



MINUTES
AD HOC COMMITTEE ON DIVERSITY
Friday, September 23, 2016 @ 11:30 a.m.
Council Conference Room, 10th Floor, City Hall

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 11:35 a.m.

Committee Members

Councilmember Carol Wood, Chair
Councilmember Patricia Spitzley
Councilmember Jody Washington

Others Present

Sherrie Boak, Council Staff
Mark Dotson, Deputy City Attorney
Barb Kimmel, Planning & Neighborhood Development
Scott Sanford, Code Compliance
Bruce Odom, Assistant Chief LFD
Judi Harris, St. Vincents
Stacey Lock, Peckham
Tammy Lemmer, TCOA
Guillermo Lopez

Minutes

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER WASHINGTON TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 9, 2016 AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

Introductions

Presentations

Overview by Council Member Wood on the process of the group participants and the presentations in the past.

Code Compliance

Mr. Sanford distributed brochures on the Office of Code Enforcement on "Exterior Checklist", "Interior Checklist", "Front Yard Parking", "Occupancy Information for Tenants and Landlords" and "Be a Good Neighbor". Mr. Sanford emphasized that the goal of the Department is to make sure residents renting properties in the City are living in a safe house. Staffing currently is at 14 full time and 2 part time staff, 8 code officers, and 4 premise officers, which started in October

2015. There was quick overview of the difference between premise officers and code enforcement that enforce everything, are State licensed housing and zoning inspectors and NFPA inspectors. A premise officer strictly does premise inspections. Mr. Sanford highlighted statistics from the department which included grass notices at 9,994, disabled vehicles at 1,365 and failure to register as a rental at 1,089. All registered rental properties should have certificates on the property. If there are concerns with people residing at red tagged properties, the police should be called.

Council Member Spitzley left the meeting at 11:51 a.m.

There is a NEAT Team that works with red tag properties, and they continue to work to bring long term red tags down. It was noted that pink tags represent they are rentals and non-compliance.

Ms. Locke asked if letters are sent when properties are tagged to assist the residents with disabilities. Council Member Wood confirmed they do not, however suggested the department consider a registry program in the future so that if a residence of a disabled person is tagged, per the registry, they could also place a phone call to that person. Mr. Lopez asked if the department could waive the compliance time if they have a disability. Mr. Sanford could not comment on waiving of fees, but informed the group if they know of properties to contact Code Enforcement and they can flag the property in the computer.

Mr. Sanford went into a discussion out their outreach programs, and perceptions of code enforcement in the public eye. Every action they tax is done with tax payer funds, so they cannot use those tax funds to maintain a house. Violations are written against the real property, so code enforcement services assessed are attached to that. Council Member Wood pointed out that the grass, weeds and trash violations are an exception to that fact.

Mr. Sanford then went through each brochure that was distributed, noting they are still in draft form.

During the discussion on animals, the topic moved to hoarding of animals and Ms. Harris asked that there be education provided to the refugees on this ordinance.

Council Member Washington asked if the premise officers just drive around and make note of yard parking and trash carts or do they have the authority to write a ticket. Council Member Wood noted she is working with the City Attorney on addressing this. Recently Code Compliance sent the new housing code to the Mayor's office and asked them to include an additional ticket fee. Because the residents are charged for their trash carts on their taxes, if they are in violation and the cart is taken that is a legal issue.

Ms. Lemmer asked Mr. Sanford if his office includes community resources when the mail tickets and leave door tags. Mr. Sanford acknowledged the office does, and also offered to work with Ms. Lemmer and her organization.

Ms. Locke asked if Code check ramps for safety. Mr. Sanford stated that ADA requirements are covered under Building Safety.

Ms. Harris asked if a property is red tagged if the landlord has to help the tenant find housing. Mr. Sanford confirmed there is no legal obligation. There is also no legal obligation by the City,

but a moral obligation once they about know it. The City attempts to reach out to the Red Cross and the HRCS Department for assistance.

At the conclusion of the presentation Council Member Wood asked Mr. Sanford to consider making his draft brochures in other languages also.

Human Right Ordinance

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER WASHINGTON TO APPROVE THE ORDINANCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ADOPTION. MOTION CARRIED 2-0.

Council Member Washington left the meeting at 12:33 p.m.

Housing Grants

Ms. Kimmel distributed brochures on “Single Family Housing Rehabilitation Grant and Loan Program” and “EPA Runs Better unleaded- How to Protect Your Children from Lead Poisoning”. The brochure outlined the income limits and housing size. The assistance covers emergency repairs such as a leaking roof or unsafe sewer lines, or electrical issues. Ms. Kimmel pointed out that they do have to meet eligibility requirements. Council Member Wood asked if the first \$10,000 is a grant. Ms. Kimmel stated that the funding offered is a 0% deferred loan, and placed as a lien on the property for the work to be done, but not the first \$10,000. After that the additional funds are forgiven after 20 years. If the resident sells before 20 years, they have to pay it back from the proceeds.

Ms. Kimmel highlighted that hopefully by December 4, 2016 the City can offer Lead Safe Lansing. The City is still working on their agreement with HUD. This assistance can be used with rentals and owner occupied homes. The homes must be built before 1978, there must be a child under the age of 6 living on site, or a pregnant person on site. The City has \$8,000 available in grants for lead reduction, and they can use \$10,000 from a CDBG Loan and other rehabilitations to remediate lead. With rentals there are the same requirements, and they get offered \$8,000 in lead assistance and up to \$8,000 in CDBG grant funds. Neither program has a match required.

Currently the City is working with the health department who is performing face to face outreach to kids who have a blood level of 5 micrograms or higher, then having them enroll in the program and also have their landlords enroll. The Health Department is also working with the Refugee Development Center to assist with the refugee population. Ms. Lemmer asked if there were any programs to include senior citizens. Ms. Kimmel stated there wasn't, but if the household meets the requirement of a child visiting the property more than two (2) times a week, they could be eligible. The project is working to perform the abatement which keeping the residents in the homes, allowing them to have shelters and not displaced temporarily.

Ms. Kimmel offered her contact information to any of the organizations present and she can coordinate a visit and presentation.

Mr. Lopez asked how they test the paint. Ms. Kimmel stated they now use an x-ray fluorescent machine and it will tell them how deep it goes. They also perform visual inspections and use dust wipe tests. Landlords will be required to take a RRP class and the City has funds to put 70 landlords through the class. This will help them identify the hazards and non-hazards.

Council Member Wood asked Ms. Kimmel if they have reached out to the Lansing Housing Commission, and Ms. Kimmel confirmed they cannot spend funds on publicly owned housing,

but can with Section 8 voucher homes. She would also offer training assistance to the LHC if they wish.

Human Rights Ordinance

Council Member Wood went through the recent changes which included adding the intent in the definitions, adding "HIV Status" to line 151, adding "State of being" to line 233, and "health care" to line 295 and line 342. On September 26, 2016 the Ordinance will be up for adoption at the Council meeting and Council Member Wood will be asking for immediate effect which means it will take effect 7 days after it is published.

Human Rights Brochure

Council Member Wood will reach out to Mr. Purchase to see if he had made the changes to the brochure from the last meeting.

Mr. Lopez asked for a history on why the new ordinance does not have HRCS doing the investigation, and stated his concern with the new process. Council Member Wood informed him that the City Attorney office stated they will do the review.

Updates on Participants in the Group

Ms. Locke handed out an upcoming event on "Meet the Candidates" and Ms. Lemmer distributed more copies of a flyer for the TCOA Auction.

Adjourn

Adjourn at 12:58 p.m.

Submitted by,

Sherrie Boak, Council Office Manager

Approved by Committee on October 28, 2016