

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

May 1, 2000

The General Development Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on May 1, 2000 at 4:00 p.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Jim Davidson, Chairman
Keno Hawker
Dennis Kavanaugh

COMMITTEE ABSENT

None

COUNCIL PRESENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

Mike Hutchinson
Neal Beets
Linda Crocker
Jack Friedline
Pat Granillo
Joe Holmwood
Bryan Raines
Bill Petrie
Others

OTHERS PRESENT

Betty Beard
Ron Fox
Barrett Marson
James Wees
Others

1. Discuss and consider issues associated with rental rates in mobile homes, manufactured homes and recreational vehicle parks.

Ronald G. Fox, 2400 East Baseline Road, Number 24, Apache Junction, addressed the Committee with regard to this agenda item.

Mr. Fox stated that the cost of manufactured homes has dramatically increased in recent years and that with the current rental rate increases occurring in mobile home parks, the need to enact Statewide rental management is crucial.

Mr. Fox requested that the General Development Committee recommend to the City Council that either a resolution be adopted requesting the State legislature to pass an amendment which would place the burden of justifying rent increases on mobile home park owners or provide cities and towns with the ability to adopt and enforce their own rent control regulations.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that the City of Apache Junction and the Pinal County Board of Supervisors have already adopted similar rent control resolutions.

James Wees, 2415 East Camelback Road, Phoenix, an attorney representing the Arizona Renters' Association, provided a brief chronology of the current mobile home housing market. Mr. Wees advised the General Development Committee that the vast majority of the residents living in mobile home parks consist of retirees who are on fixed incomes and do not have the financial ability to relocate when rental rates are increased. Mr. Wees added that the residents traditionally purchase the mobile home dwellings but do not own the land upon which the structures are situated.

Additional discussion ensued relative to the efforts initiated by the Arizona Renters' Association to modify the current law regarding rent control on mobile homes spaces, the fact that mobile home park landlords have the ability to double or triple the rental rates at their discretion and the fact that the residents are compelled to pay the higher rates or relocate to an alternative site, which is a costly process for many of the mobile home owners.

In response to a question from Chairman Davidson, Mr. Wees commented that despite the fact that the landlords do impose restrictions on the renters, mobile home parks continue to serve as a viable housing ownership alternative for lower-income families.

Committeemember Kavanaugh commented that he is aware of the deteriorating condition of numerous older mobile home parks in the City of Mesa and also the dilemma faced by many residents with regards to unregulated rental increases, the difficulties centered around relocation and the fact that although mobile homes represent a unique form of ownership, specific problems and characteristics do exist.

Committeemember Kavanaugh spoke in support of recommending that the Council consider the adoption of the proposed resolution in an effort to ensure that dialogue continues regarding this issue during the next Legislative session.

Chairman Davidson questioned the long-term effectiveness of the proposed resolution and expressed the opinion that enlisting the assistance of the City's Government Relations staff in researching this matter may represent a more viable, effective alternative.

Committeemember Hawker stated that rather than endorsing a rent control resolution, he would support the notion of mandatory disclosure between mobile home park owners and tenants with regard to capital costs, relocation costs and lease terminations. Committeemember Hawker added the opinion that government should not be involved in regulating market conditions and said that a more viable approach may be to lobby the various cities in an effort to increase the number of mobile home parks and enhance competition in this area. Councilmember Hawker commented that the added competition may result in forcing the park owners to provide incentives for mobile home owners to remain in their parks rather than increasing rates and forcing them to seek other locations for their homes.

Committeemember Kavanaugh stated that based on the large number of mobile home park residents in the City of Mesa, it is incumbent upon the Committee to direct staff to explore this issue with the State legislators. Committeemember Kavanaugh concurred with Committeemember Hawker's comments relative to avoiding the pursuit of rent control but spoke in support of exploring enhanced protection for Mesa's citizens.

Chairman Davidson commented on the fact that Representative Dean Cooley and Senator Tom Freestone have been actively involved in this particular issue and stated the opinion that it may be beneficial to determine what is occurring on this matter at the State level prior to directing staff to further explore this area

of concern. Chairman Davidson added that once the current status of this issue at the State level has been determined, staff may be directed to lobby on issues of affordability for all segments of the City's population.

Committeemembers Kavanaugh and Hawker concurred with Chairman Davidson's remarks and urged the Chairman to propose a motion to that effect.

It was moved by Chairman Davidson, seconded by Committeemember Hawker, to recommend to the Council that staff be directed to explore the status of this issue at the State-level and that staff's findings be reviewed by the Committee at a future meeting to determine a future course of action to be initiated regarding this matter.

Carried unanimously.

Chairman Davidson expressed appreciation to everyone for their input.

2. Discuss and consider an ordinance prohibiting the sale of baby chicks, ducklings and young rabbits.

Duayne Adams, a representative of the Arizona Humane Society, 9226 North 13th Avenue, Phoenix, addressed the Committee relative to this agenda item. Mr. Adams stated that during the Easter holiday season, baby bunnies, chicks and ducklings are dyed or stained and then subsequently sold as "Easter gifts" and given to young children. Mr. Adams added that after the holiday has passed, the children often lose interest in the "toys" which subsequently results in the animals being abandoned, destroyed or turned into humane organizations and animal shelters.

Mr. Adams informed the members of the Committee that the City of Phoenix has adopted an ordinance in an effort to address this matter and requested that the City of Mesa adopt an ordinance similar to the one that is currently in effect in Phoenix. (See Attachment.)

Committeemember Kavanaugh expressed support for recommending to the Council that the proposed ordinance be adopted and commented on the importance of addressing issues relating to animal cruelty throughout the City of Mesa.

Committeemember Hawker stated that the adoption of the proposed ordinance would, in his opinion, constitute "over-regulation" on the part of the City and said that he would not support the recommendation.

Discussion ensued relative to specific definitions contained in the ordinance adopted by the City of Phoenix.

In response to a question from Chairman Davidson, Mr. Adams stated that the main focus of the ordinance is to make children aware of the fact the animals are living creatures and not toys. Mr. Adams also emphasized the importance of informing the public that retail operators who are involved in the sale of these animals as outlined in the proposed ordinance are doing so illegally and should be reported and prevented from continuing this activity.

Chairman Davidson concurred with the opinions expressed by Committeemember Kavanaugh and stated that he is in favor of recommending to the Council that the proposed ordinance be adopted.

In response to a question from Committeemember Hawker, Mr. Adams clarified that in addition to passage of the ordinance, the inclusion of an informational sheet in customers' utility bills would be a means by which the public may be made aware of this issue.

It was moved by Committeemember Kavanaugh, seconded by Chairman Davidson, to recommend to the Council that the ordinance prohibiting the sale of baby chicks, ducklings and young rabbits be approved.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that the language in the proposed ordinance would have to be written in such a way as to allow residents in areas of Mesa such as Lehi to continue to own/purchase/breed the above listed animals.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Davidson-Kavanaugh

NAYS – Hawker

Chairman Davidson declared the motion carried by majority vote.

Chairman Davidson expressed appreciation to Mr. Adams for his input.

3. Adjournment.

It was moved by Committeemember Kavanaugh, seconded by Committeemember Hawker, that the meeting of the General Development Committee adjourn at 4:45 p.m.

Carried unanimously.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the meeting of the General Development Committee of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 1st day of May, 2000. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this ____ day of _____ 2000

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK