AGENDA 6b
DATE 3.1.16

CITY OF NORTON SHORES
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
February 23, 2016

A regular work session of the Norton Shores City Council was held on Tuesday, February 23, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall, 4814 Henry Street.

Present: Mayor Nelund, Council Members Beecham, Dolack, Flanders, Hylland, Jurkas, Moulatsiotis and Ostrom; also Mark Meyers, Anthony Chandler, Mike Huston, Rob Bilkie, Jon Gale, Ted Karnitz, Shelly Stibitz, and Doug Hughes

Excused: Council Member Moulatsiotis

1. Electronic Billboard Request

City Planner Rob Bilkie presented a request from Bill Cooper, AMG Outdoor, to amend the Zoning Ordinance to include electronic, digital off-premise advertising signs (billboards). Specifically, they are asking to add electronic digital technology in the GI General Industrial district when adjacent to US-31. Mr. Cooper shared that in researching his request he found a Federal Highway Administration study suggesting that electronic billboards are no more of a distraction then current billboards along the roadway and that the State allows the changing of messages every eight seconds and, where allowed, the City stipulates that electronic messages can change at five second intervals.

Council Member Dolack asked how this request differs from the electronic sign at Mona Shores High School. Mr. Bilkie explained that the school's sign is on-premise and the current request pertains to off-premise billboards. Council Member Hylland stated that the City allows electronic signs in commercial districts and it makes sense to extend that to industrial districts.

The consensus of the Council was to ask staff to proceed with drafting an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance for consideration of the Planning Commission.

2. Draft Parking Ordinance

At Council's request, staff researched the topic of front yard parking and submitted a draft ordinance amendment restricting vehicle parking to asphaltic, concrete, gravel or dolomite surfaces that are not allowed to cover more than 50% of the established front yard area minus the right-of-way. There was some discussion regarding the number of vehicles allowed at a residential property, the types and sizes of those vehicles, whether there are separate determinations for personal or commercial use of the vehicles, and a suggested change in material terminology.

In response, Mr. Bilkie, told Council and staff that any licensed, operable vehicle within the size restrictions can be parked at a residence without regard to its' intended use. He will adjust the term "dolomite" in the proposed amendment.

City Council was in agreement to place the Front Yard Parking Ordinance amendment on the next regular agenda for approval.

3. Draft Animal Ordinance Amendment

Director of Administrative Services, Anthony Chandler, summarized a minimal language amendment recommendation to City Code of Ordinances, Article IV, Section 6-89. It is proposed to add "including fowl" and "crows" to part (a) of the nuisance section.

In answer to Council's questions, Mr. Chandler confirmed that crowing of roosters will be handled the same as all other animal nuisance complaints and may be subject to civil infraction. The issue of determining when an animal's noise becomes a nuisance is subjective and will have to be handled on a case by case basis as complaints are received and investigated. This subject has been ongoing and Mayor Nelund feels that the language amendment provides a path for the City to follow in the future.

The recommended language amendment to Section 6-89 will be placed on the next Council agenda for approval.

4. Solicitation Ordinance

Chief Jon Gale addressed the City's ongoing issue of solicitation in our roadways and the safety concerns that arise from anyone collecting money in the middle of traffic. The Police Department and Council members continue to get complaints about this and, on the advice of City Attorney Doug Hughes, any action taken to restrict intersection solicitations must include all groups and individuals.

Chief Gale was asked what other communities are doing to limit organizations and panhandlers from seeking donations in intersections. He reported that Norton Shores has the largest concentration of panhandlers due, in part, to the convenience of wooded areas and busy intersections being close together.

In the interest of safety for solicitors and motorists alike, the Council directed staff to draft a policy prohibiting street solicitation.

Mayor Nelund proposed, and Council agreed, to move the first council meeting of April to Tuesday, March 29, 2016 due to the lack of a quorum.

Meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

M. D. Stibitz

M. D. Stibitz, Acting City Clerk