

FIRE COMMITTEE MINUTES

April 27, 2000

The Fire Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on April 27, 2000 at 9:50 a.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Dennis Kavanaugh, Chairman
Jim Davidson
Keno Hawker

COMMITTEE ABSENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

Mike Hutchinson
Dennis Compton
Linda Crocker
Bob De Leon
John Friedline
Dorinda Larsen
Joe Padilla
Ellen Pence
Bryan Raines
Andrea Rasizer
Jenny Sheppard

STAFF PRESENT (Cont.)

Kim West
Paul Wilson
Others

OTHERS PRESENT

Betty Beard
Dian Gilmore
Gary Pierce
Others

1. Further discussion and consideration regarding proposed amendments to the Fire Code relating to automatic fire sprinklers "Citywide."

Chairman Kavanaugh expressed appreciation to staff, members of the Homebuilders' industry and the Board of Realtors for the efforts they have expended to work together to develop a compromise that best serves the needs of the City.

Fire Chief Dennis Compton thanked Chairman Kavanaugh for his remarks and commented that the proposal will greatly enhance public safety throughout the City of Mesa.

Assistant Fire Chief Bob DeLeon provided the Committee with a brief explanation of the current Fire Code and proposed amendments relating to the installation of automatic fire sprinklers on a Citywide basis. Chief DeLeon informed the Committee that following the April 6th Fire Committee meeting, staff met with local building officials and the Southeast Valley Regional Association of Realtors concerning the code requirements pertaining to automatic fire sprinklers. Chief DeLeon added that in response to the meetings and efforts to work together, amendments to the code requirements have been developed and outlined the following recommendations for consideration: 1) an automatic fire sprinkler system shall be installed throughout all new commercial occupancies; 2) single-family homes and duplexes will be exempted from mandatory automatic fire sprinkler installation; 3) all contractors, at the request of the homebuyer, shall provide for the installation of a National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 13D automatic fire sprinkler system, This is recommended to have a delayed implementation date of January 1, 2001, and 4) the Fire Chief or his/her designee is specifically prohibited from inspecting and testing automatic fire sprinklers in single-family homes and duplexes. (This item is consistent with Ordinance No. 3695 passed on October 6, 1999.)

Discussion ensued relative to the amending Ordinance No. 3695 to reflect the above listed changes, and anticipated impacts on both the Building Inspection Division and Fire Department.

Chief Compton commented that if the Committee votes to recommend approval to the Council, this item will be placed on the May 1, 2000 Regular Council Meeting agenda for introduction and considered at the May 15th Regular Council Meeting.

In addition to a request from Committeemember Davidson, Courtney Gilstrap, representing the Arizona Multi-Housing Association, addressed the Committee and stated that members of the Association met with Chief DeLeon to review and discuss this matter late last week. Ms. Gilstrap advised that she was not in attendance at that meeting and has just had an opportunity to read the contents of a letter written by Chief DeLeon in response to concerns that had been raised by the Association. Ms. Gilstrap added that Suzanne Gilstrap also has not had an opportunity to review the contents of Chief DeLeon's letter.

Chairman Davidson recommended that Chief DeLeon review the contents of the letter at this time for the benefit of Ms. Gilstrap and in an effort to determine whether any outstanding issues remain to be addressed. Chief DeLeon commented on all of the issues contained in the letter from the Association and his responses to same.

Additional discussion ensued relative to the fact that it appears that the contents of Chief DeLeon's letter has sufficiently addressed all of the outstanding concerns, the fact that inspections on the sprinklers will occur at the time the building is completed, annual notices that will be sent to the owners of all sprinkler systems, efforts to distribute materials on the systems and educate the citizens on the benefits of automatic sprinklers, the fact that literature will be handed out at the model homes and also distributed when permits are issued, and the possibility of establishing a data base in the future to monitor this area.

Dian Gilmore, representing the Association of Realtors, pointed out an error in the text of the proposed draft (Section 1003.2.1 General,) and submitted corrected copies of the section to the members of the Committee (copy attached). Ms. Gilmore indicated her support for the compromise that has been reached and thanked everyone for their willingness to work together to achieve this goal.

Chairman Kavanaugh thanked Ms. Gilmore for pointing out the error in the draft and for her input and efforts.

Gary Pierce, representing the Homebuilders' Association, stated the opinion that everyone who worked on this issue shared the same goal, to educate citizens and allow them to make decisions on their own behalf relative to the installation of fire sprinklers in their homes. Mr. Pierce commented that the Association has developed ideas to expedite the process and stated the opinion that an ad hoc committee should be formed to assist in educating the public on the benefits of the systems.

Tim Nielsen, 2351 South Signal Butte, addressed the Committee and said that as an architect and builder he would like to stress the importance of offering incentives to homebuyers in an effort to generate the use of fire sprinklers in new residential homes. Mr. Nielsen recommended that the Committee consider the implementation of a "no fee" permit structure and perform inspections at no charge. Mr. Nielsen added that the Committee should also pursue the possibility of having the City assume the costs for upgrading the meters to accommodate a 1" rather than the current 5/8" meter. Mr. Nielsen also commented on the possibility of

developing a rebate program and requested that the members of the Committee pursue all avenues that may result in encouraging homeowners to install the systems.

Chairman Kavanaugh thanked the speakers for their input and said that staff will pursue offering incentives to generate interest among new homeowners in installing the systems.

Committeemember Davidson indicated that his personal long-term goal is to have mandatory rather than optional automatic fire sprinkler systems in all new construction but added that the current proposal represents an excellent beginning.

It was moved by Committeemember Davidson, seconded by Committeemember Hawker, to recommend to the Council that the recommendations of staff as outlined by Chief DeLeon in the last paragraph of page one, be approved.

Committeemember Hawker stated that he is pleased with the process and the cooperation that has been expended. Committeemember Hawker added the opinion that the clarifications were necessary and thanked everyone for their efforts.

Carried unanimously.

2. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Fire Committee Meeting adjourned at 10:21 a.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Fire Committee Meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 27th day of April, 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