



**URBANA CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION MINUTES
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2022**

President Hess called the City of Urbana Work Session to order at 6:00 pm.

City Staff attending: Director of Administration Kerry Brugger, Director of Law Mark Feinstein, Fire Chief Dean Ortleib, Police Chief Matt Lingrell, and Zoning and Compliance Officer Preston Carter

City Council: President Hess, present; Ms. Jumper, present; Mr. Scott, present; Mr. Paul, present; Ms. Truelove, present; Mr. Thackery, present; Ms. Collier, present; and Ms. Bean, absent.

Citizen Comments

Chris Massie (538 S. Walnut Street): He was concerned with the procedure for complaints. His neighborhood's specific complaint has been livestock (fowl) in a small building on South Walnut Street. He's concerned with odors, housing, the size of the lot, and permits, etc. He does not care if they are there, as long as it's cleaned up. This is an issue that has been going on for six months. He also believes the homeowner is no longer present.

Don Richardson (202 Dewey Avenue): He is concerned with a neighbor at Russell and Dewey that has overgrown weeds, a ten-foot fence, vehicles in the yard, and logs.

Condemned Houses / Creation of a Land Bank

Ms. Truelove started by stating she did not wish to pursue the land bank tonight. She stated she had gotten some information but it would be better down the pike.

Regarding the condemned houses, Ms. Truelove has spoken to Preston. She appreciates where he is coming from and understands he is limited in his resources. She wants to further clean up and will continue working. She cares about the outside, not the inside. They're nuisances to her eyeballs.

President Hess brought up the topic of ordinances for nuisance housing. Mr. Paul stated the City of Urbana does not have a maintenance code. President Hess stated that is what Council would have to work on. Mr. Feinstein stated that as part of a property maintenance code, the City would have to establish standards for appearance of the outside of a house. Mr. Paul stated that Council previously started to work on this, but there wasn't much of an appetite in the past. President Hess elaborated. He stated that in the past, the issue was regarding houses needing to be fixed before it could be sold. Council wasn't interested at that time in making a property owner have to do that. Mr. Feinstein mentioned that the international property maintenance code would be the place to start, and it does not specifically refer to selling properties. Council can make legislation as specific or as vague as it desires.

Mr. Paul inquired as to where enforcement of a maintenance code would lie. Mr. Feinstein stated it would be incumbent with the legislation to determine where enforcement would fit in. He indicated that the previous comments already show there are limitations to enforcement. Mr. Thackery stated that this would be biting off a lot because whose standards of being up to code would set off a slippery slope.

President Hess asked how long it takes for a condemned house to be taken down. Mr. Feinstein stated this was a County issue, in which the City has no authority. The condemnation process is typically related to health issues, which is a County division. Mr. Paul asked if conceivably the City could make its own condemnation process. Mr. Feinstein stated that via home rule, it could. Mr. Paul asked Mr. Carter if it would make his job easier. Mr. Carter responded that it would not because it would not necessarily fix the larger issues. Mr. Brugger generalized the importance of figuring out what a condemnation was. Not all condemned houses need to be torn down.

Ms. Truelove inquired as to why the Health Department does not necessarily go back in. Mr. Brugger stated the properties need to go down the process. At the end of the chain, if the County Auditor decides the County does not want the property, it reaches a stand still. The City can only fix what it has authority to fix.

Mr. Scott asked for confirmation that the City needs the County for the land bank. Mr. Brugger confirmed yes, although theoretically the City could do it on their own, but it would not work anywhere as efficiently.

Ms. Truelove ended the discussion by stating she wanted to work on the maintenance issue. She is tired of the lack of enforcement and the difficulty of all three branches of government working together.

Unpaved Parking Violations

President Hess is concerned with the number of violations of citizens parking on grass. Mr. Brugger will find out the exact number and report back. Mr. Carter indicated that there have been some violations that have been reported based on complaints. This hasn't really been an issue for the City and the complaints they have been receiving are getting resolved.

Noise Ordinance

Mr. Paul indicated he will be working with Mr. Feinstein on this issue. He believes the language of the current noise ordinances is choppy. The current statute involves noise that "disturbs a reasonable person of normal sensitivities" and is "plainly audible."

He main concern is the application of the ordinance regarding a restaurant in a residential area where citizens are concerned with live music. He wishes to solely put this on the radar for now as something that Council will need to look at in the future to further define the language, perhaps adding time limitations.

2023 City Council Budget

City Council members were able to look at the proposed budget for 2023 to potentially suggest changes prior to President Hess signing off.

Mr. Paul was concerned about not having any proposed budget for travel and training. He suggested seeing how much the Ohio Municipal League charges for training to potentially add the amount to the requested budget.

Mr. Thackery was curious what went into the advertising budget. Council Clerk Steffan indicated that this constitutes the fees the Urbana Citizen charges for all of the legal requirements surrounding notice of legislation.

President Hess suggested looking at the budget over the weekend and going through line by line at the next regular meeting.

WORK SESSION COMPLETED AT 6:55 p.m.

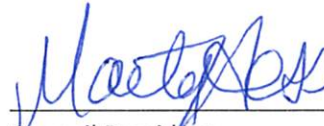
NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

October 4, 2022, at 6:00 p.m.





Council Clerk



Council President