

# CITY OF WEST CHICAGO

WHERE HISTORY & PROGRESS MEET

## MINUTES

### Development Committee

May 14, 2012

#### APPROVED AT THE JULY 9, 2012 MEETING

#### 1. Call to Order, Roll Call, and Establishment of a Quorum

Chairman Pineda called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll call found Aldermen James Beifuss, Sandy Dimas, H. Ronald Monroe and Ruben Pineda present.

Also in attendance was Interim Community Development Director Robert Hupp.

#### 2. Public Participation – None.

#### 3. Items for Consent – None.

#### 4. Items for Discussion

- A. City of West Chicago – Amendments to Chapter 10 of the City Code regarding Liens, Weeds, Natural Landscaping Areas and Priority Liens

Chairman Pineda stated that he is concerned because a neighbor has natural landscaping in the front yard. He noted that it is kept clean. He questioned if it would be grandfathered in. Mr. Hupp responded that it is not like a building and it would not be grandfathered in.

Chairman Pineda requested staff to provide a brief overview. Mr. Hupp noted that currently the code prohibits natural landscaping in the front yard. He noted further that the amendment would allow it. He added that another section of the code states that grass and weeds can not be over 8" tall but it does not cover trees, shrubs or ornamental plants so there is a lack of clarity in the ordinance. Mr. Hupp commented that the City received a complaint of plantings in the front yard that were wild looking. He noted that under the natural landscaping section as it exists now, everything was located in the front yard so the plantings would have to have been removed. He noted further that if it was called ornamental plantings, it could stay. He stated that the amendment would allow ornamental plantings of natural landscaping and it would have to be kept free of weeds.

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Michael L. Guttman  
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Mr. Hupp commented that a natural landscaping permit is required if someone wants to have natural plants in the whole yard.

Chairman Pineda asked if the inspectors would be looking for these plantings. Mr. Hupp responded that if the City receives a complaint, the inspector would look at the plantings to make sure it was maintained properly. He added that the intent is to have a cultivated and managed area.

Alderman Beifuss commented that the amendments mostly pertain to weeds. Mr. Hupp responded that yes, the amendments are two-fold. He added that the first part is to clarify the natural landscaping areas but the main point is to straighten out the City's procedures on weeds and weed liens. He added that there is a new provision in the statutes that deals with abandoned properties and a city incurring costs when someone walks away from a property. He added further that the provision allows the City to take certain action and incur certain costs and then lets us be first in line to be reimbursed when the foreclosure happens.

Alderman Beifuss asked if ornamental plantings were defined. Mr. Hupp responded that it is not defined. He added that he could not find a good definition and he did not feel comfortable coming up with one. Alderman Beifuss commented that he wants to make sure the inspectors are not going to be overzealous with enforcement. Mr. Hupp noted that if we get a complaint and the homeowner claims it is a natural landscaping area, we now have a tool to take care of it. He added that a key point is the purpose of natural landscaping areas listed on Page 4 of the proposed ordinance.

Chairman Pineda asked the members if they were okay with moving this forward. Aldermen Dimas and Monroe responded yes. Alderman Beifuss commented that his concern is identifying natural or native plants. Mr. Hupp noted that we will only get into that situation when it looks bad and we have to figure out what is there. He agreed that it is not an easy situation. He added that we are not going to be worried whether it is an ornamental or native plant. He added further that the area can not get weedy.

The members agreed to move the proposed amendments forward.

**5. Unfinished Business – None.**

**6. New Business**

Chairman Pineda commented that he and staff have had several discussions with the owners of the former Haggerty Ford property. He added that the owner has someone who wants to bring in antique cars and have a drive-in type atmosphere with a restaurant. He added further that the business owner wants to be able to take trade-ins if someone buys an antique car from him and then he would sell the trade-in. He noted that there is currently a moratorium on used car sales. Chairman Pineda commented that the owner is claiming he can not find a use for the building and Inland can not market the building.

He noted that there are two pages of uses in the B-2 Zoning District. He noted further that the building looks like a car dealership. He added that he explained to the building owner that if the ordinance is changed to allow used car sales, other people would also be allowed to open used car sales, which is not what the City wants. Chairman Pineda stated that Michael Guttman had a thought that the used car sales licenses could be granted like the liquor licenses, when one goes away then City Council could decide whether to allow another one. He commented that he would like to research how to market the property. He added that the business owner wants ten years to rehab the building, which Chairman Pineda told him he did not like. He added that the building is not in great shape and the parking lot is horrible.

Mr. Hupp commented that food for thought is to draw a line in the zoning ordinance for used car sales that requires perhaps two acres or a 20,000 square foot building. He noted that would not allow the smaller existing used car facilities, only new ones on larger sites.

Alderman Beifuss commented that he does not have a problem with some used car sales.

Alderman Monroe commented that his concern is that the owner is not interested in fixing up the building too quickly.

Chairman Pineda commented that he is open to looking at the square footage requirement. Mr. Hupp noted that there are antique license plates and perhaps it could be restricted to only cars that qualify for that license plate. Chairman Pineda requested staff to look at the options and it could be discussed at the next meeting.

**7. Reports from Staff – None.**

**8. Adjournment**

Alderman Dimas made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Alderman Monroe. The members unanimously agreed. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Ericksen