

**MINUTES OF A WORKSHOP/SPECIAL MEETING OF THE ZION CITY COUNCIL  
HELD ON THURSDAY, MAY 8, 2003, AT 4:04 P.M. IN THE CITY COUNCIL  
CHAMBERS, CITY HALL, ZION, ILLINOIS**

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Mayor Harrison called the meeting to order.

On call of the roll the following answered present: Commissioners Taylor, DeTienne, Bennett, Flammini and Mayor Harrison.

**SPRINKLER SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS**

Commissioner Taylor stated current sprinkler system requirements need to be reviewed. Many communities have adopted the National Fire Protection requirements. Commissioner Taylor stated Mundelein distinguishes requirements based on size. Commissioner Taylor noted he is concerned about safety, but requirements must be reasonable, and agreed places of public assembly or with people of restricted mobility would need these regulations. Commissioner Taylor noted concerns regarding Zion's Code for automatic sprinkler systems:

- Any new commercial or industrial structure and any residential structure with greater than four dwelling units shall have an automatic fire sprinkler system installed.
- Any existing structure other than a single-family detached residence shall add an automatic sprinkler system for the entire structure at any time the gross square footage of the structure is expanded beyond the original gross square footage of such structure by 2,500 square feet or more.

Commissioner Taylor stated the regulations should use factors of usage and the building's square footage. Mayor Harrison stated square footage, regardless of usage, needs to be taken into consideration, noting if the building's usage changes, it could require a sprinkler system. Commissioner DeTienne stated, when staff makes a recommendation, the Council should understand all of the ramifications prior to approval, and the city should be able to review individual cases. Lt. John Lewis stated a sprinkler system is designed to put out the fire of the contents of a building, noting it takes longer for a business to recoup its losses in a non-sprinkled building. Commissioner Bennett questioned why the Art Alley Center would require a sprinkler system. Bat. Chief Dale Colwell stated this center plans to use a kiln, and have other activities with public assembly. Brian Usher stated one water main to a building can be utilized for both plumbing and sprinkler services, and must be sized sufficiently to handle both. Retired Fire Chief Dave Danley of Barrington stated a building must be designed to the NFPA standards. NFPA is a base document with modifications adopted in the communities, noting costs have decreased over the years while technology has improved. Mr. Danley stated an entire building must be sprinkled for insurance credits. Commissioner Taylor stated small retail businesses, churches and single family residences shouldn't be under the same requirements. Mr. Usher stated he understands the cost concerns, however, when the City raised the tap on fees, there were concerns of less construction, but new development has continued. Lt. Lewis stated many construction materials today are more susceptible to combustion, noting it's also surprising what businesses store in their facilities. Bat. Chief Colwell stated synthetic materials shorten the time firemen have before everything ignites. Chief LaBelle stated owners of small buildings and churches can change usages or utilize their structures for storage creating fire hazards. John Jones noted people in

churches typically aren't aware of where all of the exits are located. Chief LaBelle noted new developers, who build in other areas, come into Zion expecting sprinkler requirements.

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Chief LaBelle stated if there are objections or questions on this issue, he would be more than happy to answer questions and present information. Within the last two years, 13 buildings in Zion have put in sprinkler systems with 6 additional permits being processed. Developer Jim Funderburk stated he feels his buildings are safe with firewalls and fire alarms, noting his concerns for false activation of sprinkler systems and related damage. Mr. Danley stated the water pressure in sprinkler systems is much less than what is used by the fire department's equipment, yet is capable of extinguishing the contents and lessening damage. Commissioner Flammini stated he has experienced fires working at Commonwealth Edison, one of which the sprinkler system put out the fire before the fire alarm even went off. The Council thanked everyone for their input and information.

No action was required on this issue.

### **ADJOURN**

There being no further business to come before the Council at this time, it was moved by Commissioner Bennett, seconded by Commissioner Flammini and unanimously approved the meeting be adjourned at 6:07 p.m. Motion carried.

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City Clerk

Approved May 20, 2003