

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

OCTOBER 12, 1998

7:30 P.M.

Committee Members Present:

James Hayes, Laura Huth, Carolyn Kearns, Esther Patt, John Taylor, Joseph Whelan, and Ruth Wyman

Committee Members Absent:

None

Staff Members Present:

Phyllis Clark, Mayor Satterthwaite, Police Chief Eddie Adair, Ron Eldridge, Stephen Holz, Jack Waaler, Bill Gray, Craig Grant, Rod Fletcher, Reed Berger, and Bruce Walden

Others Present:

Jeff Jones, John Lee Johnson, Mike Leheney, Ritu Vig, Deepak Nair, Betty Williams, Faysha Crosbie, DeAmeler Tolliver, Yonna Griffin, Tonya Brooks, Cheney R. Cherry, Dolory Hopkins, Cynara P. Baines, Keshia Cheers, Debra Pan, Heather Younggren, Maxine Vazquez, Garnet Lithierland, Cleveland Jefferson, Catherine Ransom, and Members of the Media

Meeting Location:

Urbana City Council Chambers

There being a quorum, Chair Whelan called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

Additions to the Agenda and Staff Report

Mayor Satterthwaite stated that there have been charges of discrimination and code violations at University Commons on North Lincoln Avenue. Building Safety Manager Craig Grant and Human Relations Officer Vacellia Clark are present to give an update on that situation.

Mr. Grant stated that the current status of the first six apartment buildings is that the complex is on the second set of temporary certificates of occupancy and have non-life safety issues to complete, including such things as completion of the site grading to match engineering design, final layer of parking lot surfacing, completion of swimming pool, replacement of heating ducts, and some exterior cleanups. There is also some additional clean up which would normally be taken care of as trouble shooting after move-ins.

Following debate, Ms. Clark stated that last Wednesday, October 7, there were a number of tenants attending the Human Relations Commission Meeting to express concerns in various areas, from employment issues to issues relating to building code violations and landlord tenant violations. Since there was such a diverse number of complaints, Ms. Clark extended an offer to anyone who was interested in scheduling an appointment to come speak to her with their specific issues. A number came to the Human Relations Office with complaints regarding the condition of their apartments and their level of frustration in dealing with those issues. Ms. Clark directed those individuals to the departments or agencies that would deal with those problems.

Ms. Clark further stated that she had a number of concerns dealing with discrimination. The one race employment issue will be handled by an outside agency and Ms. Clark will not be involved with that. Ms. Clark stated that she does have one appointment scheduled which deals with race discrimination at this time.

Ms. Clark stated that she had a meeting with Jeff Jones and his staff from University Commons to address their concerns and what they are doing in terms of addressing issues raised by their tenants.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Ms. Patt moved to approve the minutes of the September 14, 1998 meeting of the Committee of the Whole. The motion was seconded by Ms. Kearns. Ms. Wyman noted that on page 1, under others present, "Clark Dullard" is actually "Clark Bullard". The minutes, as amended, carried by a voice vote.

Public Input

Jeff Jones, Executive Vice President of Capstone Development Corp, addressed the Committee regarding employment discrimination on the basis of race and the concerns expressed by the students regarding the condition of the property.

Regarding the discrimination charges, Mr. Jones stated that Jasmine Collins was hired to be an Assistant Manager back in late August. Having discussed Ms. Collins allegations with his management staff, and he has concluded that Ms. Collins was terminated in early October for matters relating strictly to her job performance. The company was aware of Ms. Collins race from the start and was not daunted from hiring her.

Regarding the condition of the apartments, this has been one of the most difficult construction jobs due to trying to preserve some trees and the wet weather.

John Lee Johnson, 44 E. Main Street, Champaign, addressed the Committee to relay his concerns regarding housing discrimination and issues related to the housing at University Commons.

Mike Leheney, 1347 N. Lincoln Ave., #2049; Ritu Vig, 1325 N. Lincoln Ave., #2005; Deepak Nair, 1347 N. Lincoln Ave., #2049; Betty Williams, Urbana; Faysha Crosbie, 1329 N. Lincoln Ave., #2015B; DeAmeler Tolliver, 1329 N.

Lincoln Ave., #2015A; Yonna Griffin, 1327 N. Lincoln Ave., #1009A; Dolory Hopkins, 1327 N. Lincoln Ave., #2009; Cynara P. Baines, University Commons; Keshia Cheeks, 1333 N. Lincoln Ave., #3024B; Debra Pan, 1325 N. Lincoln Ave., #3006; Heather Younggren, 1341 N. Lincoln Ave., #1037; and Mazine Vazquez, 1343 N. Lincoln Ave., #3042; addressed the Committee with many concerns regarding the University Commons housing complex. Among those concerns are: bad management of the apartment complex; apartments not cleaned and ready for move in; amenities not completed; tenants had to wait to get moved in; complex security not in place; broken water pipes and flooded apartments; mold on walls; construction workers entering apartments without notice; sexually explicit comments to female tenants by construction workers; parking not adequate, nails on drives resulting in punctured tires; and bugs and mice in apartments.

LaTonya Brooks, 1004 W. Main St., #1004; Cheney R. Cherry, University Commons; and Garnet Litherland, 1343 N. Lincoln Ave., 2041; employees of University Commons, addressed the Committee regarding their concerns of racial discrimination among those employed at University Commons.

Catherine Ransom, 1028 E. Kerr, #208, did not speak but left a letter in which she addressed her previous employment at University Commons and her concerns that she had been discriminated against because of her race.

Cleveland Jefferson, representing the Champaign County Branch of the NAACP, addressed the Committee with his concerns regarding the disrespectful attitude of the people in attendance from the Management Office of University Commons. Mr. Jefferson further expressed his concern over the charges of discrimination at University Commons and reviewed the procedures of the Human Rights Ordinance regarding discrimination.

Chair Whelan stated that Mayor Satterthwaite has dedicated himself to work with staff to use the City ordinances to deal with this type of complaint, not only the construction complaint but also in the case of racial discrimination.

Chair Whelan stated that there can be no doubt that the City will do everything possible to stop racial discrimination. He further proposed that Committee take tonight's complaints and ask staff to review and investigate them to see if they are credible. Where they are credible, to deal them. Wherever the claims are valid, the City should use the means available to be a party to the remediation of those charges. Chair Whelan recommended that the City expand the review of discrimination in the City to find out if we are better able to assist people with such complaints, can our procedures be improved?

Ms. Patt stated that at their last meeting, the Human Relations Commission passed a motion to ask for a full investigation of race discrimination regarding employment and housing at the University Commons. Ms. Patt stated that the problem was not just a racial problem, there have also been charges of sexual harassment of tenants and these charges should also be addressed.

Mayor Satterthwaite reiterated that the City does take these discrimination charges very seriously and an investigation into these allegations has already begun.

Mr. Hayes stated that it was said that the public health and safety issues have been taken care of in the apartments,

but mold growing in apartments is a health hazard to people with allergies. That needs to be taken care of. The City can't just deal with some of the problems, all of the problems need to be solved. Action needs to be taken.

The Committee recessed at 10:36 p.m. and reconvened at 10:47 p.m. with all Members previously in attendance still present.

Discussion of Florida Ridge Annexation

Economic Development Manager Reed Berger presented staff report stating that staff is requesting City Council to approve a motion at its regular meeting scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Monday, October 19, 1998 directing the City Clerk to publish a Notice of Annexation for properties in the Florida Ridge area. Notice is required by State statute to advise affected property owners, residents and the general public, that the City of Urbana will consider an ordinance on November 16, 1998 causing the annexation of several residential lots located at the east end of Florida Avenue near Thomas Paine elementary school which are not completely surrounded by the City of Urbana corporate boundaries.

Mr. Taylor moved to send the motion to Council for approval. The motion was seconded by Ms. Patt and carried by a voice vote.

Ms. Wyman moved to extend time for 30 minutes until 11:30 p.m. The motion was seconded by Ms. Patt and carried by a voice vote.

Boneyard Creek Discussion

Tom Berns and Chris Billing of Berns and Clancy, engineers representing the University of Illinois on the Boneyard Creek project, gave a presentation to answer concerns from the Urbana City Council. Mr. Berns and Mr. Billing provided information regarding the following three issues:

1. Concerns regarding CDM calculations for the Hydrologic/hydraulic modeling for this watershed relating to the confluence of the Boneyard Creek and the Saline branch drainage ditch.
2. Concerns at the Lincoln Avenue bridges related to their existing conditions and the proposed configuration.
3. The possibility of some sort of new restriction at Gregory Street to help address concerns by some citizens downstream in Urbana.

During this presentation, Ms. Wyman moved to extend time until 12:00 midnight. The motion was seconded by Ms. Patt and carried by a voice vote.

Mr. Taylor left the meeting at 11:50 p.m.

Ms. Patt moved to suspend the rules to extend time at 12:00 midnight. The motion was seconded by Ms. Wyman

and carried by a voice vote.

Ms. Patt moved to extend the time until 12:30 a.m. The motion was seconded by Ms. Wyman and carried by a voice vote.

A Resolution Determining The Amounts Of Money To Be Raised By The Tax Levy (1998)

Ms. Patt moved to send **A Resolution Determining The Amounts Of Money To Be Raised By The Tax Levy (1998)**. The motion was seconded by Ms. Wyman and carried by a voice vote.

Multi-Family Recycling

Environmental Manager Rod Fletcher presented staff report stating that Council had previously directed staff to investigate means to provide for on-site recycling services to all tenants residing in apartments of seven or more units. Staff recommends that Council proceed to secure a contract with Central Waste Services to provide recycling services for a term of three years.

Following debate, Ms. Patt moved to recommend that staff pursue a contract with Central Waste Services to provide recycling services for a term of three years for multi-family recycling. The motion was seconded by Ms. Wyman and carried 5-1 by roll call vote. Voting aye were Committee Members: Hayes, Huth, Kearns, Patt, and Wyman – 5; voting nay: Whelan – 1.

Ms. Patt moved to send **An Ordinance Revising The Annual Budget Ordinance (Tax Levy Pension Funds); An Ordinance Revising The Annual Budget Ordinance (Tree Trail Brochure); and An Ordinance Revising The Annual Budget Ordinance (Sewer Cleaner Vector)** to Council for approval. The motion was seconded by Ms. Wyman and carried by a voice vote.

Ms. Kearns moved to send the Tax Levy Ordinances, **Annual Tax Levy Ordinance Of The City Of Urbana, Illinois For The Year Beginning July 1, 1998 And Ending June 30, 1999; An Ordinance Abating Tax Levy For \$5.705 Million General Obligation Bonds, Series 1994; and An Ordinance Abating Tax Levy For \$1.0 Million General Obligation Bonds, Series 1992** to Council for consideration. The motion was seconded by Ms. Patt and carried by a voice vote.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Chair Whelan declared the meeting adjourned at 12:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Committee of the Whole
October 12, 1998
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Elaine Taylor, Recording Secretary

*This meeting was taped.

**This meeting was broadcast on cable television.