COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING REPORT
January 22, 2018
McHenry Municipal Center

1. Call to Order.
Chairwoman Alderwoman Condon called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Also in attendance Alderman Curry, Director Polerecky, and Executive Assistant/Deputy Clerk Geraghty.

3. Public Comment.
None.

4. Motion to approve the October 23, 2017 Community Development Committee meeting report.
Alderman Santi made a motion, second by Alderman Devine to approve the October 23, 2017 Community Development Committee meeting report as presented.

All ayes, motion carried.

5. Motion to approve the December 11, 2017 Community Development Committee meeting report.
Alderman Devine made a motion, second by Alderman Santi to approve the December 11, 2017 Community Development Committee meeting report as presented.

All ayes, motion carried.

6. Review of Community Development Department Fees.
Alderman Curry asked to address the Committee regarding his views on the city’s building permit requirements. He stated that in his opinion, prior to discussing permit fees, the city should determine the necessity of many non-life threatening projects that require a permit such as central air conditioning, and interior demolition.

Chairman Condon asked Director Polerecky to begin his presentation to the Committee.

Director Polerecky noted the city typically reviews permit fees about every 10 years. Surrounding communities within McHenry County are surveyed. The entire department reviewed staffing specifically the amount of time from the date the permit is received to project end, to determine an adequate permit fee.

From a department standpoint, it was estimated that 84% of the budget is funded by the General Fund and approximately 13% of that comes from permit fees. As the department is responsible for duties other than processing permits, costs will never be covered just through permit fees. If time is spent with an individual who is applying for a permit, ideally the permit fee should cover that time.
Information on the average cost for commercial and residential projects along with the proposed increases were distributed to the Committee. Communities surveyed included Algonquin, Lake in the Hills, Crystal Lake, Woodstock, Cary, Fox Lake, and Spring Grove.

Director Polerecky reported that each permit issued by the city is regulated by the International Code Council, City Municipal Code or the City Zoning Code. The department is required to enforce all three codes.

Alderman Curry asked what possible interest is it of the government to regulate replacing a window. Director Polerecky answered that prior to 2009, the city did not require a permit for replacement windows unless the structure was altered. In 2009, the State of Illinois adopted the International Energy Code and municipalities are required to enforce energy efficient requirements for all windows and door. The state has the ability to audit for compliance and non-compliance may result in fines. The only means the city has to enforce this state code is to require a permit.

Addressing Alderman Curry’s inquiry about the need for a permit to install central air, Director Polerecky said the department requires a permit to ensure the unit is installed per manufacturer’s recommendations and to regulate the location the condensing unit is installed.

Alderman Curry said the city controls its Ordinances and therefore can control the projects that require a permit.

Chairwoman Condon suggested to Alderman Curry that he compile a list of permits that he would like eliminated and submit the list to the Committee for consideration at a future meeting.

The Committee review each residential permit fee and proposed increased.

Alderman Santi asked for clarification regarding the amount of fees for a basement remodel Director Polerecky stated that currently, the city charges $0.25/square foot and one permit is required for all renovations for that project including electrical. If plumbing is altered, the department is required to have a state licensed plumber perform the inspection so an additional fee is charged. All department inspectors are certified in electrical and building.

Alderman Santi reflected on the last time the committee reviewed fees and stated he would not mind at some point to review the necessity of all permits.

Alderman Santi asked which permit fees draw the most complaints. Director Polerecky answered new construction adding fees proposed for review are for minor permits only – not new construction. Most complaints for new construction are about developer donation fees, which the city does not regulate, we only collect the fee.
Director Polerecky suggested fees could be reviewed again at the Committee meeting on March 12 prior to full Council consideration.

Chairwoman Condon suggested a review of residential fees this evening, and commercial at the March meeting.

Director Polerecky stated the average residential permit cost in the city is comparable to other communities.

Alderman Devine asked for the type of permit issued more often by the city. Director Polerecky answered, furnaces, air conditioners, parking lots, driveways, sidewalks, water heaters, fences, reroof and siding, sheds, and window are the more frequently issued permits.

Alderman Devine asked if the city should raise fees on permits issued more frequently, or not. Chairwoman Condon said what should determine the fee is the cost to staff for implementing the permit. As an example, Director Polerecky said there is currently a $30 base fee for a deck plus $0.5/sq. ft. Typically, a deck requires a pier or posthole, framing, and final inspection. Often larger decks or some smaller decks with stairs, would require a minimum of two pier hole inspections; the larger the deck, the more inspections required, hence the square footage fee. Some decks may require as many as six inspections.

Chairman Condon asked about the proposed increase from $25 to $75 for driveway permits. Director Polerecky stated inspectors spend a lot of time on driveway permits such as drainage issues with culverts and downspouts that need to be worked out. During the review process, items such as gutter placement are identified before they become a problem. In addition, a pre-permit site inspection is performed.

Alderman Santi inquired about garage sales and asked if the city charges a fee. Director Polerecky stated there is no fee charged for garage sales however, the number allowed per year is limited and violations take up staff time in the summer season.

Chairwoman Condon inquired about the proposed increase from $50 to separate fees for prefab ($75) and masonry fireplaces ($150). Director Polerecky stated there is much more staff time and number of inspections required for masonry and wood burning fireplaces versus prefab, which is simply following the manufacturer’s recommendation. Director Polerecky added that department receives approximately two masonry fireplace permits per year.

A discussion ensued on the permit cost for in ground, above ground and storable or blowup swimming pools.

Regarding new construction, Alderman Santi asked when city water/sewer fees are charged. Director Polerecky answered anytime you hook up to city water/sewer, capital development fees are charged, which is not associated with permit fees.
Regarding window replacement permits, Alderman Devine confirmed that the city charges a onetime fee of $25 no matter how many windows are replaced and Director Polerecky answered that is correct and staff is proposing to increase the fee to $50. Alderman Devine suggested a fee for up to six windows similar to the Village of Cary. Director Polerecky said staff did consider the Cary fee however window inspections are not time consuming. Alderman Devine noted that if he replaces one window his permit fee is the same as his neighbor who replaced six window. Director Polerecky stated the International Building Code has a fee structure built in to the code based on construction value, which is much higher than the city’s permit fees. This provision was written out when the city adopted the latest version of the code.

Alderman Santi confirmed that for plumbing, the city is charging a base and per fixture fee and asked for the reasoning behind the fee structure. Director Polerecky said the separate fees are to help offset the cost for a state license plumber to inspect the plumbing.

Alderman Santi asked if the department considered a residential dumpster fee. Director Polerecky answered the Ordinance was recently amended to limit the timeframe for dumpsters and pods however no fee was imposed.

Chairwoman Condon requested a motion to forward the recommended residential permit fees to the full City Council for consideration.

Alderman Santi suggested a permit fee for patios be considered.

Motion made by Alderman Santi, second by Alderman Devine to forward the new residential building permit fees as presented to the full City Council.

All ayes, motion carried.

Chairwoman Condon announced the proposed commercial permit fees will be considered at the next Committee meeting.

7. 2108 Committee Meeting Dates.

The Committee agreed to the following meeting dates for the remainder of 2018:

March 12, May 14, June 11, July 30, September 17, October 22, and December 10. All meetings begin at 7:00 PM.

Alderman Santi reported he might not be available to meet on July 30.

Director Polerecky stated a list of future topics is forthcoming. A few topics for future meetings include recreational/open burning, codification, community involvement committee, and the taxi ordinance.

Alderman Condon requested a list of future meetings with the topics to be discussed at each meeting.
Director Polerecky announced recreational burning and follow up on commercial permit fees would be discussed on March 12, and at that meeting he will submit a list of proposed topics for the remainder of the year.

8. Code Enforcement/Department Updates

Did you know? Director Polerecky reported the department would initiate a weekly “Did you know?” segment through social media tentatively to begin in February on Tuesday afternoons. Top code enforcement and building permit topics will be posted such as “did you know a permit is required for window replacements?”

Alderman Condon said this was a great idea and noted the need for the city to have one dedicated person to coordinate all city communications.

Pearl St. Commons. The development is still on hold awaiting suitable weather conditions to begin construction of the project.

Hickory Pit. A permit was submitted for a minor addition to the restaurant to accommodate catering.

Do It Yourself Dog Wash. This project is moving forward in the Riverwalk Place retail center.

Hidden Pearl Café. Business plans have changed. Staff is working with the owner on the new plans.

Building Maintenance. The Municipal Center lost heat between Christmas and the New Year holiday. Department staff are replacing 47, VAV valves at the cost of approximately $4,000 in supplies.

Building Maintenance Position. The department is hiring a new maintenance worker for the Municipal Center. The qualifications for this position require advance maintenance skills versus just janitorial. This will enable more projects to be completed in-house.

Chairwoman Condon asked Director Polerecky for the percentage of his time spent on building maintenance and as Department Director as she is concerned that someone with his qualifications is performing maintenance duties. Director Polerecky noted he would spend less time on building maintenance when the new position is filled. At this time, he estimated approximately 35% is building maintenance.

Alderman Curry suggested that standing committees review their respective departments’ budget stating in his opinion, it will be difficult to review all the budgets in the Community Whole environment. Chairwoman Condon said that if this is the direction everyone wants to take, it could be worked into committee agenda in future years.
Director Polerecky said the Community Development budget is driven by personnel. Each employee needs a vehicle, fuel, etc. Other than software updates, which were recently completed and office supplies, there is nothing at this time that the department requires.

9. **Motion to Adjourn.**

Alderman Santi made a motion, seconded by Alderman Devine to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 PM.

All yes, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by Marci Geraghty, Executive Assistant/Deputy City Clerk.

Reviewed and Approved on the 10th day of July, 2018.

Alderwoman Geri Condon, Chairwoman