

Office of the City Manager

City of Richland Hills, Texas

# Memorandum

To: Honorable Mayor Bill Agan and members of the Richland Hills City Council  
From: Eric Strong, City Manager  
Date: July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
Subject: Neighborhood Improvement

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## **Council Action Requested:**

No Action – Discussion Only

## **Background Information:**

At a recent council meeting, staff discussed with the City Council possible alternatives to the 6Stones program that we currently participate in. Council requested viable alternatives be presented to you before you make a decision on which way to proceed. Staff has summarized the options below for your consideration.

## **Current Program: 6Stones**

The current program that has been in place for nearly two years is 6Stones. Staff presented this program to the City Council as a tool to help in revitalizing neighborhoods and increasing property values over time. To date, there have been approximately 23 homes worked on in Richland Hills and we have spent approximately \$90,000 on the program.

## **Grant Program:**

One alternative is to set up a home improvement grant program. We could determine eligibility requirements and provide up to a 100% grant for homeowners to make certain improvements to the façade of their homes. The guiding principles would be as follows

- Up to a 100% grant for eligible projects
- Funds could be paid directly to contractor AFTER completion of eligible work
- Eligible projects could include: tree and bush trimming, replacement of rotting wood, painting, window replacement, fence replacement, etc.
- All improvements would have to be visible from public right of ways.

Decisions that would have to be made include types of eligible projects, whether or not rental properties qualify, maximum amount eligible per property, grading criteria to determine how to prioritize applicants, and more.

### **Aggressive Substandard Enforcement:**

This would include targeting vacant properties that present sufficient health and safety conditions to qualify as being deemed substandard. The end result would be either that the owner of the property bring the property back to satisfactory conditions or that it be demolished. Demolition would likely be done by the city, with a lien being placed on the property, when allowable by state law.

### **Joint Efforts with local Churches:**

The cost to this would be minimal, and we might pursue it even if we continue with 6Stones. The idea would be to try to target people that have code violations but that are unable to remedy the problem due to their physical, mental or financial conditions. We could then work with selected Church groups in order to offer volunteers to do basic projects on the exterior of the property to remedy the code violations. This would require homeowner cooperation, as does 6Stones.

**Board/Citizen Input:** N/A

**Financial Impact:** N/A

### **Staff Contacts**

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City Manager

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**Attachments:** N/A