

DEARBORN CHARTER COMMISSION
Mayor's Conference Room
Tuesday, June 20, 2006

Chairman Bazzy called the meeting to order at 5:43 p.m. A roll call was taken. Present were: David Bazzy, Mary M. Bugeia, Stephen S. Dobkowski, Jr., Paula Hamilton-Stokes, Thomas Patrick Korte, Mary K. Petlichkoff, Ganelle Shooshanian, and Raymond Thomas Trudeau. Absent: John Jay Hubbard. Also present: Kathleen Buda, City Clerk and Debra Walling, Corporation Counsel.

Chairman Bazzy asked if anyone had any questions on the minutes from the meeting from June 13, 2006.

A motion was made by Commissioner Korte and seconded by Commissioner Petlichkoff to accept the minutes of the June 13, 2006 meeting. The motion passed as follows: Yeas: Bazzy, Bugeia, Dobkowski, Hamilton-Stokes, Korte, Petlichkoff, Shooshanian and Trudeau (8). Nays: None. Absent: Hubbard (1). The motion was adopted.

Bonnie Ordus, Acting City Assessor, addressed the Commission. Ms. Ordus stated that the Department of Assessment's main responsibility is to annually inventory and list all property within the City of Dearborn, to equitably evaluate every item of taxable property in accordance with sound appraisal methods as prescribed by the State Tax Commission, to calculate the taxable value for every taxable property, and to prepare an assessment roll with all property listed in an orderly fashion by parcel number or legal description.

Ms. Ordus further stated that the task of determining an assessment is accomplished by analyzing various pieces of information, market activities through sales verification, new construction, exemption status of any taxable property, description changes to the property, situs of the property, and other factors that affect the market value.

Property owners are notified annually of their assessed values along with their rights of appeal. The Department of Assessment's responsibility includes defending these values at the Board of Review, the Michigan Tax

Tribunal, or the State Tax Commission or any court system that has the authority to rule on values.

The Department of Assessment is also responsible for the creation of the tax roll, principal resident's exemption affidavits, the property transfer affidavits are also processed to ensure the correct millage rate and/or taxable value is applied to each value.

Finally, the Department of Assessment maintains the abated roll, the TIFA district properties and identifications, special assessment districts, and monitors all property tax issues that might affect the City of Dearborn's tax base.

Commissioner Shooshanian stated that it doesn't seem that there are very many employees in the Department of Assessment for all of the jobs that must be done.

Ms. Ordus stated that previously the department had a larger staff, but, due to reductions in the City, the department now has fewer employees. She also stated that recently the department has worked with Economic & Community Development, Building & Safety, and Treasury. Employees from the Department of Assessment were recently trained on some of the jobs in the Treasury Department, and currently, employees from the Treasury Department are being trained on functions of the Department of Assessment.

Ms. Ordus further stated that the Department of Assessment is totally financed from the property tax administration fee that is levied. The department uses a tremendous amount of support from the Legal Department, Engineering and MIS to assist in the jobs that must be performed. Currently, the majority of the employees in the office are certified as an assessor.

Commissioner Hamilton-Stokes asked Ms. Ordus if it would be advantageous to eliminate the word "Assessor" and combine with another department to create a cost savings.

Ms. Ordus stated that there are things that are required within the General Property Tax Act as far as what a general municipality is required to do and what an Assessor is in charge of. The Department of Assessment

works well with several departments, but it would be hard to decide which department the duties would fall under.

Chairman Bazy stated that it was recommended to change the Charter to describe the functions of the City government rather than defining departments individually.

Ms. Ordus stated that as long as it is addressed somewhere that the assessing functions would be governed by the General Property Tax Act and that the City of Dearborn would be in compliance with the act it shouldn't be a problem.

Commissioner Dobkowski asked what Michigan law requires of local communities when it comes to Assessors.

Ms. Ordus stated that the State Tax Commission just amended their guidelines and rules and regulations of what an assessor's office is required to do. The State Tax Commission also reviews municipalities throughout the State to see if the assessor's office is in compliance with the laws.

Floyd Addison, Housing Director addressed the Commission. Mr. Addison stated that the primary function of the Housing Department is that of property manager for the City of Dearborn senior housing program. The Department manages six senior high rise buildings, five located in the City of Dearborn and one located in Clearwater, Florida. The Department is involved in the operation of two federally subsidized rent programs. The Department is responsible for the entire gamut of the high rise buildings, everything including management, wait lists, intake, checking the applicant as they are moving in, placing the people in the proper units, determining rent, manning the building with proper staff, and preparing the budgets, along with staying in compliance with the ever changing HUD laws.

There are three buildings which are federally subsidized and their operation is governed by the Housing Commission and the Housing Director is appointed by the Commission to operate the three federally subsidized buildings.

The Housing Department also oversees the Section 8 programs for new construction and existing buildings with subsidized rental programs. A Certified Housing Manager is required to manage these housing programs.

The Housing Director reports to the City Council on the operations of the other two City of Dearborn housing buildings along with the building located in Florida.

The buildings that are located in the City staff a manager and custodian in each of the facilities, along with three people that are on call 24/7. Occupancy is a key element in all of the City housing buildings.

Commissioner Petlichkoff asked if the Department of Housing oversees the rental of houses under the terms of Section 8.

Mr. Addison stated that renters have to find a property that meets the federal guidelines for minimum quality of housing standards, the landlord must be willing to participate in the program, and the Housing Department certifies that a property meets the standards. The next step is a lease or contractual agreement where the person that is qualified for the program pays the required 30% to the landlord and the City is responsible for the rest up to the fair market value.

Commissioner Shooshanian asked how much of these rents are paid from Dearborn's tax money and how much comes from federal funds.

Mr. Addison explained that there are no City tax dollars involved in the operation of any of the housing programs. On the federal side, the City receives a subsidy and capital improvement grants for the operation of the programs. On the City's side, the department is solely funded from the rents that are generated.

John Nagy, City Planner addressed the Commission. Mr. Nagy stated that the City Plan staff serves the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission is composed of nine people that are appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. The Master Plan is the major reference that is used to guide the Planning Commission to fulfill their duties. The Master Plan basically sets forth the future land use plan for the City.

The basic functions of the City Plan Commission are to make recommendations to City Council covering any proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, prepare a Master plan as required by the terms Michigan law, to make recommendations to the City Council concerning the proposed

opening or vacating of any and all streets and alleys to the City, and to effect a long-range plan for capital improvements and expenditures in the City.

The City Plan Commission also gets involved with design of various projects within the City and can also help with design concepts for the private sector when asked.

The City Plan Commission has a tie in with the Zoning Board of Appeals as it relates to parking facilities.

The City Plan Commission is also involved with operation eyesore which is a program designed to upgrade neighborhoods throughout the City by the acquisition and removal of temporary and substandard structures, nonconforming structures, and nonconforming uses.

Commissioner Petlichkoff stated that there seems to be a lot of cross over between the City Plan Department, Economic & Community Development and the Building & Safety Department and asked Mr. Nagy if there was something that could be targeted that is specific to the City Plan Department that sets the department apart from the components of the other departments.

Mr. Nagy stated that the City Plan Department basically functions through a commission to the City Council and the City Administration. Many of the things that are processed through the Commission is further reviewed by the City Council and the final action is by the City Council.

Chairman Bazzy stated that at the July 18, 2006 meeting, representatives from the Building & Safety, MIS and the Legal Departments will appear before the Commission to give presentations.

A motion was made by Commissioner Trudeau and supported by Commissioner Shooshanian to adjourn.

The Charter Commission meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Approved:

/s/ David Bazzy
Chairperson

Attested:

/s/ Kathleen Buda
CMC, City Clerk