

Mayor Amy Vierung called the study session to order at 6:22 p.m. on Monday, September 8, 2008. Roll call. Present: Aldermen Cox, Elston, Lee, Martin, and Sotelo. Absent: Aldermen Adell.

Also present were City Manager Scott Shumard, Police Chief Ron Potthoff, and City Clerk Marie Rombouts.

Ted Redman of BKV Group summarized the needs assessment, building audit, concept plans, and cost assessments. Developing image work has not been started.

Ted Redman presented the two remodeling options. One kept the auditorium in place and expanded to the east for the Police Department. The second, preferred option, renovated the auditorium space into offices with the addition to the east for the Police Department.

Ted Redman reviewed the construction cost estimates. He compared costs for options, such as renovation excluding the firing range, renovation including the firing range, and new construction including the firing range, with some funding towards site acquisition. Costs for renovation ranged from \$11.9 million to \$17.83 million, whereas new construction ranged from \$14.44 million to \$16.7 million – all in 2008 dollars. Alderman Lee noted that there was not a big difference between renovation and new construction but with new construction there would still be approximately \$2 million of work for needed repairs to the Coliseum.

Ted Redman outlined the next steps as a consensus on goals, identification of preferred option (renovation/expansion or new construction), development of a concept image and potential funding scenarios.

Manager Shumard thanked Ted Redman for the presentation and the job that BKV Group has done.

Manager Shumard announced that the dwelling at 2008 15th Avenue has been condemned and the paperwork has been sent to Attorney Coplan for court. Shumard explained that it could take months for any action to come of this. If the City had a municipal court for these cases, we would need to hire an additional attorney and would still go through the Circuit Court.

Manager Shumard informed the Council that three cases are ready to be prosecuted. Alderman Lee suggested that we hire an additional attorney to specifically handle property maintenance cases. Manager Shumard stated that hiring an additional

attorney does come with additional costs. Council members agreed that if the cost of an additional attorney started eliminating property maintenance cases, it would be a good problem. The Council wants the citizens to know that we mean business. They also agreed that cleaning up one property in an area usually spurs other properties to do repairs.

Manager Shumard reported that he had a meeting with Code Enforcement staff on August 18. Code Enforcement staff's goal is to maintain and enhance the standard of life in Sterling. Staff expressed concern about consistency. Maureen Frankfother and Kent Sathoff currently issue tickets for abandoned vehicles, excess junk to be collected, and lawns that need to be mowed. Sathoff can access vehicle license plates from his mobile computer; Frankfother does not have a mobile computer. Manager Shumard has recommended that performance measures be developed to monitor the work that is being done. Local Government Management software will be purchased with a monthly subscription fee for three full users at the cost of \$555 monthly. It is a web-based service, so all information will be updated immediately.

Manager Shumard distributed a property maintenance protocol sheet that outlines the steps to be taken for each property maintenance issue. If someone does not follow the protocol, it will be considered a performance issue. Fines for violations have been increased and timelines have been reduced. Landlords will be contacted, not tenants.

Council members expressed concern that Code Enforcement staff is concentrating on small issues that do not matter instead of focusing on the real problems. Mayor Viering reminded the Council that something insignificant to one person may be a very real problem for another. Code Enforcement staff must respond to all complaint calls.

Manager Shumard plans to have a draft of the rental program ready by September 30. Software will be ordered October 7 and a draft of the ordinance should be ready on October 8. Digital cameras will be purchased for each Code Enforcement Officer. AVL (Automatic Vehicle Locators) will be installed on each vehicle at \$575 each. AVLs have been installed on all police squad cars.

Manager Shumard has met with the landlords and reported that their greatest concern is how they will absorb the costs to bring their properties up to code. Other concerns were tenants that destroy property, the cost of background checks, and that landlords were being singled out.

Manager Shumard informed the Council that some numbers have been compiled on property maintenance issues. Information was input on properties, with rankings on the condition of various items, such as roof, siding, porch, foundation, and garage. 254 properties, along the major roadways through Sterling, received at least three poor rankings. 169 of these are non-owner occupied units (67%). Only 37% of housing in

Sterling is rental property. Manager Shumard believes that these statistics, justify the need to start with property maintenance on non-owner occupied units.

Council members would like Code Enforcement staff to contact the complainant after they have visited a property to give a status report. The complainant would then know that progress is being made.

Manager Shumard explained that he has received several complaints from a local landlord about a dilapidated rental property, not owned by him. Manager Shumard stated that this landlord is not getting a grasp on due process allowed any property owner. The complainant is hoping to purchase the property and renovate it for himself.

Manager Shumard explained that if a property is condemned, everything must be brought up to code before it can be reinhabited. The only inspection that the City can legally do when ownership is transferred is an electrical inspection.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

Marie Rombouts
City Clerk