



OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK DAWN M. JONES, CITY CLERK

Community Investment Committee April 25 2022, 3:45 P.M.

Committee Members Present: Rachel Tomas Morgan, Eli Wax, Henry Davis Jr.

Citizen Members Present: Caine Kanczuzewski, Thomas Kurzhal

Committee Members Absent: None

Other Council Present: Canneth Lee, Sharon L. McBride, Troy Warner, Karen White, Sheila Niezgodski, Lori Hamann

Other Council Absent: None

Others Present: Dawn Jones

Presenters: Santiago Garces, Caleb Bauer

Agenda: Community Investment Update- Annual Report and Pandemic Recovery Efforts and Highlights.

Full audio dialogue of the meeting is available upon request from the City Clerk's Office.

Committee Chair Rachel Tomas Morgan called to order the Community Investment Committee meeting at 3:45 p.m.

Community Chair Tomas Morgan stated the first order of business is the department's 2020-2021 annual reports and update highlights on the department's pandemic recovery efforts.

Santiago Garces, Executive Director of the Department of Community Investment, with offices on the fourteenth (14th) floor, and Caleb Bauer, Deputy Executive Director of the Department of Community Investment, with offices on the fourteenth (14th) floor, presented the 2020-2021 annual report for the Department of Community Investment.

Committee Chair Tomas Morgan asked for questions from the committee members.

Committee Member Eli Wax stated over the past couple of years, there have been changes to the structure of community investment and that he would like to hear more on Code Enforcement and how it is managed.

Caleb Bauer stated code enforcement is renamed Neighborhood Services and Enforcement is under Pam Meyer.



Santiago Garces stated that the neighborhood team works across the board. Several properties are substandard with zoning issues. The department has regular meetings to go over those issues. The team is also developing synergies within housing programs and repair as well as doing outreach for people who have housing issues. Residents are matched with programs for the repairs. The EEE team manages relations with neighborhood associations. The department is piloting a spring clean-up to help people dispose of trash the correct way.

Committee Member Wax stated that he appreciates the perspective of “if you can work with code violators, everyone benefits and there are fewer code violations.”

Santiago Garces reports the past year has been abnormal with code violations and with spiking in illegal dumping. Next year you will have data on the efforts. The most environmental violations happen in the summertime. The department will have to wait to get the data at the end of the year to see if there is an overall reduction.

Committee Member Wax inquired if the neighborhood safety and enforcement team have employees who are specific to them.

Santiago Garces responded the RSVP program monitors rental reporting under the housing unit. There is assigned staff to do housing, structural and environmental inspections.

Caine Kanczuzewski reported that one hundred thirty-four (134) landlords have registered and asked what the participation rate is and what is the end results without participation.

Santiago Garces responded RSVP is not an active program due to legal challenges. In the past few years, the legislation has changed the city’s ability to act. Landlord registration is not active. With permission from the tenants, RSVP can inspect and fine the landlords including the housing authority; the housing authority is one of the top property owners that gets inspected.

Committee Member Wax inquired if the city could create liens against the property.

Santiago Garces responded that RSVP is new; and deals with most code enforcement violations, along with property and housing violations.

Committee Member Wax inquired if the city could foreclose on the house for habitual offenders.

Santiago Garces responded if the fines go unpaid against the property, this can initiate the sale of the property.

Committee Chair Tomas Morgan inquired if the RSVP requires a warrant.

Santiago Garces responded that they take the consent of the tenant. Landlords are starting to tell their tenants to not contact code enforcement. Results are starting to be seen. Miami Hills worked with RSVP, and RSVP acted as verification and allowed the city to be reassured of the repairs due to the city-initiated investment in their property.

Caine Kanczuzewski inquired if the city is coming up with plans for pre-designed homes in vacant lot infill.



Caleb Bauer responded the department will release preapprove plans in late summer for single, duplexes, and quadplexes. People can download plans and cut down on architectural costs for potential home builders and streamline the approval process for zoning and other regulatory processes through the Department of Community Investment.

Caine Kanczuzewski inquired about approving designs and development costs.

Santiago Garces responded the designs are pre-approved with plans that are fully developed at full cost according to contractors. The department has been using pre-approved plans in our cost estimation to give to the council.

Committee Chair Tomas Morgan opened the floor to council members.

Councilmember Lori Hamann inquired if it is possible to get additional plans to cut down costs and can have multiple builds per city lot.

Santiago Garces stated the department has had conversations to look at different models. The challenge is the costs, parts, labor, and challenge of the appraisal gap. The value is lower than the actual cost of the house as well as affordability is a challenge. Working with subsidized mortgages and partners, we work to address the appraisal gap. The team focuses on trying to build houses that function as multiple units to produce alternative income streams. There can be U zoning that can have up to four (4) units in a lot.

Councilmember Hamann stated her support for the location of the pop-up markets due to it addressing the food desert concern and asked if the city can do them more frequently since work has been done.

Santiago Garces responded that with the Dream Center and remodeling of MLK park, a request was made to the mayor to help build structures to help with the pop-ups. Currently, there are tents. The hope is that businesses starting as a pop-up can support retail or restaurants on Linden Avenue. If this model works, then we can replicate it in parts of the city that need it. It fits with new business owners. Vacant spaces can be unaffordable. Pop-ups are small enough and we have been subsidizing them with no charge for rental space.

Councilmember Sheila Niezgodski inquired if the department is looking to do something specific in the spring and fall to dump tires.

Santiago Garces responded the pilot for the dumpster program will be later this year.

Councilmember Niezgodski stated Rum Village did that and it was a great partnership with the city to alleviate the problem.

Committee Chair Tomas Morgan requested a briefing on the leadership transition plan for the Department of Community Investment.

Caleb Bauer stated that he will assume the duties of acting executive director when Santiago Garces leaves next week. At the mayor's discretion, he will appoint the next Executive Director. Director of Business Development, Angelina Vilo, will be leaving. The city is currently working



to fill, and the title has been changed from Business Development to the Director of Growth and Opportunity; the position is posted on the city website.

Santiago Garces reiterated the team is smart and committed and he has been lucky to work with them. His gratitude goes to the council, mayor, and community. There are a lot of exciting projects and a great future for the city.

Committee Chair Tomas Morgan opened to the council and committee and thanked Garces for his efforts and expertise to streamline efforts and reduce redundancy.

Santiago Garces responded that South Bend has been a very welcoming community. It is a community where people care and have big challenges. He stated that he leaves with optimism and is thankful to the mayor for entrusting him with this department.

Committee Chair Tomas Morgan ends the Community Investment Committee meeting at 4:35 p.m.

Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel Tomas Morgan".

Rachel Tomas Morgan, Committee Chair