

MEMORANDUM TO: David B. Humpton, City Manager

FROM: Greg Ossont, Director
Planning and Code Administration

DATE: December 12, 2006

SUBJECT: Market Square Issues



The purpose of this memorandum is to provide updates on a number of issues related to the Market Square commercial area. As you know, a number of City departments and staff members have been coordinating with residents, merchants, and property owners to resolve nuisances and other quality of life issues in and around Market Square. Staff believes that we have made significant progress to address these neighborhood concerns and will continue to work with the residents and business owners.

The following is a list of action items and measures taken to resolve each matter.

Site Lighting

Initial inspections of the Market Square area noted number of public and private street light outages. These outages were immediately repaired this summer.

Additionally, City staff has coordinated with property owners to improve the lighting in the area around the Lakelands office building. Small directional fixtures have been installed on the public art sculpture around the existing fountain, additional recessed lighting has been added under the office building arcade as well as the façade facing the parking lot. All of the lights are operational and have significantly improved visibility in the area.

Finally, decorative pole lights were installed in conjunction with the new plaza construction. These poles lights are operational and provide significant site lighting for the plaza and rear of the office building.

Site Maintenance (litter, graffiti, trash collection, etc.)

Four additional trash receptacles were installed in the plaza area as well as seven additional cans throughout the rest of Market Square. Also, several dumpsters were removed by Beatty Management and replaced with one trash compactor. The compactor increases capacity and restricts access to only authorized users. This has dramatically reduced overflowing dumpster complaints and malodorous nuisance complaints. The Lakelands office building trash enclosure is secured with locks and is emptied regularly as well.

Department of Public Works staff patrols the plaza and office building area seven days a week, emptying trash receptacles and removing litter from the exterior property areas. Additionally, Beatty Management now employs an on-site day porter to provide regular maintenance including trash removal, dumpster maintenance and graffiti removal. City inspectors perform regular inspections of Market Square and order the removal of any graffiti in accordance with the City's zero tolerance policy.

General Enhancements

During a walking tour with residents, a number of minor site enhancements were suggested. Businesses occupying the first floor of the Lakelands office building have used reflective material on "walled in" windows to enhance the appearance from the exterior. Also, the Department of Public Works installed a street tree and re-graded a parking island near these residences. Nearby residents have supplemented the tree with additional landscaping and provide regular maintenance.

Also, residents noted fading paint and deteriorating trim on various store fronts and buildings. Beatty Management completed a comprehensive exterior painting and trim project this fall and the day porter provides touch up work as needed. Finally, Beatty Management installed an additional crosswalk to enhance pedestrian safety near the Kentlands movie theater at the request of a resident.

Lastly, the City recently completed the significant capital project of converting the Market Square ice rink area into a public plaza. The plaza provides a central public space for all ages with various seating and gathering areas.

Resident Parking

Residents in the 200 block of Market Street East expressed concern that the on-street parking directly in front of their homes was used predominantly by Market Square employees and patrons and were rarely available to residents or their guests. A resident permit parking restriction for these 13 spaces was implemented for a 1 year trial. The trial seems to be working quite well and the parking restrictions should remain in place permanently.

Security/Policing

The Lakelands Community Association and the Lakelands office building owner have retained the same part-time security staff to patrol community and other private properties during evening hours. Beatty Management, the owner of the Market Square Shopping Center, has indicated that they will also be retaining the same security company by year's end. This should provide for a seamless and comprehensive security coverage.

This past summer, the City provided regular police presence (Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights). It is anticipated that a similar presence will be needed in the spring and summer of 2007. In addition, regular patrols of the park have been identified as a priority given the past record of vandalism, etc. within that area. City staff is exploring a "Watch the Park" program for neighboring businesses and residences using Neighborhood Watch program techniques to protect the City's new asset as well as private property in that area.

I hope this information is helpful. Please contact me directly if you have any questions.