

Meeting Minutes

**CITY OF GLENDALE
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMISSION ON NEIGHBORHOODS
Glendale City Hall
5850 W. Glendale Avenue – B-3
Wednesday, January 8, 2014
6:00 p.m.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Geurs, Chair - Ocotillo District
Davita Solter, Vice Chair – Sahuaro District
Ken Wixon - Cactus District
Cathy Corella – Barrel District
Leslie Sheeler– Ocotillo District
Rebecca Ontiveros – Ocotillo District
Scott Richmond – Yucca District

MEMBERS ABSENT: Josh Marshall - Cactus District
Melissa Neighbors – Cholla District

STAFF PRESENT: Sam McAllen, Executive Director
Angie Wilkie, Neighborhood Services Coordinator
Mark Ptashkin, City of Glendale Building Safety

Call to Order

Chair Geurs called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

I. Roll Call

Chair Geurs conducted roll call. Chair Geurs noted that Commissioner Marshall called in his absence prior to the meeting and thus was excused.

II. Approval of Minutes – November 6, 2013 Meeting

Commissioner Sheeler motioned to approve the November 6, 2013 minutes with the following change:

- **Remove Commissioner Dietzman from the Members Absent section as he was no longer on the Commission.**

Vice Chair Solter made the second. The motion passed 7 - 0

III. Vacant Properties/Abandoned Homes Presentation

Mr. McAllen stated that there are a few ways that the City can work to keep buildings safe.

Mr. McAllen discussed the City's Clean and Lien program which included the following information:

- Clean and Lien is used as a tool for combating blight in the neighborhoods.
- The owner of a vacant property will receive a notice from the Code Department requesting clean up of the property within 30 days.
- 20 days later, a second letter is sent.
- If the property is not cleaned up within 30 days, procedures for Clean and Lien can begin.

- 10 days after the 30-day period, which is 40 days from the date of first notice, a Request for Proposal for Clean and Lien goes out.
- The low bid is awarded the work and the homeowner is invoiced for the cost of the clean up.
- A lien is then placed on the property for the cost of clean-up plus 10% mark-up and \$14 recording fee.

Mr. McAllen introduced Mr. Ptashkin and excuses himself to attend the Community Development Block Grant Hearings. Commissioner Sheeler inquired as to where questions regarding his presentation should be directed and Mr. McAllen instructs the Commissioners to contact him at his office with any questions or comments.

Mr. Ptashkin gave a presentation on Building Safety Department and the Abatement of Hazardous Buildings:

- Typical Projects
 - Fire-damaged structures comprise approximately 80% of the buildings in the abatement process.
 - 5% of the structures are damaged by motor vehicles
 - 10-15% of the projects are referred to Building Safety through Police, Fire or Code Enforcement
- What is an Unsafe Condition?
 - Fire damage
 - Unhealthful conditions
 - Deterioration
 - Structural failure
 - Improper electrical
 - Inability to safely exit the structure in an emergency
- Process – Fire Damaged Structures
 - Building Safety typically receives notification from the Fire Department of the damaged structure
 - Building Safety notifies the owner of the preliminary steps to be taken
 - Owner is responsible to secure the structure
 - Owner makes repairs to the structure
 - Building receives the final approval to occupy
- Abatement – Roadblocks
 - Property Owner does not have insurance
 - Owner is unwilling or unable to abate the hazards
 - Hearing/appeal process:
 - After Glendale exhausts all diplomatic options, a hearing is scheduled
 - Hearing Officer issues orders that are binding to all parties
 - Hearing Officer's order may be appealed to the Superior Court
 - Other legal remedies for the property owner include bankruptcy
- Success Stories
 - In approximately 95% of projects, Glendale is able to work with property owners to abate the hazards with little to no additional expenditures to the city's budget
 - Approximately 90% of the properties are renovated and improved
 - Only 5-10% of the properties are demolished

Mr. Ptashkin displayed pictures of homes with hazards and also success stories.

Mr. Ptashkin explained that in the case of a fire, structural failure, or compromised safety of exit/entrance ways, the homeowner is required to fence off the property and make the repairs. Mr. Ptashkin stated that before the City can utilize municipal code to enforce repairs, there is a 120-day notice period as well as a hearing on the property.

Commissioner Sheeler wondered how it could be proven that a property was secure by fencing alone.

Mr. Ptashkin commented on attractive nuisances, which are structures at a property such as a swimming pool, which require a fence around the property at the very least.

Mr. Ptashkin stated that there is no time limit for a homeowner to fix a property once it is secured.

Commissioner Sheeler mentioned a burned out building on 67nd Avenue that needs to be addressed. Commissioner Sheeler wondered why it took over a year of complaints to the Code department along with photographic evidence that the property was an attractive nuisance and that a fence was inadequate protection from vandalism and blight to determine that the burned out hull of a building was unsafe. Mr. Ptashkin replied that his department had no communication from Code. Mr. Ptashkin was very familiar with the property and its problems.

Commissioner Sheeler asked for direction on how to proceed in the future with unsafe buildings/homes such as the 67th Avenue situation. Mr. Ptashkin stated that a call should be made to the police department, his department or a Councilperson, but not the Code department.

Commissioner Sheeler asked how long, now that the City is paying for and contracted for the raising of the property, would it take to be done. Mr. Ptashkin knew the problems with the out-of-state owner who resides in Oregon. Mr. Ptashkin stated they were waiting for Southwest Gas to turn off the gas to the property.

Commissioner Corella inquired about residents who may be living in these abandoned buildings. Mr. Ptashkin explained that a police escort may be necessary to remove people from the buildings. Mr. Ptashkin recounted a few stories of hoarding and difficulty evicting some residents.

Commissioner Richmond wondered how many staff members worked in Building Safety. Mr. Ptashkin noted that there are seven building inspectors in addition to him. The inspectors cover the entire City, including new building inspections. Mr. Ptashkin stated that over the recent years, the department has been hit with a 60% reduction in staffing.

Chair Geurs thanked Mr. Ptashkin for his presentation.

IV. Call to the Public

No public comments were made.

V. Staff Report on Upcoming Activities

The Staff report included the following information:

- During December 2013, more than 50 volunteers from Midwestern University, Vineyard Youth Group and Northwest Christian School volunteered more than 150 hours in Glendale.
- In December, the Sierra Land in Brighton Manor neighborhood completed a neighborhood newsletter. In January, the Orchard Glen neighborhood completed a postcard-style neighborhood newsletter. A total of 584 newsletters were mailed to residents in those registered neighborhoods.
- Marketing will begin in January for the Spring 2014 Glendale University 101 program. Classes start on Monday, March 17th and will run through Monday, May 19th.
- More than 200 volunteers have registered for the annual MLK Day of Service project that will be held on Saturday, January 18th from 9:00 a.m. to noon at Sahuaro Ranch Park. Volunteers will pick 15 tons of citrus that will be donated to the local food banks.
- The Rock-n-Roll Paint-a-Thon was held on October 26th at which 300 volunteers painted 16 homes in Glendale.
- The Fire Department is seeking community input and is hosting four meetings at various locations. A flyer was distributed with detailed information.

The contact list of neighborhood leaders for the approximately 200 registered neighborhoods needs to be confirmed and updated. The Commissioners, along with Chair Geurs, decided how to split up the lists between the Commissioners. Each Commissioner was assigned at least nine people to contact within their districts.

VI. Commission Member Reports and Comments

Chair Geurs thanked the Commissioners and staff for their participation with the December meeting and the awards given. Chair Geurs suggested that next year, the invitee list should be increased and the invites should be sent out earlier. Chair Geurs stated that a theme for the June meeting was still needed.

Commissioner Wixon was concerned about the trees and bushes in the right-of-ways in his neighborhood. Commissioner Wixon stated that the plants are not getting enough water and may be dying. Mr. McAllen suggested that Mr. Roger Boyer in the Right of Way Division be contacted regarding this issue.

Vice Chair Solter commented on the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Group which provides free tax preparation assistance for those in need. Vice Chair Solter noted that there are sites in Glendale whereby these services can be obtained. Vice Chair Solter praised the installation of the traffic box at 59th Avenue and Olive which provides safety for pedestrians. Vice Chair Solter commented that there are two houses from the Rock N Roll Paint-a-Thon which will be painted in March.

Commissioner Sheeler praised Ms. Deb Coy and other staff of the Sanitation Department with the assistance in combating the recycling looters in her neighborhood. However, the looters still continue using shopping carts to steal from the recycling bins. Commissioner Sheeler mentioned that the C's Recycling, which opened in her community, was responsible for this new crime wave and was purchasing stolen goods from these looters who are organized. The City police, CAT and Sanitation were monitoring this activity per

Municipal Code. Commissioner Sheeler advised all to watch their neighborhoods for signs of these prosecutable activities. Commissioner Sheeler stated that it was weed season and hoped that the Code was better prepared for it this year.

Chair Geurs noted that Commissioner Neighbors absence was unexcused this evening.

VII. **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Denise Kazmierczak