

July 13, 2009 Workshop

9:12 p.m. Workshop began.

1. Discussion of the Current Tax Acquired Property Policy and listing of Tax Acquired Properties and a future course of actions for disposition of the same.
 - Under the new policy as of November 4, 2008, there were 60 outstanding properties totaling \$64,000.
 - List has decreased to include three 2005 properties that have been inspected and are ready for bid and three 2006 outstanding properties totaling \$13,052.61:
 - One involves 2 mobile homes
 - One includes a home and business with 3 years of taxes due
 - One is land only

A list of 75 unresolved tax acquired properties (all years combined as of 7/13/09) was studied.

- 5 are either ready to go out to bid or are sold
- 20 are on payment plans.

The remaining list of 50 tax acquired properties with no payment plans in place was studied to determine what steps should be taken to resolve them.

- The list is currently available for public inspection.
- The problem arises when tax acquired properties are occupied and the possibility of making families homeless becomes real. Concern was voiced about handling these cases.
- All tax acquired properties must go out for bid if the plan is to sell the property – negotiating sales is not acceptable under the City Charter.
- Council could choose to not to go to bid, abate all prior taxes and allow the property owner to start fresh with clean slate and begin payment program on future taxes. (missing a payment could result in implementing the bidding process as tax acquired property)
- The bidding process begins with a notification from Wanda to each property owner.
- Steve Wentworth would conduct inspections after notifications to determine status of whether property is occupied, etc.
- Providing property owners with information for assistance such as the Circuit Breaker program as well as other sources of assistance was seen as the best first step. It was decided that such information explaining the available programs should be included with Wanda's notice.
- Steve said he would look into having Denise and the Assessing Department assist Wanda in preparing the additional information that would be provided.

- Steve would compile a prioritized list properties would be listed as to occupancy, environmental status, amount of taxes, etc.
- Presenting several properties a month for Council consideration would eventually whittle down the list.
- 2. Discussion of future actions for the Building Committee consideration pertaining to all facilities and for the pending Detailed Energy Audit.

Discussions would continue at the Building Committee meeting Thursday, the 16th at 6:00 p.m.

- 3. Review and discussion of a letter to the Governor and or Legislature on the suspension of penalties associated with the first year consolidation of Schools under the Region School Unit Consolidation Laws.

Steve had met earlier with Pat Sutherland, co-chair of the Education Committee, and Peter Edgecomb.

- Both welcomed the letter and supported sending it to the co-chairs of the Education Committee, the Governor and anyone affiliated with the issue.
- Peter also wished to come before the Council to urge support of the vote against the RSU in November. There was a discussion about Rep. Edgecomb's stand on the RSU issue in relation to his constituents and their vote to accept it.
- Rep. Edgecomb thinks the penalties will go away permanently. Steve had suggested that, if the legislature does that, there should be a mechanism in place to allow those compliant communities to withdraw from the RSU – current law does not address that scenario.

Councilor Goughan was not in favor of sending the letter and wanted to go on record as not supporting it. He reasoned that the decision had been made to follow the law - pros and cons included. He added, "This game's not over yet."

The consensus was to have Steve send the letter as written with copies going to all related parties as named earlier and to sign it on behalf of the majority of the Council.

9:50 p.m. Workshop adjourned.

Judy-Ann Corrow, Secretary