

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

May 3, 2022 at 5:15 PM

Chairman Stewart called the meeting to order.

The Clerk calls the roll.

Present: Aldermen Stewart, Trisciani, E. Sapienza, Heath

Absent: Alderman Cavanaugh

Messrs.: F. McNeill, A. Parent, T. Fleming, L. LaFreniere

1. Summary of abatement requests submitted by Fred McNeill, Chief Engineer.

Alderman E. Sapienza moved to approve. **Alderman Heath** duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Heath asked can someone explain to me the process individuals asking for the abatement have to go through to make sure that they fixed whatever it was that was broken.

Fred McNeill, Chief Engineer, EPD, answered we do not do a physical follow-up. Our limitation to that is they can only apply for an abatement once every five years. When we do our abatement research to approve it, we do ask for back-up. I don't believe you get the full package but the package we have back in the office usually contains Home Depot or plumbing receipts and things of that nature.

Chairman Stewart called for a vote. *There being none opposed, the motion carried.*

2. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$412,006.25 for CIP 213122 Primary Care Services for the Homeless.

*On motion of **Alderman Heath**, duly seconded by **Alderman E. Sapienza**, it was voted to approve.*

3. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$262,500 for CIP 412020 Community Response Unit.

*On motion of **Alderman Heath**, duly seconded by **Alderman Trisciani**, it was voted to approve.*

4. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$31,097.56 for CIP 412622 Police Search and Rescue Equipment.

*On motion of **Alderman Heath**, duly seconded by **Alderman E. Sapienza**, it was voted to approve.*

5. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$50,000 for CIP 412722 GOFERR Locality Equipment Matching Program.

*On motion of **Alderman Heath**, duly seconded by **Alderman Trisciani**, it was voted to approve.*

6. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$10,000 for CIP 511322 Recreation Programming.

*On motion of **Alderman E. Sapienza**, duly seconded by **Alderman Heath**, it was voted to approve.*

7. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$612,000 for CIP 712822 COVID Pandemic Expenses.

*On motion of **Alderman Heath**, duly seconded by **Alderman Trisciani**, it was voted to approve.*

8. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorizations providing for the transfer and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$4,500,000 for CIP 711022 CMOM Study, Design & Construction.

*On motion of **Alderman Heath**, duly seconded by **Alderman Heath**, duly seconded by **Alderman Trisciani**, it was voted to approve.*

9. Communication from Fred McNeill, Chief Engineer, requesting a line item adjustment to CIP 710816 Cohas Brook Sewer.

*On motion of **Alderman E. Sapienza**, duly seconded by **Alderman Heath**, it was voted to approve.*

10. Communication from Leon LaFreniere, Planning & Community Development Director, requesting adoption of a draft policy on the Protection and Secure Handling of Personally Identifiable Information.

*On motion of **Alderman Heath**, duly seconded by **Alderman E. Sapienza**, it was voted to approve.*

11. Communication from the Planning & Community Development Director requesting various CIP project extensions.

*On motion of **Alderman Heath**, duly seconded by **Alderman E. Sapienza**, it was voted to approve.*

12. Communication from Andy Parent, Fire Chief, requesting authorization to apply for \$450,000 in Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) funds to renovate the Emergency Operations Center and fund technical and equipment upgrades. *(Note: If awarded this money, there is a 25% City cost share; cash or in-kind services.)*

Alderman Heath moved to approve. **Alderman E. Sapienza** duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Trisciani asked Chief can you tell us what kind of in-kind services they are referring to. What are the guidelines for that?

Andre Parent, Fire Chief, answered in-kind services would be if we did some of the work ourselves so if city staff did it like our communications staff.

Alderman Trisciani stated so hopefully it is likely that we can do a lot of the match through in-kind services.

Chief Parent responded we will do what we can but we can't do it all. However, that is an option that we have.

Chairman Stewart called for a vote. *There being none opposed, the motion carried.*

13. Communication from the property owner of 251-261 W. Hancock Street requesting subordination of a City lien in the amount of \$60,060.

Chairman Stewart asked Leon and Todd to come forward. As the committee might recall, we now have some guidelines in place to help us make these decisions. Perhaps we can hear from staff regarding the particulars of this case.

Todd Fleming, CIP, stated basically with this subordination the owner is requesting to refinance the existing mortgage and take cash out in the amount of approximately \$170,000. \$82,000 would be reimbursed for improvements to the property. The other \$88,000 he is requesting for reimbursement for down payment on purchasing the property. In accordance with the policy that was recently adopted, this doesn't meet the criteria.

Alderman Trisciani asked so it does not because the money is helping to reimburse him for his original down payment on the property.

Mr. Fleming replied one of the criteria of the policy is the property owner could take cash out to make improvements to a property.

Alderman Trisciani stated and he is taking cash out to reimburse the list of improvements he gave us.

Mr. Fleming replied that would meet the criteria because they would be taking cash out for improvements but taking cash out to reimburse himself for purchasing the property does not.

Alderman Trisciani responded but at the end of the day we are second in line right now because this is purely a refinance and we would remain second in line today and given the value or what appears to be the assessed value of the home, it seems to be well within the guidelines for refinancing correct.

Mr. Fleming answered I guess it would be up to the committee to make that determination. The other thing to note on these loans is they are three year forgivable loans so this particular loan would be forgiven in June 2024.

Chairman Stewart stated so basically two years from now.

Alderman Trisciani stated yes and it looks like the original mortgage was \$360,000 and they are mortgaging now for \$500,000 and the valuation of the property is \$900,000. I am not sure that I see us at risk.

Chairman Stewart stated I am not sure about the risk part but what stands out to me is precedent. We developed these guidelines for a reason. I will make a motion to receive and file this and perhaps if the property owner wants to come back and talk about the reimbursement of the money that was used to make improvements to the property that might be more in-line.

Alderman Heath stated I would feel much more comfortable with that motion than approving this request.

Chairman Stewart moved to receive and file. **Alderman Heath** duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Trisciani asked are we receiving and filing or tabling this until the owner comes back with more information.

Chairman Stewart stated I will defer to the Clerk.

Matthew Normand, City Clerk, stated you can table this if you are waiting for more information.

Chairman Stewart responded I don't know that we are waiting for more information.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked we can receive and file and this item can always be brought forward again right.

Chairman Stewart answered correct. They can submit another letter with a more specific request.

Alderman Trisciani stated so we are specifically asking the property owner to come back to us with more information. What more information would we be looking for from him?

Chairman Stewart replied I don't know if we are asking him to come back. We are saying that he has the opportunity to make the request again. We are not asking for anything.

Alderman Trisciani asked so what would change if they came back to us with another request. That is my question because it is difficult to tell a property owner well we received and filed but if you come back with more information and not really tell them what might change our decision I guess...

Alderman Heath interjected I guess he needs to make the case to us whether or not to move forward because I am not convinced.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated it is not our burden.

Alderman Heath stated I was concerned because there were questions coming from the department which made me take pause. I would like to ask a question about the lead. It said something about lead abatement and he had two. Did he or didn't he?

Mr. Fleming answered as far as the lead abatement program, they have to submit an annual report that confirms that they continue to rent to low to moderate income people and that they maintain improvements to the property.

Alderman Trisciani asked how many units of housing is this property.

Mr. Fleming replied I would have to get you that information. I am not sure.

Alderman Trisciani stated I think it is almost up to eight because it is two buildings together. I guess my thing is given that the lead abatement is going to be forgiven in June 2024, which means we are guaranteed affordable housing through June 2024...

Mr. Fleming interjected other property owners in the past have come back with a refinance based on only taking like say the \$82,000 out for the improvements that he made to the property or not taking any cash out at all. That has happened in the past.

Leon LaFreniere, Planning & Community Development Director, stated to your point, alderman, I think that from an actuarial perspective clearly there is an equity position that is favorable to us. I don't think that is the issue. The issue is just the practice of the committee and the Board as to whether you feel it is appropriate. That is why when the draft was provided to you for the conditions under which subordinations would be granted, it was left with the proviso that if the committee felt it appropriate and it didn't otherwise meet fully the criteria, the Board has that ability. The criteria was put in place to try to put some framework around these requests so there would be some consistency.

Mr. Fleming stated I would also note that the policy was provided to the property owner so he is aware of what the policy in place was.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked so he is aware that he doesn't meet the criteria essentially. Was he throwing a Hail Mary?

Mr. Fleming replied yes if he read them.

Chairman Stewart called for a vote. *The motion carried with Alderman Trisciani being duly recorded in opposition.*

*There being no further business, on motion of **Alderman E. Sapienza**, duly seconded by **Alderman Heath**, it was voted to adjourn.*

A True Record. Attest.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Normand". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Clerk of Committee