

The Mayor and Commissioners of the Town of Elkton

MINUTES

August 8, 2012

A public meeting (workshop) of the Mayor and Commissioners of the Town of Elkton (“the Board”) was held on this date at 4:00 p.m. with the following persons present: Mayor Joseph Fisona, Commissioners Charles H. Givens, Sr.; Charles E. Hicks, V; Mary Jo Jablonski and Earl M. Piner, Sr.; Town Administrator Lewis H. George, Jr.; Finance Director Steven H. Repole; Chief of Police William E. Ryan; Administration Office Secretary L. Michelle Henson; and Town Attorney H. Norman Wilson, Jr..

Also in attendance, representing the Local Government Insurance Trust, Ms. Elisabeth Beekman and Messrs. Kevin Karpinski, Esquire and Matthew Peters, Esquire.

Mayor Fisona called the workshop to order at 4:00 p.m.

Motion for a Closed Meeting

ACTION: Pursuant to State Government Article § 10-508 to discuss (7) to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice on a legal matter; Commissioner Jablonski made a motion for a Closed Meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Givens and approved by all present. Mayor Fisona announced that the workshop meeting would reconvene.

Mayor Fisona announced the meeting would re-convene.

Meeting Re-convened

Mayor Fisona re-convened the workshop meeting at 5:40 p.m.

Discussion – Town of Elkton Charter Article VII §C7-8 Election Date; Filing as Candidates; Terms of Office

Commissioner Jablonski asked the Board to consider amending the Town’s Municipal Election date. She said the Municipal Election was currently scheduled for the fourth Tuesday in May. She stated Municipal Elections often fell on the Tuesday after the Memorial Day Holiday, which negatively affected voter turnout.

Mayor Fisona stated he did not support amending the Town’s Municipal Election date.

Mayor Fisona queried the Board regarding a consensus to amend the Town’s Municipal Election Date. It was the consensus of the Board not to amend the Town’s Municipal Election Date.

Discussion – Ordinance 4-2012 Vacant Building Registration

Commissioner Jablonski stated she did not support the Vacant Building Ordinance, stating the Town already had mechanisms in place to address Code Violations. She expressed concerns that Ordinance 4-2012 would place an unnecessary burden on the Code Enforcement Official.

Commissioner Hicks stated Ordinance 4-2012 gave the Town the tools to address areas of blight and neglected properties.

Discussion ensued regarding the increase in vacant houses due to foreclosures. Discussion continued regarding increasing Code Violations throughout Elkton. Mayor Fisona stated Ordinance 4-2012 provided an inventory of vacant properties in Elkton.

Mr. Wilson stated the increase in vacant properties could be attributed to the economy, adding that tracking down owners of foreclosed properties was difficult. He added Ordinance 4-2012 could be expensive to enforce.

Discussion ensued regarding consistent enforcement of Town Ordinances.

Commissioner Piner expressed concerns regarding the Town taking over maintenance of vacant properties.

Discussion ensued regarding costs associated with issues during which Code Enforcement brought charges against property owners, and the owners addressing the issues just prior to going to court.

Commissioner Piner stated he did not support Ordinance 4-2012, stating a house was recently inspected and subsequently condemned using existing Town Codes.

Commissioner Jablonski reiterated her opposition to Ordinance 4-2012, stating the Town's Code called out fines associated with violations and subsequent penalties.

Commissioner Hicks stated the fees outlined in Ordinance 4-2012 would assist in reimbursing the Town for costs associated with enforcing the Ordinance.

Discussion ensued regarding a commercial property with on-going Code violations. Commissioner Hicks stated Ordinance 4-2012 would motivate the property owners to address the outstanding issues.

Commissioner Piner suggested that the Town identify vacant buildings and address the owners. Commissioner Jablonski stated she supported addressing blighted properties, but did not support Ordinance 4-2012 as written.

Mayor Fisona queried the Board for a consensus regarding moving forward with Ordinance 4-2012. Commissioners Jablonski and Piner expressed opposition to

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Ordinance 4-2012. Commissioner Hicks and Mayor Fisona expressed support for Ordinance 4-2012. Commissioner Givens, noting the contention regarding Ordinance 4-2012, stated the Board should continue to discuss the matter.

Commissioner Piner suggested that the Board meet in a workshop with Messrs. Craig Trostle, Zoning Administrator, and John Smith, Code Enforcement Official, to discuss the proposed Ordinance. Commissioner Givens concurred with Commissioner Piner. Mayor Fisona queried the Board regarding a consensus to include Messrs. Trostle and Smith in a workshop meeting to discuss the proposed Ordinance. It was the consensus of the Board to include Messrs. Trostle and Smith in a discussion of the proposed Ordinance.

Hearing no additional business to come before the Board, Mayor Fisona adjourned the meeting at 6:33 p.m.

L. Michelle Henson
Administration Office Secretary

A RECORDING OF THIS MEETING RETAINED
AT THE ADMINISTRATION OFFICE