

OBSERVER REPORT
Planning & Development Committee
February 25, 2008

Observer: Nancy Bashook

Aldermen Present: All present

Staff Present: Jim Wolinski, Dona Spicuzza, Dennis Marino, Stan ?

Media Present: Roundtable, Evanston Review

Meeting began: 7:00 pm

Meeting ended: 9:50 pm

Meeting started with Jim Wolinski announcing that Ms. Jackson, zoning planner for city past 5 ½ years, is leaving for a position in Washington, D.C. She will be working in the office of planning. He wished her well, and Ms. Jackson thanked the Committee.

Items for consideration

(P4) Ordinance 31-O-08 – Licensing of Rental Dwelling Units

Consideration of a staff recommendation to charge a \$40 per unit/year license fee for all residential dwelling units.

This was discussed at the last meeting and held over. The committee suggested staff go back and look at a graduated fee. Felt the ordinance was giving too much power to the Community Development Director. Now staff recommends that the \$40 fee be reduced to \$25 and a no-show fee was introduced. The no-show fee of \$150 would be applied if the landlord/owner does not appear at the site and does not notify the city within 48 hours. An inspection fee of \$75 would be applied for a second inspection, if the problems identified at the first inspection are not corrected. Also recommended is that the Development Director not serve as the officer responsible for the revocation of licenses but that someone in the city manager's office serve in this capacity. Rainey proposed that the Committee adopt this recommendation, along with an amendment that seniors get a 50% fee reduction.

Purpose of this ordinance is to assure renters that the licensed apartment they are renting meets the minimum standards of the International Property Maintenance Code, Fire Prevention Code and Health Codes for safety, health and welfare. Another purpose is to eliminate nuisance renters. Mainly, the fees applied would enable the City to recover

virtually all costs for its housing inspection programs. This program should generate approximately \$500,000.

A lengthy discussion pursued among the committee members and about 35 citizens spoke against the ordinance. There were several common themes among the speakers. Staff said that the many no-shows cost lost days in productivity. The appeal process to evict a tenant takes about 180 days. Regulations are already in place, but not enforced. Citizens claim that the city is frequently a no-show; the ordinance is about revenue for the city, not going after bad guys; costs will be passed on to tenants and currently there are many vacancies in Evanston; this will cause much hardship to the owner; city should help landlord evict tenant; let's go after only those who are causing the problems.

Ald. Moran - This is regressive, expensive for people who cannot afford, and strictly a revenue item. Procedures already in place and must be enforced.

Ald. Rainey- Rental of housing an important business and owners should be licensed like any other business.

Ald. Bernstein- prefers registration to licensing. Registering properties on a yearly basis for a fee will give us information on the owners. If this \$500,000 is not put in budget, then real estate taxes will be increased.

Ald. Hansen - enforcement an issue.

Ald. Jean-Baptiste; Revenue generating not a bad word. Should address landlords who are creating the problems.

Ald. Holmes and Wollin- Problems are serious and we must get a handle on them.

Moved and seconded. Vote failed 5-4. Wollin, Tisdahl, Rainey and Holmes voted Yes. Jean-Baptiste, Wynne, Bernstein, Moran, Hansen voted No.

(P2) and (P4) out of time. Held in committee.