

**MINUTES
OF THE WORK SESSION OF THE
EDINA CITY COUNCIL
HELD AT CITY HALL
MARCH 16, 2010
5:38 P.M.**

Mayor Hovland called the meeting to order at 5:38 p.m. in the Community Room of City Hall. Answering rollcall were Members Brindle, Swenson and Mayor Hovland. Member Bennett arrived at 5:40 p.m. Member Housh arrived at 5:55 p.m. Staff attending the meeting included: Heather Worthington, Assistant City Manager; Sherry Engelman, Community Health Administrator; Steve Kirchman, Chief Building Official; Cary Teague, Planning Director; Joyce Repya, Associate Planner; and Jennifer Bennerotte, Communications & Marketing Director.

Mayor Hovland said the purpose of the meeting was to discuss a Property Maintenance Code and Housing Improvement Areas (HIAs).

Community Health Administrator Engelman and Chief Building Official Kirchman presented information on possible adoption of a Property Maintenance Code. The City of Edina's Housing Code is not as comprehensive as a Property Maintenance Code. Among the benefits, a Property Maintenance Code would include all structures on a property, require equipment that provides heat and carbon monoxide detectors in dwelling units, and would be compatible with other internationally adopted building codes.

Staff recommends a Property Maintenance Code be established that adopts the International Property Maintenance Code. Local amendments to the international code would include references to adopted Minnesota State Codes where necessary; the current local appeal process; and existing local code sections relating to motor vehicles, swimming pools, rubbish and garbage, and weeds. Adoption of a Property Maintenance Code would not increase the City's enforcement abilities, but offers a greater variety of standards and would allow the City to speed up the process when there is a public health nuisance.

The Council indicated its support of a local Property Maintenance Code and directed staff to prepare ordinance amendments for consideration at an upcoming meeting.

The Council also discussed HIAs, which are used by cities to finance the cost of renovating townhouse and condominium common areas that otherwise cannot be financed. Bonds are sold to finance the improvements and are repaid through an annual fee charged to benefitted unit owners. Like special assessments, the fees are certified for collection along with property taxes.

The establishment of HIAs is relatively complicated and requires significant staff time and legal resources. Assistant City Manager Heather Worthington estimated it would equate to the work of 0.5 to 1 full-time equivalent staff member. Enforcement actions and other corrective measures when property falls into disarray can also be costly and staff intensive and focus on problems rather than preventative measures.

Planning Director Teague said that most townhomes in the community are in good shape, but the oldest are 50 years old and could be nearing time for some improvements. Two local condominium associations – Brookside and Windwood – have asked the City to consider establishing HIAs for their benefit.

Member Housh suggested real estate professionals be asked to provide their opinions on the need for this type of financial assistance in the community.

The Council directed Planning Department staff to get more information from Brookside and Windwood about their requests and needs. The Council also directed staff to set up a meeting in May with officials from the City of St. Louis Park and Hopkins, the first area cities to adopt an HIA, to learn more about HIAs before they decide to proceed.

There being no further business, Mayor Hovland adjourned the meeting at 6:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Bennerotte, Communications & Marketing Director

Minutes approved by Edina City Council, April 6, 2010.

James B. Hovland, Mayor