

**Aberdeen City Council Work Session
September 29, 2008**

Roll Call: The Aberdeen City Council Roll was called with the following results:

Present: Mayor Bennett, Council President Elliott, Councilwoman Young, Councilmen Hiob and Kupferman

Absent: None

Also Present: Douglas Miller, City Manager
Phyllis Grover, Director of Planning & Community Development
Randy Rudy, Chief of Police
Matthew Lapinsky, Director of Public Works
Doris Manner, Recording Secretary

1. Mayor Bennett called the Work Session to order at 4:30 p.m.
2. Maintenance Code: Public Comment

Mr. Miller stated that Public Comment was heard at the Council meeting last Monday. The Council was asked if they had any questions or additions.

Council President Elliott addressed the following:

- A. The cost for administering the Code
- B. Combining this document with a Liability Code
- C. Access to private property by City employees
- D. Constitutional aspects of the Ordinance
- E. Responsibilities of the Director of Public Works & Director of Planning and Community Development should be defined
- F. Concerns for elderly citizens who are financially and physically unable to comply with the Code

Councilman Kupferman feels the Code is geared more toward the careless, messy residents who have trash, abandon cars, etc. around their homes. Roof repairs and similar issues may not be the types of issues this document should address. If Habitat for Humanity becomes involved, these projects will be huge. This ordinance is no good without enforcement.

Mayor Bennett asked when the point would be reached to determine when painting, etc. would be required to solve a problem. It comes down to liability and affordability. These measures are being taken to make the City look good.

Councilman Hiob noted that some of the “dirty” homeowners have expensive cars, etc. They need to refocus on their homes. The ordinance is a good way to raise the bar for the City. There is some fine tuning needed. The fines which are collected could be used to pay the salaries if additional employees are needed.

Councilman Kupferman said the Director of Planning and Community Development the Director of Public Works will make decisions regarding which improvements are needed, fine assessments, and court order obtainment. He asked if the City would be responsible for legal fees if the case goes to court. Ms. Grover said the States Attorney would represent the City without charge.

Council President Elliott feels the ordinance is too restrictive and wonders if the City should be this involved.

Councilman Kupferman said areas of “Old Aberdeen” would be “under fire” with this ordinance. He said the City has 47% rentals which would make the landlords responsible.

Mayor Bennett stated that this document is not intended for the City to take over. It is a complaint driven ordinance. As a result, common ground is needed for the homeowners and the City.

Councilman Kupferman agrees with Mayor Bennett. However, the City will have to go farther when a roof or other repair is needed which involves money.

Councilman Hiob noted that residents who maintain their homes should be considered and protected. This document is one more tool for the City to use toward enforcement.

Council President Elliott said some problems can be solved between residents with reasonable communication. She asked if there were any other municipalities with this type of ordinance. Ms. Grover mentioned the following: Havre de Grace, Elkton, Berlin, Laurel, Westminster, Gaithersburg, College Park, Greenbelt, Hagerstown, and New Carrollton.

Councilwoman Young supports the proposed ordinance. This is an opportunity for residents to take pride in the City. The ability to gain entry is covered in other Codes. She submitted suggested changes and additions to the document to Mr. Miller. The citizens should be better informed on these issues.

Mayor Bennett asked the Council to submit their comments to Ms. Grover for review.

A motion was made by Councilman Hiob and seconded by Councilwoman Young for the Mayor and Council to adjourn to a Closed Session with the City Attorney.

The motion was passed with a vote of 5 – yes.

The Work Session was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.