



MINUTES

**Committee on General Services
Monday, February 25, 2019 @ 3:30 p.m.
City Council Conference Room, City Hall 10th Floor**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting called to order at 3:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Council Member Jody Washington, Chair
Council Member Brian T. Jackson, Vice Chair
Council Member Carol Wood, Member

OTHERS PRESENT

Sherrie Boak, Council Office Manager
Scott Sanford, Code Enforcement
Eric Brewer, Council Internal Auditor
Lisa Hagen, Assistant City Attorney
Amin Fallahi
Thomas Bucholz
Vonda Gilliam

Minutes

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER WOOD TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 4, 2019 AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

Public Comment on Agenda Items

Comments will be made during the agenda items.

Discussion/Action:

RESOLUTION – Appointment; Thomas Bucholz, Business Owner; Downtown Lansing, Inc. Board; Term to Expire June 20, 2022

Mr. Bucholz outlined his experience in the public relations field and his business in the downtown area. Mr. Bucholz confirmed his lease is up in June, and he is aware to be on the Board he needs to be in the downtown area, and he will be staying.

Council Member Jackson asked Law if Mr. Bucholz had to be a resident of the City and Ms. Hagen stated he did not. Mr. Bucholz then went onto elaborate on what he hopes

to bring to Board, knowing that the Downtown Lansing Board builds and markets downtown and wants to encourage diversity in businesses, and focus on making downtown a diverse base. He intends to communicate the Board's goals to all current and future tenants to build a communication network with them. Council Member Washington made Mr. Bucholz aware of a few of the issues that have been brought to her attention such as parking issue, rents too high, to name a few. Council Member Jackson asked Mr. Bucholz his feelings on private developers and Brownfields. Mr. Bucholz summarized an interview he recently did with the City Pulse on the Red Cedar Development. He noted he does not agree with a private developer asking the tax payers to cover the costs of their development. He wanted the City to be a good steward of tax dollars.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER WOOD TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION TO APPOINT THOMAS BUCHOLZ AS THE BUSINESS OWNER REPRESENTATIVE ON THE DOWNTOWN LANSING INC. BOARD. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

RESOLUTION – Claim Appeal #1610; a, Fallahi; 539 Avon Street; \$767.00

Mr. Sanford informed the Committee of the statistics on the property; that being it was cited on 6/22/2018 with a compliance date of 6/29/2018. When rechecked on 7/3/2018 the violations were still present so the officer submitted it to the City contractor who arrived 7/5/2018 and removed the violation. Any addition items were removed and their policy is that they do not have to notify the owners of those items.

Mr. Brewer stated the Claims Review Committee met on 10/25/2018, and based on the information in the packet and the amount of the bill, and the photos, the Committee denied the claim in full.

Mr. Fallahi admitted he works out of town and has a difficult time tracking everything. Council Member Washington acknowledged the statement but added as owner he is still responsible. Council Member Jackson inquired into how long Mr. Fallahi had been the landlord and if he had asked for help since he admitted he is not in town often. Mr. Fallahi stated he has owned since 2010 and has asked friends in the past but does not want to hold them responsible. He admitted he would pay if he had to. The Committee and Mr. Sanford held a brief discussion on what is determined as a porch because the photos appear to show a porch that is enclosed, and Mr. Sanford stated their determination is anything beyond the front edge of the house. The owner was encouraged to write his lease to include the provisions and requirements and make them accountable.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER WOOD TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION TO DENY THE CLAIM FOR APPEAL #1610 FOR 539 AVON STREET IN THE AMOUNT OF \$767.00. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

RESOLUTION – Claim Appeal #1635; S. Hanks; 4614 Ballard Rd.; \$1,824.00

Ms. Boak confirmed that phone calls were placed to the applicant, and the office received a call in late January asking to be moved from the February 4th, 2019 meeting to this meeting. Ms. Boak then confirmed she mailed a letter to the applicant as well for this meeting and did not get a response. Council Member Wood asked Ms. Hagen if the communications should have gone through the applicant's attorney since there were communications from the attorney. Ms. Hagen stated it was up to the discretion of the Committee and there would be nothing from prohibiting the Committee from hearing the claim today. Council Member Jackson stated his opinion that since there was a communication from an attorney he would like the communication to go to the attorney. Ms. Hagen offered to call the attorney and applicant and stepped away from the meeting at 4:06 p.m.

RESOLUTION - Claim Appeal # 1634; V. Gilliam ; 909 Ferly Street; \$668.00

Mr. Sanford stated the property was cited for indoor furniture outside on 8/2/2018 with a compliance date of 8/9/2018 and the contractor arrived 8/16/2019. The department recommends denial.

Ms. Gilliam stated she had the couch outside and it got rained on, so when she received the notification she moved it to the side of the house near the garage to dry.

Mr. Brewer confirmed the claim was heard at the Claims Review Committee on 12/13/2018 and based on the information it was denied in full.

Ms. Gilliam referenced the photos and confirmed she did move it and if she would have known the other items in the back yard were debris she would have moved them as well. Ms. Gilliam appealed that when she filed the claim in September she did not get any communication from the Attorney's Office on a meeting date. She also claimed she never got notice of the violations or the bill until it appeared on her taxes \$668.00. At that point she called the City Attorney Office and spoke to Venus Kumar who stated that there was an internal communication issue with emails and her claim was missed.

Ms. Hagen returned to the meeting at 4:11 p.m.

Ms. Gilliam appealed to the Committee that her mortgage company paid the taxes, and now her escrow is short because of it and her mortgage will go up. She appealed again that she never got notification, and that she moved the couch to the driveway to dry and once it was dry she would plan to move to the garage.

Mr. Brewer confirmed the Claims Review Committee did discuss the issue with the claims review process in December, but they heard the case on 12/13/2018 and denied.

The Committee and the applicant continued the discussion on the timing of the appeal, the notices, and the invoices. Council Member Jackson asked Ms. Gilliam if she moved it to the street initially and she confirmed, and she was using it outside. She added

again that she filed the claim, never heard back so called the City in December when the bill showed up on her taxes.

Council Member Wood referenced the claim form from September, 2018 where it listed the amount of \$668 which was the amount of the invoice, and Ms. Gilliam then confirmed she did get the invoice, what she didn't ever get was a communication on when her appeal would be heard.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER WOOD TO DENY THE CLAIM FOR APPEAL #1634 FOR 909 FERLY STREET IN THE AMOUNT OF \$668.00.

Council Member Jackson noted that it appeared when the claimant contacted the City, they were not given the correct information in a timely manner to make an amended motion.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON TO AMEND THE RESOLUTION TO DENY AND REDUCE THE AMOUNT BY THE ADMINISTRATIVE FEE OF \$265.00 LEAVING A BALANCE OF \$403.00. MOTION FAILED 1-2

MOTION TO DENY THE CLAIM FOR 909 FERLY STREET IN THE AMOUNT OF \$668.00 CARRIED 2-1.

Ms. Gilliam again appealed that she filed the claim in September but was never scheduled until December and that is when she called for an updated. She believed she would have had time to appeal it before it went to the taxes if they would have scheduled her before December. She asked that the City provide more details on the website for residents.

**RESOLUTION – Claim Appeal #1635; S. Hanks; 4614 Ballard Rd.; \$1,824.00-
CONTINUED**

Ms. Hagen confirmed she spoke to Mr. Hadley the attorney who in turn called the client and neither will be attending the meeting.

Mr. Sanford outlined the violation which was cited on 8/20/2018 with a compliance date of 8/27/2018, there was a premise recheck on 8/28/2018 and the violations were still present. The City contractor arrived 8/31/2018. A notice was sent to the owner and tenant and the tenant was aware of the violation because they spoke to the City contractor when they arrived.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER WOOD TO DENY THE CLAIM FOR APPEAL #1635 FOR 4614 BALLARD RD IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,824.00. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

The Committee continued a discussion on Ms. Gilliam claim, referencing the notices and bills.

RESOLUTION- Claim # 1657; C. Skinner; 1001 W. Hillsdale; \$4,500.00

Mr. Sanford stated the property was cited 7 times and has been cleaned by the contractor prior to this violation. This violation was granted an extension, and the claimant is aware of the premise violations. The department recommends denial, but noted the owner has made a payment so the remaining balance is \$3,554.00.

The Committee referred Mr. Sanford to a photo where it shows the porch is cleaned up but the contractor left an indoor chair on the porch, and asked why. Mr. Sanford stated he would look into the reasoning behind that.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON TO DENY THE CLAIM #1657 FOR 1001 W HILLSDALE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$4,500. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

Other

Michigan Liquor Control Commission; Transfer License with Sunday Sales, Outdoor Service, Catering Bars and Dance-Entertainment from 7786 E. US 10, Walhalla to 419 Spring Street, Lansing. Transfer Governmental Unit from Branch Twp., Mason County to Lansing City, Ingham County (**Pending Application**)

The Committee briefly discussed an email they received from a resident who went to the Claims Review Committee and was not satisfied with the decision, but the Committee determined until he actually appealed that decision they will not have any discussion with the residents. Council Member Washington offered to contact the owner and explain the process to him since the property was located in her ward.

Adjourned

Adjourned at 4:43 p.m.

Submitted by Sherrie Boak,

Office Manager,

Lansing City Council

Approved by the Committee on March 25, 2019