffs. She wants discussion about vacation rentals and she wants to talk about it. We should give workshop in various languages, we are not doing a good job getting information out in a positive way. William said not an accepted definition yet of what a sober home is, he hopes the paper being put out in August, will give the clarification.

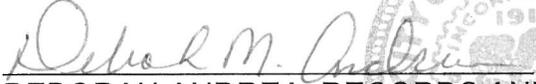
Mr. Torcivia will give out the handout staff was given at the meeting with Lois Frankel. Commissioner Amoroso wants HUD to give a definition and stand behind the municipalities.

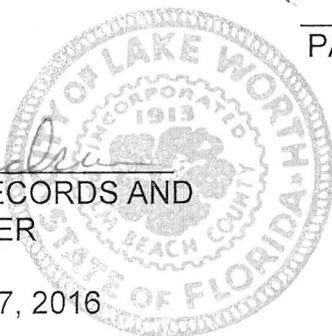
Vice Mayor Maxwell wants to get a report from Code about this meeting.

4. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Consensus: To adjourn the meeting at 8:25 PM.

ATTEST:


DEBORAH ANDREA, RECORDS AND
INFORMATION MANAGER




PAM TRIOLO, MAYOR

Minutes Approved: June 7, 2016

A digital audio recording of this meeting will be available in the Office of the City Clerk.