

North Fort Worth Alliance
Meeting Minutes
Fellowship of the Parks Church
January 15, 2011

The meeting was called to order at 9:16am by Rusty Fuller, who presided over the meeting in Ms. Demel's absence.

Rusty introduced Kelvin Beene, Special Projects Coordinator/Code Rangers and Brandon Bennett, Manager of Code Compliance for the City of Fort Worth.

Code compliance writes tickets but cares about the results. Code Compliance has lost about 60% of their budget. As a result, in 2010, started cutting grass at 18" rather than 12" but for 2011 mowing regulations are back to 2009 level. Mowing costs about \$600,000/yr (about \$70/property) but collection is comparable though payment takes years.

Code has absorbed some of the consolidated departments' duties – animal care & control, public health, and in June, solid waste. Petsmart has partnered with the city's animal control for store to donate space, city get interns to run adoption facilities at Hulen Petsmart, and is building a business plan to encourage and receive charitable donations to manage pet adoption to reduce euthanization.

Working to build into noise ordinance they need objective measurements for what constitutes a nuisance that current ordinance doesn't have. Tickets get peoples' attention but they have to have probable cause, which is difficult under the current ordinance.

Paul Rudisill asked where fine funds go and was told they go to the general fund and that Code Compliance couldn't run solely off of fines.

The city is looking to the state to move to a civil penalty for violations subjecting the property owner to a fine. There is a house bill currently allowing civil penalties for chapter 54 violations. This would allow code ranger volunteers using cameras to document violations and have light duty officers handle ticketing. Some Code Rangers are driving Code vehicles. Under sign ordinance, new law doesn't require city to catch offender placing the sign rather whoever's company name on the sign is liable. Will be moving environmental court to separate location to handle code violations and fines will help support its duties.

Paul asked if Keller Citizen could be changed to an opt-in for non-Star-Telegram subscribers. Current door-to-door ordinance allows door-to-door unless a resident has a “no soliciting” sign visible. Permit is not required unless person who comes to the door is trying to sell something. Leaving material does not require a permit.

Paul asked what challenges code compliance has currently. Brandon says when he came in 2004 they didn't need more staff. They needed to improve efficiency. Call volume is increasing, budget going down, productivity per officer going up but now the rubber band is stretched to the point of breaking. At this point more staff is needed. As an example, the whole county has max of 6 animal control officers on a given day.

The City is thinking about adding a drop-off station up here that could house renters (solid waste provider offices, animal control satellite office) that would be built and managed under solid waste budget. 287 and south loop 820 may be a spot for new recycling facility to sell to Waste Management.

A question was asked about Code's position on plastic grocery bags. Mr. Bennett stated that while many cities have taken a position taxing or banning the bags, Fort Worth has elected not to take a position.

Rusty thanked Mr. Beene and Mr. Bennett for coming and moved on to the next agenda topic.

Rusty announced that the NFWA Facebook page is now live, with Jerry Betts managing it.

He then mentioned that the city should be redistricting some time in 2013. He recommended that we think about elements that should be considered.

Rusty also mentioned that the city's streetcar study is dead. The general consensus was that transit opportunities need to not be focused on only the city center but from the suburbs and to major employers.

Attendees:

Rob Beauseau –Heritage

Paul Rudisill – Saratoga

Rusty Fuller – Vineyards at Heritage

Bill Lebo – Trace Ridge

Shirley Gansser – Villages of Woodland Springs

Ibizo Charles – City of Fort Worth

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Beauseau, Secretary