

Gainesville Police Department #060002
Inter-Office Communication
Chief Norman B. Botsford

To: Public Safety Committee **Date: 6/13/06**
From: Chief Norman B. Botsford
Subject: Response to Trespass Tow Contract Fees for Multiple Properties within Certain Boundaries

Question: Should the fee structure for the Trespass Tow Contract be amended in situations where multiple properties, having the same owner, are located in close proximity to each other?

Background: Referral was made to the PSC by the City Commission subsequent to a request by Mr. Nathan Collier to clarify the City's Trespass Tow Ordinance administrative fee requirement as it applies to College Park Properties. Mr. Collier contends that College Park Properties is essentially one community or property rather than numerous non-contiguous locations that are subject to a \$47 administrative fee for each property.

Assignment: Develop and present a proposal for restructuring fees assessed for Trespass Tow Contract management, taking into consideration the special circumstance of College Park Properties and other similar properties located within the city limits.

The administrative fee of \$47.00 for Trespass Tow Contracts was developed by the Tow Advisory Board and adopted by the City Commission, June 28, 2004, and effective October 1, 2004. An amendment clarifying that the administrative fee for processing towing applications is an annual fee was approved July 11, 2005, retroactive to July 1, 2005.

The first renewal notices were mailed to property owners in January, 2006. The renewal notices are sent in the month the contract was originally submitted. Some properties are paying the \$47 fee for the first time (i.e., instances where the contract existed prior to the adoption of an administrative fee), and others are renewing.

The \$47 fee is intended to cover administrative responsibilities, including: verification that the contract is properly completed, maintaining a current record of all accounts, initial and then periodic site visits to confirm signage is in compliance, submission to the City Finance Department of all information required for contract renewal, respond to all

inquiries from either the property owners, citizens or police personnel related to Trespass Tow Contracts and investigate complaints of alleged illegal towing.

Clearly, inspection of multiple properties in close proximity would save time on the part of the inspector. This would require that all qualifying properties contract on the same date so that inspections could be made during one visit.

Since management and billing of the contract are done by address, there is no real time savings to the city for properties bundled under the same contract. For example, multiple addresses can be included in one contract of properties that choose the same options such as roam versus call-in towing. However, each individual address requires a separate renewal invoice, and may require individual inspection as result of a complaint or other problem. Other than the initial site visit, there does not appear to be less involved in a bundled, as compared to single, property contract.

Because there is minimal costs savings to the city when properties are bundled under one contract, some level of fee for additional locations is indicated. A pro-rated fee reduction may be more feasible and still serve as a benefit to the property owner with multiple, contiguous properties. Suggested qualifying criteria include:

1. All properties are included in one contract
2. All properties are contracted simultaneously
3. All properties have the same owner(s)
4. All properties are located within the same proximity of each other (must be within a ten block area, example attached)

Properties meeting these criteria are eligible for the following fee scale:

1 – 5 properties	\$47.00 each
6 – 10 properties	\$35.00 each
11-15 properties	\$30.00 each
16-20 properties	\$25.00 each
20+ properties	\$15.00 each

New contracts procured during the year that meet the same criteria could be added to the existing contract and charged according to the scale, or could be contracted separately at the regular rate of \$47.00 for one year.

The proposed fee adjustments provide financial consideration to the owners of multiple properties contracted within a specified area. Still, the reduced rate is intended to cover some of the other associated costs of managing the Trespass Tow Contract without unduly penalizing the city.