

The Mayor and Council of the City of Abbeville met for a committee meeting on November 1, 2016 at 5:15 P.M., at the regular meeting place, the Council Meeting Room located at 101 North State Street, with the Honorable Mark Piazza, Mayor presiding.

Members Present: Council Members Francis Plaisance, Mayor Pro-Tem, Brady Broussard, Jr., Wayne Landry, Joe Hardy and Francis Touchet, Jr.

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Ike Funderburk, City Attorney
Richard Primeaux, Engineer
Tony Hardy, Police Chief
Jude Mire, Fire Chief
Clay Menard, Public Works Director

Mayor Piazza stated we are here for an Ordinance committee meeting chaired by Councilman Wayne Landry. He turned the floor over to Councilman Landry.

Councilman Landry asked if there were any public comments on any agenda item. There were none.

Councilman Landry stated the item is to discuss an amendment to the mobile home ordinance to reduce the age of the mobile home allowed in the City from 15 years old to 10. Since Councilman Plaisance had requested to place this as an agenda item, Councilman Landry turned the floor over to him

Councilman Plaisance stated he asked Mr. Funderburk to research surrounding cities to see what age of mobile home they allow in their city. There is a variety of ages on these mobile homes. Kaplan has 10 years but it can be waived by the Mayor. Erath has 10 years, Gueydan has 20 years and Hammond has 5 years. He was really bothered by the mobile home that recently burned in Kaplan where two children and a young lady lost their lives. He thought it would be a good idea for us to reduce the age allowed. Mobile homes that are already in the City would be grandfathered in. This would only affect those mobile homes that were moved into the City. He knows the Council can grant variances but we should make every effort to keep it as strict as we can. He understands that people need homes to live in but he is concerned about the safety factor of older mobile homes. He spoke to Ronald Darby about the agenda item. He stated he would address that with the Police Jury but he expressed some concern about that because of people's camps. He agreed that in the rural areas, it is difficult for the fire department to get to the mobile home quickly. He would feel really bad if people died because of an older mobile home that was in the City because of a variance.

Councilman Landry asked how old the mobile home was that burned in Kaplan. Chief Jude Mire stated it was 35 years old.

Councilman Touchet stated that no matter if we go from 15 to 10, the issue is that this Council is always under political pressure. We get calls about accepting a mobile home and we come here and we waive it. No matter if it is 10 or 15, he agrees with Councilman Plaisance, that we need to be committed to the ordinance. The root of the problem is that we have an ordinance and we break it. We let trailers in that are 25 years old.

Councilman Landry stated that a 15 year old trailer is not that old. You will have some homeless people. They can't afford a 10 year old trailer.

Councilman Plaisance did not agree with that because the price difference is not that great. He would rather see families not lose family members and be safer. As a Council, it is time for us to be committed and be very careful when granting a variance.

Councilman Landry stated he would like to see a comparison of prices for a 15 year old mobile home versus a 10 year old mobile home.

Councilman Touchet asked Mr. Richard Primeaux to explain the differences between a 10 year old mobile home and a 15 year old mobile home. Mr. Primeaux stated the code changes have really become strict on the grounding. That is where a lot of the fires are happening. That change has only taken place in the last nine years. The trailer has to be grounded to the meter and it also has to be grounded internally within the receptacles. You will see a more significant difference between a 10 year old and 15 year old trailer. The price difference will probably be between \$10,000 and \$15,000 because the codes are stricter.

Councilman Plaisance stated so the 10 years would conform within the new codes and it would be an added safety feature.

Councilman Touchet stated there are several economically disadvantaged people in his district and not even a 10 year old mobile home would have restricted fires.

Councilman Broussard asked Mr. Richard Primeaux if you would stand a 15 year old and a 10 year old mobile home side by side, would there be a difference as far as safety. Mr. Primeaux answered yes.

Councilman Landry asked if FEMA required us to change our trailers.

Mayor Piazza stated FEMA did not order us to do that. Governor Blanco insisted that we adopt new building codes after Hurricane Katrina and Rita. That was when a lot of new codes came into play.

Mr. Primeaux stated they inspect the tie down and the outside ground on the meter. Everything else is done in the factory so we can't see into the walls because they are closed up at the factory.

-01 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Mr. Joe Hardy to recommend to the City Council at their next meeting scheduled on November 15, 2016 to adopt an ordinance amending the mobile home ordinance to reduce the age of a mobile home allowed in the City from 15 years old to 10 years old. The motion was put to a vote and the vote thereon was as follows:

*YEAS: 2(Plaisance, Hardy)
NAYS: 3(Broussard, Landry, Touchet)
ABSENT: 0
ABSTAIN: 0*

Therefore the motion failed.

Councilman Broussard stated old space heaters in homes are killing more people. We are not here to govern people's choices in houses.

Councilman Touchet stated we don't do anything differently at 15 because we grant variances. He will not vote for a variance in the future.

Mayor Piazza stated this administration has come a long way in 12 years. We had so many landlords hauling these old \$500 trailers into the City and putting people in them in the past. 10 or 15 years won't make that big a difference as long as we stick to the ordinance. Our ordinance also addresses the tie down and electrical inspections. Richard cannot look into the wall on remodels. So we have to be careful on older mobile homes that are remodeled. We also have restrictions on lot size so we have a lot of stuff in our ordinance to regulate mobile homes to make sure people are safe. Mr. Funderburk stated the mobile home must also possess a seal issued by HUD or it cannot come into the City even if it is brand new. The mobile home also has to be moved by a state licensed mover.

Councilman Plaisance stated he will not vote for a variance in the future.

Mr. Funderburk stated he congratulates all cities who put age restrictions. Some cities will accept any mobile home that was built after January 1, 1975.

There being no further business to discuss, Mayor Piazza declared this meeting adjourned.

ATTEST:

APPROVE:

Kathleen S. Faulk
Secretary-Treasurer

Mark Piazza
Mayor