



**AD HOC COMMITTEE ON HOUSING
Thursday, February 1, 2018 @ 4:00 p.m.
City Council Conference Room**

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 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, Economic Development & Planning
Eric Schertzing, Ingham County Treasurer and Landbank
Dale Shrader
Elaine Womboldt
Dax Carpenter, Disability Network Capital Area
Tina Amburger-Abraham, Disability Network Capital Area
Julee Rodocker
Megan Webber, Realtor Association of
Steve Japinga, Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce
Greg Venker, Assistant City Attorney

Introductions

Council Member Washington outlined the focus of the Committee which includes looking at the diversity in housing stock, looking at what the City currently has, and how to restore what the City already has. Her opinion was to increase property tax and bring in higher income wage earner. They can look at low and affordable income housing to be a regional discussion not just Lansing City.

Mr. McGrain made the group aware that he had just gotten information on the City demographics and would try to forward those before the end of the meeting. Council Member Washington provided information she was aware of that in the 2010 Census, the City was \$20,000 behind the State in median income, and for the Region \$50 less in rent.

Mr. Schrader spoke on an example of a rental property in his area that was un-kept in addition to multiple rentals unregistered.

Council Member Washington asked for all present to state their vision, what they wish regional housing would be and what they would like to see come out of the committee. The goal would be to report back to Council in December with the vision.

Mr. Carpenter spoke on the need for nursing transitional apartments, but not just in Lansing but the Tri-County area. He did note he understood Council Member Washington's statement to step away from low income, but his organization has people on social security and they need those types of units. Currently they are going outside the Lansing area because they have no choice. They want to move back to Lansing but there is no housing. According to the census data, Mr. Carpenter noted, the 60 and over population is growing faster than the rest of the State. Council Member Washington asked the question the Committee should all consider which was, if the complexes do not have the units, why not.

Ms. Webber stated that what they hear in the real estate market is that people are not looking to buy in the City because of property taxes, because she believes that when taxes are one of the highest, and if someone can buy a house 3 miles down road with less taxes they will. She also added that Lansing has a flood zone which is also expensive. Council Member Washington pointed out to the Committee and public present that this Ad Hoc has nothing to do with affordable housing. The City has affordable housing, but do not have high end housing. Ms. Webber responded that her opinion is that there is nothing here, so people are not looking here.

Mr. McGrain appealed that he hoped the group does not exclude affordable, but maybe talk strategies on how to do mixed income housing. A lot of our housing is affordable, but is opinion is they need to talk about all income housing. Council Member Washington's gave her opinion that the region refuses to participate and the City is the only one addressing and providing affordable housing. She added she was not opposed to affordable housing, but the owners need to fix what they have, not keep building more affordable housing. Council Member Spadafore asked

Council Member Spadafore asked for suggestions on how the City would get other municipalities to build affordable housing, and what are the residents living in Lansing being attracted to here to move or stay here. One response was the transportation. Council Member Washington added that regional transportation needs to be addressed.

Mr. Schertzing pointed out to the group that the County has 1,000 parcels of land, and his experience with people building or not building in the City is the value. A resident could build in Lansing and it would not have the same value as if it was built in Mason. Ms. Webber stated her experience in the real estate sector is that there are no areas being developed, and there is a stigma about the schools. Council Member Washington gave an example of a developer telling her they cannot get any funding unless it is for low income affordable. Mr. Schertzing encouraged a change in how properties are assessed because the Land Bank will invest \$200,000 into a property, it will sell for \$150,000 but be valued at \$30,000.

Mr. Japinga asked if a housing report has been done in Lansing, and if there was a report on the real housing stock. Council Member Washington agreed one needs to be commissioned to see where the City is, where Lansing is and a comparison. Mr. Japinga then informed the group that he recently attended a Regional Prosperity Meeting (RPI) with Tri County Regional Planning, and they plan to do a dash board of the region with demographics. The last time that done was in 2012. Mr. Japinga noted that the Chamber is advocating on the RPI, and they are aware there are funds available to communities, but they need to know where those dollars go. Do to that a dash board needs to be done to find out where City is at. Mr. McGrain stated he

would also look into a study, and Council Member Washington emphasized the urgency of getting the report done.

Mr. Carpenter asked the question; What can be done regionally to make the City of Lansing attractive and bring people back to the City. Council Member Washington admitted that when she has asked people it is “housing and schools”. She admitted that there is nothing the Council can do about the schools but they can address housing, and the City needs diversity in housing.

Mr. Carpenter asked Ms. Webber how much of the infrastructure issues was playing a part in people not moving to the City. Ms. Webber admitted that all roads in the area are the same, so her opinion was that it was not a big factor.

Council Member Jackson suggested going out into the City, Ward by Ward, and identify the challenges and opportunities, then decide which is the universal issues to address first.

Ms. Rodocker did not have questions at the time, however was encouraged for a discussion on the roads, and her opinion was that the City millage was hurting the City. Council Member Washington pointed out to the Committee that there are many properties in the City that do not pay taxes including State properties, churches, and schools.

Mr. Japinga asked what the number is that the City is losing on taxes, and Council Member Washington asked Mr. McGrain to include that as part of the study.

Mr. Schrader’s comments were on addressing code compliance, and creating historic districts.

Mr. McGrain pointed out the population has gone up to 117,000 and 90% of the housing is occupied, but split between owner and rental. He noted that the median value is \$92,000, up from \$72,000 in 2000, the median house hold income went to \$40,000 and Michigan was at \$52,000. The numbers reflect 10% have a median income under \$10,000 and 10% have a median income over \$100,000.

Council Member Washington pointed out that the regional partners also need to be at the table for discussions, and asked Ms. Webber to also update the Committee next time on why people are not asking to buy property in Lansing.

Mr. Japinga state that he would look at the study and will follow up at the next meeting bringing in a discussion on what dollars the City is missing out on from the State. They need to know what dollar amount the City is missing with property taxes, and start advocating on getting those dollars.

Council Member Washington informed the group that at the next meeting they will start working on ideas on where to get funds, how to incentive for a clean-up, and work on a new study. Regarding transportation dollars, the City also needs to find out what their counterparts are going with their dollars.

Council Member Jackson stated he believes the City has the resources, and they don’t want to see people leave, then listed multiple neighborhoods in the City he believed to be prospering.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Minutes

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER SPADAFORE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM JANUARY 18, 2018 AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

ADJOURN

Adjourn at 5:00 p.m.

Submitted by,

Sherrie Boak, Recording Secretary

Lansing City Council

Approved by the Committee on March 1, 2018