

**MINUTES  
CITY OF LONSDALE  
SPECIAL JOINT CITY COUNCIL & PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 22, 2016**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Rud called a meeting of the Lonsdale City Council to order at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 415 Central Street West.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Everyone stood and recited the pledge of allegiance.

**3. ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Daleiden, Kodada, Rud, Furrer, and Pelava

Members Absent: None

City Staff Present: City Administrator Joel Erickson, City Planner Benjamin Baker, Public Works Director Russ Vlasak, Police Chief Jason Schmitz

Planning Commission: Jim Freid, Joe Kodada, John Duban, and Ben Sticha

P.C. Members Absent: Dave Dols

**4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mayor Rud asked if there were any additions, deletions, or corrections to the agenda.

A motion was made by Kodada and seconded by Pelava to approve the agenda as presented.

Vote for: Daleiden, Kodada, Rud, Furrer, and Pelava. Vote against: None. Abstained: None. Vote: 5-0. Motion carried.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

None

**6. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

None

**7. PRESENTATION OF CITIZEN PETITIONS AND COMMENTS**

None

**8. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

None

**9. OLD BUSINESS**

None

## 10. NEW BUSINESS

### a. Discuss Blight and Parking Issues with the Planning Commission

The Council and Planning Commission members reviewed the Staff Memo, which included background information, relevant City ordinances, and recent pictures concerning blight and off-street parking. Erickson stated that the purpose of the meeting was to get the City Council, Planning Commission, and public together to discuss what should/should not be included in the ordinances, enforcement, and examples of parking issues, parking pads, and blight. Erickson said that blight can be subjective, with some residents having very high standards and some having lower standards. Rud thanked everyone in the audience for coming to the meeting, and he introduced the city officials in attendance. He encouraged the audience members to feel free to provide comments throughout the meeting.

Erickson projected numerous blight and off-street parking pictures on the front wall of the Council Chambers to engage discussion and gain insight on people's thoughts on parking pads, number of allowed recreational vehicles, setbacks, cluttered piles, exterior storage, and enforcement. Rud stated that the City is trying to create a realistic ordinance that makes the City look like a nice, clean town but that is still practical to follow and enforce.

Pat Hughes, 522 Delaware St SW, stated that some of the presentation pictures showed blight/parking issues in his neighborhood. He said that Lonsdale residents should be proud of their town, and he suggested that the City not settle to become like a backwaters Mississippi town. He encouraged the City to do something about blight/parking that everyone can support. He questioned if MPCA had rules about vehicles parked on pervious surfaces.

Steve Jakobitz, 218 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave SE, defined blight as a property that lowers neighbor's property values. He said that he was okay with people parking a boat along the side of a garage on gravel or better. He said that gravel shouldn't wash out onto the road and that parking pads should be neatly maintained. He wondered why people don't use their garage spaces to store items.

Daleiden questioned why some residents use their garages for living space instead of for vehicles and lawn maintenance items.

Joe Krammer, 400 Singing Hills Dr SE, stated that he was in favor of enforcing blight/parking issues, and he suggested taking baby steps with enforcement and not riling everyone up with one large swoop. He said that parking pads could be gravel so long as they were weed-free, orderly, and neat. He stated that there is a property on the 200 block of 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE that needs to be cleaned up.

Erickson stated that it is hard to enforce only certain ordinances in specific areas, because of finger pointing by violators seeking fairness in ordinance enforcement.

Rud explained how neighborhood covenants function, and he noted that the City is not responsible for enforcing neighborhood covenants. He said that developers and neighborhood associations are ultimately responsible for providing that duty.

Robyn Pikal, 709 Golden Oak Street NE, stated that she takes pride in her property. She suggested that the City use common sense when enforcing the garbage can location regulation. Pikal said that she constructed a small enclosure for her garbage cans in the front of her home because there wasn't enough room in their garage, but she expressed her frustration with being ticketed for having garbage bins in front of house. She suggested focusing on larger blight issues, such as utility/work vehicles obstructing views, overflowing garbage bins, bins that sit out at the street/curb for more than four days, and cluttered yards/garages.

Gary Skluzacek, 601 Railway St SW, commented on garbage that blows around during/after trash pickup day.

Bob Brezina, 615 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue NW, mentioned that the City may want to account for different setback rules for the City's various neighborhoods. He explained that his home was built too close his southern property line.

Brian Pikal, 709 Golden Oak Street NE, said that people shouldn't turn their residential yards/driveways into impound lots full of vehicles. He suggested that seasonal items be stored in the garage or off-site during the off months. He agreed with having a setback away from the curb for recreation vehicle parking. Pikal said that heavy equipment trucks are breaking up curbs, driveways, and are an eyesore. Overall, he thanked the City for doing something about blight/parking, but he also stated that common sense should be used with enforcement.

Josh Warren, 510 Cottonwood Street NE, stated that boats and recreational vehicles may not always be able to fit inside a garage. He also said that the topography on his side yard is too steep to park anything.

Krammer stated that people who purchase a recreational vehicle or trailer should also budget enough money for storage of that vehicle. He said that he spends \$65/mo. to store his recreational vehicle in Lakeville.

Scott Boyer, 424 Singing Hills Dr SE, stated that the City shouldn't force people out of town by requiring them to construct accessory structures just to house recreational vehicles. He said that many budgets can't handle that expense. He said that Lonsdale should remain a family/budget-friendly town.

Belinda Thomas, 421 Main Street North, provided insight on dealings she recently had with neighbors who had blighted yards. She said that she was forced to erect a \$4,000 privacy fence to protect her property and block the unsightly view. She said that some people need to realize that they are living in town and not on a rural farm.

Lori Nickel, 927 Tom Jirik Ct NW, stated that vehicles should be parked back far enough away from the curb as to not create a safety hazard.

There was brief discussion on whether the City should create an informational pamphlet for resident that would list the basic standards/rules for keeping up a property.

Jeff Kodada, Landmark Square Apartments, 309 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue SE, stated that he traps skunks and opossums around town. He said that critters can live in cluttered piles.

There was brief discussion about how many toys/recreational vehicles should be allowed on a lot before it looks cluttered/blighted.

Aaron Brown, 875 Florida Street SW, suggested that before enforcement begins, the City should first present to the public why blight/parking is a problem, such as harboring rodents.

Rud asked if anyone else wanted to speak on the subject.

Duban suggested that yard items and vehicles be lined up and organized.

Pelava invited everyone to attend a City Council or Planning Commission meeting to further discuss the subject.

The Council members thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

## **11. OTHER BUSINESS**

- a. Department Reports  
None
- b. Council Reports  
None

## **12. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Kodada and seconded by Furrer to adjourn the meeting. Vote for: Daleiden, Kodada, Rud, Furrer, and Pelava. Vote against: None. Abstained: None. Vote: 5-0. Motion carried. The meeting ended at 7:59 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

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Joel A. Erickson, City Administrator