

Aberdeen City Council
Work Session
May 7, 2007

PRESENT: Mayor Simmons, Council President Hiob, Councilwoman Elliott
Councilmen Kupferman and Yensan

Mr. Miller, Mr. Lapinsky, Chief Rudy, and Mr. Jack

OPENING

Mayor Simmons called the Work Session to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

1. My Space – Mayor Simmons

Mayor Simmons reported that a fight between youths, which started in the library over the My Space website, needs the attention of the Council. He asked why My Space is available to children in the City library. The librarian indicated that site could be used as a learning source. Previously, My Space was filtered; but, because of numerous breakdowns the filter was removed. Mayor Simmons asked the Council for their input on this issue.

Councilman Yensan said he has had little experience with this website. His home computer has a filter for this and some other websites.

Council President Hiob noted that he has had little experience with this website, but he knows there are many bad things on the computer. He monitors the computer use of his children. Council President Hiob would like to know what the Council can do legally about this problem.

2. The Baker House Bed and Breakfast – Mayor Simmons

Mayor Simmons introduced Mr. & Mrs. Riddell, owners of The Baker House Bed and Breakfast. Mr. Riddell stated that he has owned the property for four years. During that time, he and his wife have run the business and continued to work full time. The house is 111 years old and expenses are increasing rapidly. They would like to have approval to operate an assisted living facility which would bring additional revenue to the City. In order to do this, an exception would be required. Mr. Riddell said his electric bill is \$1,100 a month in the winter and \$400 - \$500 per month in the summer, and water bills have increased greatly. Mr. Riddell mentioned that he and his wife do all of the gardening and some of the necessary repairs.

Mayor Simmons mentioned that due to government cutbacks, military travel has been reduced. Mr. Riddell said they still have the Murder Mystery events to help with expenses. Mayor Simmons asked what the long term plans for the facility were. The Riddell's goal is to generate enough revenue so that one of them could remain at home to operate the business. One of his neighbors operates an assisted living facility and is getting calls regularly to accept more people.

Councilman Kupferman asked what kind of license is required. He was told that none is needed for two or three people. If there are more than three people in residence, the Health Department and other entities get involved and licenses are required.

Mayor Simmons asked how some neighbors would react to the proposed business. Mr. Riddell said some neighbors are not even aware that an assisted living facility is on site because the residents are picked up in the morning and returned in the evening from adult day care.

Council President Hiob asked how long the neighbors have had the exception. He was told approximately four years.

Councilman Yensan said the request would have to go to Planning and Zoning, and then to the Board of Appeals for a special exception.

Mayor Simmons assured the Riddells that the City would like to help them.

3. Water and Sewer Capital Needs – Mr. Lapinsky

Mr. Lapinsky introduced the following DPW employees: Paul Visser, Acting Superintendent of Water and Waste Water, 33 years with the City; George Skinner, Waste Water Department, 24 ½ years with the City; Jim Sites, oversees all Maintenance for the City and APG, 21 years with the City; Frank Collins, Water Plant Operator, 27 years with the City; and Curtis Ball, Waste Water Treatment Plant at APG, 21 years with the City.

Mr. Lapinsky gave a PowerPoint presentation on Water and Waste Water System Capital Projects and Expenditures. The Water Capital Projects are: Pump Stations, Plant Upgrades, Automated Well Suite, and Distribution Line Upgrades.

Mr. Lapinsky said when these upgrades are completed they will be merged with the new systems. The improvements are needed for improved service to citizens as well as City employee safety.

The benefits of the improvements will be:

- a. Increased dependability and reliability in the production and distribution of water.
- b. The majority of this Capital Project is aimed at the Distribution System.
- c. Standardization of Controls and Equipment.
- d. Increased efficiency.

The future water needs include Swan Meadow Transite replacement which is very involved.

Mr. Lapinsky also recommended the purchase of a camera truck or van at a cost of approximately \$150,000, and a project to reduce I & I at a cost of approximately \$100,000. Currently, I & I is a substantial problem. The overall “fix” for the City of Aberdeen is in the millions of dollars.

Council President Hiob asked if during dry weather is there any way to determine the flow in the system. This is a common problem in the County. He also asked if there was a Frito-Lay inspection due to their recent problem and was told there was not.

Councilman Yensan agreed that these are complicated problems and thanked Mr. Lapinsky and his department for their help in keeping the City’s Water and Sewer Systems operating.

Council President Hiob noted that all of the City’s pumping stations were built in the 1950’s. Today, they should be above ground for better control and safety of the employees. He asked how many boosters the City owns and was told four are owned by Aberdeen.

Mayor Simmons asked when new pumps are installed can their use determine when replacement will be necessary. He was told they will be monitored on line.

Mr. Lapinsky is bringing this information to the Council because the facilities are in urgent need for upgrades and replacement. The ingenuity of the Maintenance Department has kept things going. However, repairs are not feasible, a new station would be just as economical.

Councilman Kupferman said the DPW is doing a great job with all of the current problems to maintain service to the residents.

Mayor Simmons thanked Mr. Lapinsky and his staff and noted that the rate increases will finance these Capital Projects.

Councilman Kupferman said the 2.9 million dollars in the Budget for improvements is only a small portion of the amount needed.

Mr. Lapinsky commended the five men responsible for tonight's presentation and their ability to work well together. They are all very reliable employees.

Councilwoman Elliott said the Treatment Plant employees go above and beyond the call of duty; her father was a superintendent at the plant. She was surprised that the three pumping stations are in such bad condition and asked whether it was possible to postpone the replacement of one at this time. Mr. Lapinsky said that would be impossible. Definitely, the Old Post Road and Plater Street Stations need replacement. Graceford could be looked at, but three should be done.

Council President Hiob said the cost could skyrocket in the future with postponements. Purchasing more units is cheaper for the City.

Mr. Miller agreed that the higher number purchased would reduce the cost.

OTHER MATTERS

Councilman Yensan introduced two Auxiliary Police in the audience. They were Tom Anderson and Don Mullins. He and the City appreciate the work they are doing and the savings being realized.

Chief Rudy reported the following:

- a. The Auxiliary Police are fully mobilized and ready for the 10K Run.
- b. An error in the 2006 Annual Police Report has been corrected.
- c. Two officers have applied to the Harford County Sheriff's Department and replacements will be processed.

Mayor Simmons repeated that the City is dedicated to trying to maintain parity and to ensure safety along the Rt. 40 corridor between Havre de Grace and other entities. Everyone in the region should be concerned and involved, not just Aberdeen.

Chief Rudy is also concerned because the problems go through and/or stop in Aberdeen. He reported that major problems are going to Cecil County. It is necessary for Aberdeen to stay on top of problems to prevent them from returning to the City.

Councilman Yensan attended the NAACP Dinner and was congratulated by a resident on the crime reduction on Washington Street, Baldwin Manor, etc. This person asked if Perryman could be helped with their problems

Chief Rudy received information on an existing problem today and when it was brought to Cpl. Gosnell's attention, it was already being handled.

Council President Hiob thanked Mr. Lapinsky for correcting the storm drain issue on Angus Drive which was mentioned last Monday. He was told the work was finished this morning.

Mayor Simmons reported that the City has applied for a grant for BRAC money in the amount of \$650,000 for a GIS System which will help with locating problems. Also, a request was made for \$500,000 for a Vertical Take-Out Study.

ADJOURNMENT

The Work Session was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.