



Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting
Hemet Public Library- 2nd Floor
Thursday, March 28, 2013 – 3:30 PM to 5:30 PM

AGENDA RECAP

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT: *Members of the public may be given an opportunity to comment on agenda items at the conclusion of each discussion item, as time permits.*

1. Call to Order- *Chairman Dan Goodrich*

Chair Dan Goodrich called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

STAFF PRESENT: Dave Brown – Police Chief
 Deanna Elliano – Community Development Director
 Steve McEwen – Assistant City Attorney

CAC PRESENT: Jim Connell Mary Ann Mari
 Gary Fowler Robert Masson
 Eva Gifford Sharon McComb
 John Gifford Shellie Milne
 Dan Goodrich Carlos Navarro
 Frank Gorman Stefany Nelson
 Norm Kyriss Michael Ramirez

CAC ABSENT: Patti Drusky Mona Groff
 Eric Gosch Connie Hall
 Larry Graves

2. Comments or corrections to the February 28, 2013 CAC Agenda Recap (distributed via e-mail to CAC members)- *CAC members*

It was MOVED by CAC Member Mary Ann Mari, SECONDED by CAC Member Eva Gifford and unanimously agreed to approve the February 28, 2013 Agenda Recap as presented.

3. Hemet ROCS Task Force Activities Update– *Community Development Director Elliano*

CDD Elliano provided an update regarding both the Tier 1 and Tier 2 efforts of the Hemet ROCS task force, noting that Tier 1 efforts almost always result in arrests and/or parole violations. She advised that as the task force progresses, we hope to move out of the “trriage mode” and towards the restoration of properties and getting people back into buildings to make them viable again.

CDD Elliano reviewed a list of some of the other items that were in progress. She advised after the Alcoholic Beverage Ordinance went into effect on February 21st, the Code Compliance Team had visited 44 liquor stores in the City to give them an informational packet regarding the ordinance, and to let them know that they would be returning in two weeks to check on compliance. Upon re-visiting the stores, 19 were in compliance, six citations were issued, and the remaining 19 were working towards compliance.

CDD Elliano passed around several photos of the liquor stores before and after the sweep, noting that most of the violations displayed in the photos were related to signage and visibility. She advised that the businesses were appreciative of the notification that they were given regarding the ordinance, and that some had expressed concern with other businesses that were also in violation. Some business owners, particularly in the East Hemet area, commented about the stores in the County jurisdiction, so we have shared our ordinance with Olivia Barnes, Supervisor Stone’s representative at the County, with hopes of establishing a coordinated effort.

CAC Member Gifford inquired regarding the types of violations that the task force was encountering.

CDD Elliano responded that for the Tier 1 efforts that involve the Police Department, there were often a lot of parole violations, drugs, weapons etc. The Tier 2 properties tend to include various health and safety code violations, as well as property maintenance issues and unpermitted construction. The larger Mobile Home Parks and apartment complexes seem to have more minor violations, while more severe violations are found in the smaller duplexes, four-plexes, etc.

CAC Member Mari inquired regarding the success of the liquor store sweep.

CDD Elliano responded that overall she thought it had been very productive and that staff was hopeful that compliance would be achieved with all of the stores that were inspected.

CAC Member Ramirez commended staff and CDD Elliano on the ordinance, as well as the success depicted in the photos.

CDD Elliano thanked the CAC for their support, and noted that staff would continue to monitor the liquor stores to ensure continued compliance.

4. Updates regarding the Abandoned/ Vacant Property Ordinance and the current Inventory of Boarded Properties- *Community Development Director Elliano and City Attorney*

CDD Elliano began her presentation by first advising that a draft version of the Abandoned / Vacant Property Ordinance had been distributed to the CAC via email.

She then continued with the good news that Notices of Default and Foreclosure in the City are decreasing, down from a total of 638 at the previous count in January to a current 603. Additionally, unemployment, previously reported at 19% is down to 14%, so we are seeing some trends of improvement. These trends are also being seen on the Economic Development side, through signs of investment interest. The former Skyline building, south of Acacia Avenue on Palm Avenue, was purchased by KPL Scaffold, Inc. who will be hiring 30 local people to help run their business.

Regarding vacant and boarded up property in the City, the last comprehensive inventory was completed in 2009, which indicated 277 boarded properties. This number is down to 53 board-ups, which is comprised of 46 residential units and eight commercial buildings.

CAC Member Connell inquired about a recent meeting of various businesses that the Mayor had mentioned to him.

CDD Elliano suggested that he may be referring to the Broker Breakfast, which included representatives from both the Real Estate and Developer industries, as well as the City. Approximately 60 people attended, and the event was very successful. It was held prior to the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) conference, at which two Council members and City staff will be conducting marketing of and outreach for the City of Hemet. Another similar meeting may be held with engineers, developers, etc., to discuss ideas on improving our permit processes.

CDD Elliano moved on to discuss the City's board-up process, explaining that the Abandoned / Vacant Property Ordinance would help staff achieve early notification of properties going into foreclosure. She walked through the ordinance, and then offered to answer any questions.

CDD Elliano discussed the registration requirement of the Abandoned / Vacant Property Ordinance, noting that this process is already in place in Riverside and various other cities. She explained what the process would accomplish, and that it would place the onus on whomever is responsible for the property for the clean-up and maintenance, rather than having Code Enforcement deal with it, which is what is currently happening. She explained the classification of “nuisances,” and what each category under this section would do, and how it would work. Not all vacant properties are problematic, but usually those that are not being maintained tend to become a problem. Enforcement of the ordinance will be focused on these properties, and the ordinance includes maintenance requirements for vacant properties.

CAC Member Fowler stated his assumption that the ordinance included verbiage from other communities that already have such an ordinance established. He asked if this could be expanded on.

Assistant City Attorney McEwen advised that the ordinances from the cities of Placentia, Riverside, and Eastvale had been reviewed, and some verbiage or enforcement methods were acquired from each.

CAC Member John Gifford referred to the various places in the ordinance that discussed “due diligence” and “diligent progression.” He asked if he was correct to assume that the argument of what this terminology meant would be determined by the Community Development Director.

CDD Elliano responded that it would typically be determined either by herself or the Building Official, depending on the issue.

CAC Member John Gifford suggested that it should be spelled out regarding who would make the determination.

Discussion ensued regarding various aspects of the ordinance.

Police Chief Brown suggested that if the City had 100% registration of vacant properties, it would save a great deal of time and provide a mechanism to deal with identifying squatters.

CAC Member Mari inquired regarding the time frame that would be allowed for an owner to bring a property into compliance, in the event that a tenant is renting a home but failing to maintain it, and the landlord is absent.

CDD Elliano explained that there was a different process to follow for vacant vs. occupied property. The City’s abatement crews cannot go onto private property that is occupied. First a notice is sent to both the tenant and the property owner, followed by a

citation if no compliance has occurred within a specified time frame. This type of situation falls under the Nuisance Ordinance, rather than the Abandoned / Vacant Property Ordinance.

CAC Member Mari suggested that compliance tends to come from getting into the pockets of the offenders. I would rather spend my money cleaning up my property than paying fines.

CAC Member Gorman inquired regarding the time frame for the recording of the Notice of Default, wondering if it was after the 10 days, or after the family vacates the house.

CDD Elliano advised that it was after the Notice of Default is recorded by the bank or lienholder.

CAC Member Gorman asked for clarification that, with this being the case, the family may not even have vacated the property yet.

CDD Elliano indicated that this was correct.

CAC Member Gorman wondered if the ordinance was working for the other communities utilizing it.

CDD Elliano noted that this depended on the level of the enforcement implemented by the community. The City of Riverside is very aggressive in enforcement of their ordinance, as is the City of Grand Terrace. Other cities with similar ordinances may or may not be as aggressive.

A discussion of the rental registration process ensued.

CAC Member McComb wondered how banks and/or lien holders would be made aware of the ordinance and its related process.

CDD Elliano advised that the City would be contacting them. She noted that questions are often posed by some of the banks who have taken over a property as to whether Hemet has a registration program, since they are accustomed to them in other cities.

Chairman Goodrich noted that under "Definitions" there is no definition of personal property listed. He suggested that one be added.

Assistant City Attorney McEwen responded that this could definitely be looked at.

Chairman Goodrich asked for clarification on the building permit process. If at the end of 180 days a property has not been completed can there be an extension? And if so, how many extensions can be granted?

CDD Elliano advised that to be granted an extension the property must be making substantial progress toward completion.

Chairman Goodrich suggested that this be spelled out, since what is often seen is the granting of multiple extensions without any real progress being made. Such cases have been known to go on for years.

Assistant City Attorney McEwen noted that there is a building code section that deals with permits. This can often be vague, and we have run into this issue in other cities as well.

CAC Member Gary Fowler suggested that there must be a reasonable limit somewhere. He referred to a local property that has been in poor repair for all of the 10 years that he has been a resident of the City, and that it seemed to him that 10 years was an unreasonable amount of extensions.

Discussion ensued regarding this issue.

CAC Member Kyriss referred to the "purpose and intent," and then noted the definition of abandoned property. It seems that to be addressed a property must not only be vacant, but also have a notice of default. He wondered if certain properties would be excluded because there is no Notice of Default.

Further discussion ensued.

It was suggested, with reference to Section 14-503 (d)(4) of the proposed ordinance regarding registration requirements, that once a bank actually takes over a property they are typically very diligent in cleaning it up and maintaining it, and that with this in mind, perhaps the "prior to" verbiage should be removed.

CAC Member Kyriss indicated that he would like to see the banks take properties back as quickly as possible, and that he would hate for them to be hindered by this ordinance. He wondered what kind of penalty there was for non-compliance.

Assistant City Attorney McEwen advised that any part of this ordinance could be enforced by any of the remedies that are currently in place, including the criminal route, civil action, or citations.

CAC Member Kyriss brought up the fact that not only beneficiaries, but also management companies may be penalized for properties per this ordinance.

CDD Elliano advised that penalties would primarily fall on the property owner. The management company is referred to for contact purposes.

CAC Member Kyriss noted that when his company is trying to sell a property that has been abandoned and boarded up, they are not hired to maintain the property, and have no control over making the owner perform maintenance.

CAC Member Nelson wondered how Section 2 regarding Environmental Exemptions related to this ordinance.

CDD Elliano explained how the actual ordinance amendment would be exempted from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Chairman Goodrich asked for a motion regarding the ordinance.

It was MOVED by CAC Member Gorman, SECONDED by CAC Member McComb, and unanimously agreed to recommend approval to the City Council of the Abandoned / Vacant Property Ordinance.

CDD Elliano advised that there were only two CAC meetings left, and indicated that she would try to pull together the rental registration program for the April meeting. She suggested that the last meeting could include a brief review of the remaining ordinances that had not yet been moved forward.

5. Presentation regarding Technology and Staffing Updates for the Police Department- *Police Chief Dave Brown*

Police Chief Brown advised the CAC that over the last several months the City Council had authorized \$1.5 million for technology and staffing upgrades for the Police Department. He then gave a Power Point presentation outlining various programs that had either been completed or were in progress, including:

- West Covina Service Group (CAD / RMS Upgrade); Funding source – US-DOJ Justice Assistance Grants; Status – Complete
- State 911 System Upgrades; Funding source – State 911 PSAP Allocation; Status – Complete
- California Department of Justice Network Security Upgrade; Funding source – Police Dept. budget savings; Status – Complete
- FCC “Narrow-band” Radio Replacement
- Advance Data Management / Crime Analysis

- Automatic License Plate Reader Project; Funding source – US DOJ Justice Assistance Grant; Status – Out to Bid
- Communications Center / Sisk Rebuild; Funding source – 911 Funds / Development Impact Fees

Chief Brown advised that four (4) of the first six-cylinder police cars were in and being utilized, and another five (5) were on their way. The automatic license plate readers will be mounted on those cars.

City Council Liaison Milne expressed concern regarding the automatic license plate readers as they might relate to privacy invasion.

Discussion ensued regarding this matter.

Chief Brown indicated that the Police Department could only run plates located on public streets. They could not enter someone's garage or back yard to view or run their license plates.

Chief Brown gave a staffing update, noting that there were now 57 fully trained officers in the field and ten officers in training. Of the 10, eight are in field training and two are in the academy. The training program is typically four months long. Occasionally if it goes well, it is extended by a month or two.

CAC Member Mari inquired regarding the actual cost per car of one of the automatic license plate readers.

Chief Brown responded that the cost was approximately \$15,000 per car.

CAC Member McComb asked how long a police car typically lasts.

Chief Brown stated that in most communities a police vehicle is utilized for about three years, but the Hemet Police Department typically utilized for eight years, and then use of the vehicle is transferred to the Police volunteers.

CAC Member Connell inquired regarding the current level of police staffing vs. what it was at its highest.

Chief Brown indicated that staffing was at 90 in 2007.

CAC Member Mari asked how many officers Chief Brown felt were needed.

Chief Brown responded that this answer changes with technology upgrades, and as the Department's way of doing things is improved. We are excited about having 67 police officers on staff. One officer per 1,000 people is generally what is needed.

CAC Member Gorman wondered if the 67 officers were sworn officers exclusively.

Chief Brown affirmed that they were.

CAC Member Masson expressed his support of the automatic license plate readers.

CAC Member Navarro wondered if the reduction of 23 officers since 2007 was a result of there being less people residing in the City.

Chief Brown advised that the current ratio is 0.7 officers per 1,000 people.

CAC Member Navarro added that he was a strong proponent of the Police Department.

The CAC thanked Chief Brown for his presentation and update.

6. CAC Roundtable – CAC Chair & Committee Members

CAC Member Navarro noted that he was a latecomer to the CAC, and stated that he had some questions. He asked if the CAC had been tasked with restoring the community. It is apparent that efforts are being made to do a lot of things with little or no resources. Has it ever been recommended to the City Council that they pursue ways of generating revenue? I have never run into a person who has indicated an opposition to a tax that would fund additional police officers, and I feel that this would be an appropriate approach. All over this town, things are not the way they were.

CAC Member Mari indicated that part of the job on the CAC is looking for funding resources, but the response of the citizens is often that it's not their problem and they don't want to be taxed. Everyone has an agenda, and not everyone is in favor of taxes that are proposed for a specific item.

Chairman Goodrich mentioned the grossly defeated Measure "O" which was a utility tax that would benefit the City's General Fund in 2008. The general consensus of the people was that they did not want to pay a tax that would go into the General Fund. Perhaps if it had been proposed to fund public safety exclusively it might have been more palatable to the residents.

CAC Member Navarro noted that there were different conditions in 2008.

Assistant City Attorney McEwen advised that this was a touchy subject. Taxes are something that the voters would have to approve. We haven't really been tasked with developing taxing ideas, but if the CAC is really interested in this, they could come up with a recommendation and move it up the chain to the Council.

Chairman Goodrich suggested that it wouldn't be a bad idea to have an economic development presentation with the Community Investment Director.

CAC Member Gorman agreed. The biggest part of ROCS is the need for more police officers. The City Council has to do what they have to do to give us the best police protection that they can, but they can't just move forward with taxing people. He referred to the February 24th CAC meeting that included a presentation of the 19 ordinances that were proposed to be accomplished. I would like to see that chart updated and brought back to us at the next meeting.

CAC Member Ramirez shared with the CAC his police ride-along experience from two weeks ago. The officers are doing a fabulous job. He referred to a sweep that the police department was doing regarding adults purchasing alcohol for minors. The first time they did the sweep there were six or seven occurrences of this, but this time there were only two. He commended the Police Department.

7. Comments from the Public regarding items not on the agenda – Chairman

Goodrich (This is an optional portion of the agenda at the discretion of the Chair, and allowed as time permits.)

Bob Jungblood thanked the CAC for their commitment to the City through their efforts. I am an elected officer for Hemet Del Sol, and the biggest problem that we have today is off-site property owners. When I moved to Hemet Del Sol, this community was almost 100% owner occupied. Now there are so many out-of-state owners that we cannot get to clean up or maintain their properties that our budget in dealing with these matters has increased to approximately \$5,000 per year. I don't want to get political, but I can't understand why we can't find some money for our Police and Fire Departments. I feel that this is unreasonable. Rod Fuller is one of the finest officers that the City has ever had in Code Enforcement, and Soledad Carrisoza in the Planning Department is wonderful. Sarah McComas in the City Clerk's office is also helpful whenever I have a request. The residents could not ask for better service from the City's employees.

Marcia Scott advised the CAC that the Farmer's Market vendor who sells knives continues to have a booth there. I was told that there would follow-up regarding this issue, but nothing has changed. I feel that this is very dangerous and inappropriate in our community. She suggested that the CAC make a recommendation to the City Council that this booth not be allowed to locate there.

Discussion ensued regarding this issue.

City Council Liasion Milne stated that she was tired of Hemet ROCS not being given the credit that it deserves. She suggested that the CAC members and the regular members of the audience write to the Press to commend the Hemet ROCS group for their efforts and note what some of those efforts are. She noted that there are a number of good things happening in Hemet, but the Press never prints the good.

CAC Member Gorman suggested that the list of accomplishments be posted in the Press Enterprise.

CAC Member Mari asked if there had been any more discussion regarding the CAC moving their focus from negative to positive.

Chairman Goodrich indicated getting the word out has always been the difficult part.

City Council Liasion Milne suggested that if the people in this room right now write to Gail Hammond at the Press Enterprise in a positive light, perhaps we can get some word out to the community.

8. Adjournment to the meeting of April 25, 2013- *Chairman Goodrich*

It was MOVED by CAC Member Gorman, SECONDED by CAC Member McComb and unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 5:28 p.m. to the April 25, 2013 meeting of the Hemet ROCS CAC.
