

AGENDA SESSION MINUTES

CHATTANOOGA CITY COUNCIL

June 13, 2017

In Attendance

Council Chairman Jerry Mitchell called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m. in the Assembly Room. A quorum was present, including Vice Chair Ken Smith and Council members Carol Berz, Anthony Byrd, Demetrus Coonrod, Russell Gilbert, Chip Henderson, Darrin Ledford and Erskine Oglesby. City Attorney Wade Hinton and Council Support Specialist Keren Campbell were also present.

Approval of Minutes

On motion of Councilman Gilbert and seconded by Councilman Ledford, the minutes of the last meeting (June 6, 2017) were approved as published.

Ordinances (Final Reading) - Agenda Item 5A & 5B

These items had been discussed at previous open meetings. Upon no questions or comments, the issue was closed.

Ordinances (First Reading) - Agenda Item 6A, 6B, 6C & 6D

These items had been discussed at previous open meetings. Upon no questions or comments, the issue was closed.

Ordinances (First Reading) - Agenda Item 6E

Chairman Mitchell informed the Council that there were educators who were concerned about school safety relative to Short-Term Vacation Rentals (STVR). He opened the floor to hear from the following educators and constituents wishing to address the Council:

- **Dr. Autumn Graves** (Head of GPS) - She had safety concerns about safety zones around schools to protect students from those who prey on them and recommended that the Council consider having a school safety zone as part of the ordinance, similar to what is established with adult entertainment facilities, liquor stores and clubs. She recommended that the Council use the STVR ordinances to establish best practices around the country on this economic venture. She went on to inform the Council that GPS was not in a gated community, so there are concerns about sex offenders staying in STVR homes and gaining access to students.
 - She questioned why the buffer zone for STVR is less than the number of feet allowed from educational facilities.
 - Councilman Henderson asked if Ms. Graves had any data that is causing her concern. She did not, but had anecdotal information from other cities where there have been illegal activities, including drug drops and sexual assault, in relation to STVR.
 - Councilman Henderson asked if there was concern for hotels near schools. She stated that no hotels are allowed within 1000 feet of her school. She did explained that hotels had certain restrictions and types of training for their employees in order to recognize certain behaviors. She voiced concerns about private citizens engaging in hotel practices without proper training.

- Mr. Bridger confirmed that the zoning ordinance already in place does not provide a distance standard for schools.
- Dr. Graves questioned why the public notification was limited to property owners within 300-feet instead of 500- or 1000-feet. Councilman Henderson discussed how the 300-feet keeps the STVR component consistent with the rest of the zoning code. He also discussed the public input process for non-owner occupied STVR.
- Mr. Hinton discussed the idea of a hotline for communities to report violations at STVR.
- Dr. Graves asked the Council to consider expanding the 300-feet distance to 500 or 1000. She also asked the City to notify schools when notifying the property owners within 300-feet on an STVR property.
- **Mark Fallo** (Head of School at St. Nicholas) – He voiced concerns that sex offenders would use STVR in close proximity of schools to negate restrictions already in place to safeguard children. He recommended that the Council table this ordinance to spend time to examining the safety of children.
- **Phillip Clegg** (District 4) – He voiced concerns about not feeling part of the conversation on STVR. He, his wife and other STVR hosts attended meetings on STVR last year, but were not aware until recently of the changes that have been added to it. He is an advocate for putting an ordinance in place that would enable STVR operators to come into compliance. He feels that the overlay boundary excludes and brings a hardship upon people outside of that boundary who want to be compliant. He believes that non-owner occupied STVR creates a problem for hosts. He now falls outside the overlay boundary that is being proposed. He recommends more discussion with STVR hosts during this process.
- **Meredith Ruffner** (St. Peter’s Episcopal) - She recommended that the Council take more time to come up with a way of ensuring the safety zones of children.

Upon no further questions or comments, the issue was closed.

Resolution - Agenda Item 7A, 7B, 7C, 7D, 7E, 7F 7G & 7H

These items had been discussed at previous open meetings. Upon no questions or comments, the issues were closed.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairman Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 3:31 p.m.