



**AD HOC COMMITTEE ON HOUSING**  
**Thursday, January 18, 2018 @ 4:00 p.m.**  
**City Council Conference Room**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

Councilmember Jody Washington, Chair  
Councilmember Peter Spadafore, Vice Chair  
Councilmember Brian T. Jackson, Member

Others Present:

Sherrie Boak, Council Office Manager  
Jim Smiertka, City Attorney  
Brian McGrain, PND/Economic Development  
Elaine Womboldt  
Kathy Miles  
Eric Schertzing, Ingham County Treasurer

**Public Comment**

No public comment at this time.

Goals for the Ad Hoc Committee in 2018

Council Member Washington provided introductions and appreciated the participation Mr. McGrain will be taking in the Committee. The Committee will be looking for comprehensive details, and will brain storm over the next meetings to determine the vision of the Committee. Council Member Washington then read the portion of the resolution that established the committee stating they will work with the Administration to develop recommendations and policies to improve housing options in Lansing and with their regional partners. The Committee will invite and pull input from Representative of the Greater Lansing Association of Realtors, a Representative of the Greater Lansing Chamber of Commerce, the Michigan State Housing Development Authority, a residential housing builder, a community member and a Representative of the Rental Property Owners Association of Mid-Michigan. Council Member Washington stated she would reach out to the Lansing Realtors and work with Council staff on the contacts for the other members.

Council Member Washington referenced the MSU Regional Affordable Housing Study; Part I and Part II on Housing Expert Interview Results. She asked that the other Committee members review the study and stated she would provide them with the links. She also confirmed she had spoken to Mayor Schor and have looked at large portions of land that could develop single family homes. Over the years, she noted, the City has heard the issue is with the schools and

the Michigan housing stock. Mr. McGrain noted that most studies show the majority of the housing was built in the 1970's. He believed that there are certain things and resources that could be deployed to assist with the project, though the City does not have all the resources. The City should look at tracts of land and encourage building in some areas. Mr. McGrain noted that the Land Bank has been a good assistance, but there are not as many Federal dollars in that realm. He also suggested reaching out to the neighboring communities and see what their ideas are, and not push them for action, but to start talking about fair housing. He admitted he was not sure of the new department goals yet, but was encouraged to work hand in hand with this Committee to address all needs. He noted they need to think about design but also think about room for multi-family and all spectrums of income.

The Committee discussed the variety of housing all over the City with a large amount of townhouse complexes in the south side, and multiple apartments in the downtown area which is attributed to density and residential above commercial. These all fit low income to affordable aspect. Statements that have been made in the past state low income, attainable, work force, but they agreed there was no difference generally, and even MSHDA has no definition in difference. The work force is struggling and part of the mix and low income has taken many shapes over the years, and it has been single family residence and density in one area which is not healthy. Council Member Washington added to the discussion that her opinion was that 80% of the housing falls within affordable, believing the City is lacking middle income housing. The Committee discussed proposed a funding allocation for a program to promote ownership, and promote depopulation of poverty, and maintaining the homes. The Committee decided to look at making sure homes are suitable for living, and landlords are doing what they can do. Again they agreed all income levels should be considered.

Council Member Spadafore asked Council Member Washington if over the next meetings the Committee could look at the studies she referenced earlier, housing numbers and affordable housing, and if there was a time line for the findings. Council Member Washington agreed the Committee should review the studies and her goal was to have a report by December, 2017, however the next President could re-establish in 2019. Council Member Spadafore noted his opinion is the need for diversity in housing options and affordable. Council Member Washington encouraged a discussion on how to increase the budget, the need to find a higher income earner, and maintain families. She again referred the Committee to the studies she mentioned earlier and noted she would find other studies.

Ms. Miles commented on her frustration with retail on the first floor and housing on second floor. Council Member Washington told Ms. Miles that most developments over the last year have been in the downtown area which is commercial and residential on the second floor, and "empty nesters" are filling those units up. Council Member Jackson noted that some developers are now building with wider doors, first floor access so that millennials can move in and not leave. Council Member Washington agreed that she has heard that those that are selling their homes, are staying in the area but into apartments and smaller. She added that the City of Lansing have to find a way to bring the housing stock back up. Council Member Spadafore encouraged the Committee to talk about appropriate housing and those with low income housing not getting second class status. Council Member Washington suggested the Committee address landlords who own multiple homes.

Ms. Miles asked the Committee for a program where builders can help people fix up their homes. Council Member Washington agreed, and added that a lot of those homes are rentals and those landlords should have an obligation to bring the house up to code.

Council Member Jackson asked if the research the Committee is working on is to provide a recommendation for more Code Officers and make a recommendation to the Mayor. Council Member Washington confirmed. Council Member Jackson then suggested that if Code write tickets and focused on the costs incurred it would not hit budget hard.

Council Member Spadafore asked if there were housing policies that need changing. Council Member Washington acknowledged there is not anything now, but they can pull whatever ordinances that have housing in them. She stated she will email Committee Members and Mr. McGrain to review.

Mr. McGrain stated there is a need to address homeowners and renters with limited resources, and a plan should be created to see what it will look like, knowing the resources are limited, they will know the the plan for the future. He noted for the Committee there are direct grant and resources and he can walk through the policies and resources, and federal resources for housing. There is not one cohesive set of policies, but the Committee can look together at what they want to see moving forward.

Council Member Washington mentioned that in the Potter Walsh neighborhood they are buying houses, fixing them up, establishing families in them, however she has encouraged them to provide them with lessons on how to maintain the homes after they have them. The Committee should consider an educational piece. Council Member Jackson asked if the Committee could consider a mandate to explore the alternate models. Council Member Washington encouraged the Committee to discuss all housing levels, not a focus only on low income. Mr. Schertzing agreed that education needs to be provided to home owners even on simple maintenance items.

Council Member Jackson asked, other than zoning residential and land bank programs, what the Council and the Ad Hoc do to direct the type of housing they want in place. Council Member Washington suggested looking at neighborhoods where people can move into then and not have to build, and look at a bigger array of housing.

Ms. Miles asked that homeowners be educated on being a good neighbor.

Mr. Smiertka suggested that if the land is City owned, they can set restrictions on what is built such as deed restrictions, square footage, etc.

Mr. Schertzing stated the Treasurer and auction process has worked on guidelines for developers having used the owner occupancy covenant. Council Member Washington referenced the fact that over the last years the City has not pursued a developer to come to the City, but waits for them to come to the City. This Committee could make a useful tool to say this is what council is interested in. The charge could be to make the City the best place possible for everyone, not just high income or low income but for everyone. There is a need for decent, safe, affordable housing evenly disbursed.

Council Member Washington gave the charge to Mr. McGrain to look at all empty housing lots and their location in the City, partnering with Mr. Schertzing, and then the Committee can look at the population and median income, where it is at and what the Council wants to see. She will provide studies and research she has found to the other Committee Members for the next meeting. This would be to have them also look at the current Master Plan.

Council Member Spadafore suggested getting the Committee fully established, then find the data and determine what the next steps are, looking at big, small and medium objectives. Council Member Washington asked to pressure the surrounding townships on low income housing since the City cannot sustain it as the only ones. Her opinion is that the surrounding townships have to be part of the regional conversation.

Council Member Spadafore asked if the City has embarked on a City wide demolition similar to Detroit. Mr. Schertzing confirmed there were 650 demolitions over the last 10 years.

Mr. McGrain noted that the area has only grown 3% over the last 30-40 years, so has been stable at 110,000 populations. The City needs to create a place where people want to come.

Council Member Washington stated the next meeting would be February 1, 2018 and they will review the Master plan, get the census information on income housing from PND, and Mr. McGrain can provide any information on federal funding. Mr. McGrain stated he would provide the Committee with the link to the Master Plan on the website, and Ms. Boak confirmed she would verify any paper copies the office currently has and will also provide the link.

Mr. Schertzing stated at the next meeting he will have a list of what his office currently has in the City and provide maps.

**ADJOURN**

Adjourn at 4:52 p.m.

Submitted by,

Sherrie Boak, Recording Secretary

Lansing City Council

Approved by the Committee on February 1, 2018