

THAN
TAMPA HOMEOWNERS, AN ASSOCIATION OF NEIGHBORHOODS
MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 14, 2011
HELD AT THE LORETTA INGRAHAM RECREATION COMPLEX

1. President Jerry Frankhouser called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. He asked for a moment of silence to reflect on our mission and that we pledge allegiance to the flag. He then asked the members and guests to introduce themselves.
2. Our invited guests this evening were the members of City Council. Six members attended. Our hope is that Charlie Miranda will convalesce quickly and resume his council seat soon. President Frankhouser invited the council members to introduce themselves.
3. President Frankhouser called on Margaret Vizzi, chair of the Zoning Committee, to report of the September 8th Meeting of this committee. Margaret reported that the committee was alarmed that it was proposed that First Readings be done at Workshops. This puts a further burden on the public. Not only are citizens to expect legal action at regularly scheduled council meetings, but now, it seems, also at Workshops. Some of these Workshops are held in the Mascotte Room or other places with no recording cameras. Therefore, the Zoning Committee requests that any ordinance to be proposed for First Reading at a Workshop be available at the time of notice of the Workshop. Such Workshops should be held in Council Chambers and be recorded on camera. Margaret concluded her remarks by inviting anyone who wants to be on the Zoning Committee to call her at 286-0980.
4. Councilwoman Lisa Montelione, chair of the Building, Zoning and Preservation Committee, replied that Margaret's comments were directed at a Workshop she organized. She assured us that First Readings are not done at Workshops. In the Workshop in question, a First Reading was prepared to be presented at a council meeting. The Workshop was meant to orient the several new members of council on land use and to learn about the Zoning Code. The aim was efficiency as well as education. No First Readings occurred and minutes were taken and are publically available. Mary Mulhern observed that many of the council members are new to the intricacies of the City Code and need to get up to speed quickly. In short, the Zoning Committee recommends that Council hold Workshops in Council Chambers with cameras on if First Readings are to be done.
5. Margaret Vizzi then referenced the Mayor's new Economic Competitiveness Committee that meets in the Building Services Building on North Boulevard. She wants broad dissemination of information. [I was asked to obtain the link to this group. Go to the city's web site, www.tampagov.net. In the Search Box, type *Economic Competitiveness Committee*. Click on the first entry that appears. [My thanks to Marcus Garza, Legislative Aide to Lisa Montelione, for his assistance.] Again, Margaret noted the Code is hard to read. Elements of the Code have been added or modified piecemeal and are sometimes in conflict with other parts of the Code. Items are referenced in multiple sections. Topics need to be combined into a single section.

6. Jim Beeler asked each council member to tell the one thing he or she wants to accomplish during their tenure on council.
 - a. Yvonne Yolie Capin noted that cultural assets are an economic asset to any community. Art is a part, but only a part, of our culture. She has invited experts to tell what they contribute to the culture of the community. [This Workshop aired on CTTV at 1:30 p.m., Thursday, September 15.] She wants to explore the cultural advantages Tampa has that entice economic development.
 - b. Harry Cohen warned that street solicitation is only a part of the larger issues of homelessness and poverty in the community. We have a shortage of beds, but there are places to eat. There are approximately 17,000 homeless in the county and, with the state of the economy, the problem will only get worse. We need new solutions for affordable housing and homelessness and we need the help of the private sector.
 - c. Mary Mulhern wants to promote sustainability and green enterprises to encourage economic growth. How can Tampa create jobs? By being an attractive city to live in. Tampa must compete not just by being cheaper but by being a desirable place to live with a high quality of life. She is glad for the creative ideas on council.
 - d. Frank Reddick reminded us that he was the president of a neighborhood association for six years prior to his election to council. He knows from first-hand experience the need for viable neighborhoods and is committed to help preserve their integrity. Services must be provided. Neighborhoods need sidewalks, potholes filled, and overgrown lots cleaned. The residents must want to live there, feel safe and enjoy their property.
 - e. Mike Suarez emphasized the livability of the city. Public safety must be maintained. Tampa's neighborhoods are getting older and change with time. Some neighborhoods now containing many retirees are transitions with an influx of new residents who might not share the values of the long-time residents. How do we get creative people to come to Tampa?
 - f. Lisa Montelione noted that she chairs the Building, Zoning and Historic Preservation Committee, her area of expertise. All the previous statements are important, but, she emphasized, effective communication among all departments of the city is essential. We need staff that know their jobs and have the tools to do them. She mentioned a new group, *Innovation Alliance*, that is attempting to lure research industries to North Tampa.
 - g. President Frankhouser thanked the council members for their insights and opened the floor for discussion.
7. Al Steenson noted that panhandling and homelessness are two different issues and asked how the council members would approach these issues.
 - a. Harry Cohen observed that panhandlers run the gamut from scammers to the truly needy and all in between.
 - b. Mary Mulhern noted that we have tried to be compassionate but not enough resources are available. We need to consider other options than just a ban on panhandling.
 - c. Yolie Capin insisted that council has addressed panhandling and homelessness separately.

8. Wofford Johnson cited the Economic Competitiveness Committee. He stated that we support simplification of processes, but has concerns about code changes. Because such changes can have unintended consequences, he asks that neighborhoods be allowed and encouraged to address issues. Our goal is to make sure our neighborhoods are protected.
9. Bobby Ann Tarcza noted that pipes were replaced and airport runways resurfaced using stimulus money. She expressed the hope that such efforts to maintain the infrastructure of the city continue after the stimulus money is gone.
10. Sue Lyon observed with regard to feeding the homeless, in the past the city turned a blind eye to the use of public ground. Although prohibited by statute, this rule was not enforced. Now, however, the ban is being enforced rigorously. All such aid must be done on private land. This approach hardly seems compassionate. Mary Mulhern responded that we need a center containing beds and serving meals. Panhandling and homelessness are symptoms of a much bigger problem.
11. Steve LaBour asked how neighborhood associations could help the city with its problems.
 - a. Mike Suarez noted that, because of the difficulty in enticing people to assume leadership roles in neighborhood associations, small cadres of people run them. It is important that we maintain communication with them.
 - b. Mary Mulhern asked that we invite her to our meetings. Such one-on-one discussions help communications.
 - c. Harry Cohen repeated this request to attend neighborhood meetings. He asked that if we know of problems to inform him and the other members of council. They will try to help.
 - d. Yolie Capin would also like to visit, but more to listen than to speak.
12. Joanne McNabb said that the sewage lift station in Sunset Park stinks. Mike Suarez said that he would contact Steve Daignault, Administrator of Public Works for the City of Tampa, to see what can be done.
13. Pat Torres noted the difficulty of responding to zoning issues. Mike Suarez said that this is a problem for council also. Harry Cohen observed that we all must follow the law and not our emotions.
14. The issue of the time of response granted to citizens to respond to issues before council was introduced. [This issue was discussed by THAN at its meeting of March 10, 2010. At that time, the Secretary drafted a letter to the members of council expressing our concern and offering suggestions. On June 17, 2010, council held a Workshop on this issue.] The members of council will address this issue again.

15. The Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m. Our next meeting is on Wednesday, October 12, 2011, from 7:00 till 9:00 p.m. at Union Station.

Respectfully submitted,

Fredric Zerla, Secretary

ADDENDUM: Because our conversation with the council members did not allow time for the Secretary's or Treasurer's Reports, I will give them now. A correction to the August Minutes: in item #9, Burns' Park should be Bern's Park. Otherwise no other corrections were made. Since those reported in the August Minutes, the following members renewed: North Bon Air, Bayshore Beautiful, Beach Park Isles, The Marina Club, Stoney Point and past-president Bill Duvall. Two checks were written: \$355.99 to the secretary for annual expenses and \$120 for the web-page, for a total of \$475.99. Also, \$275 was deposited from membership dues.