



MINUTES
Committee of the Whole
Monday, January 8, 2018 @ 5:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

Council President Wood called the meeting called to order at 5:30 p.m.

PRESENT

Councilmember Kathie Dunbar
Councilmember Jeremy A. Garza
Councilmember Adam Hussain
Council Member Brian T. Jackson
Councilmember Peter Spadafore
Councilmember Patricia Spitzley
Councilmember Jody Washington
Councilmember Carol Wood

OTHERS PRESENT

Sherrie Boak, Council Staff
Mayor Schor
Samantha Harkins, Mayor Executive Assistant
Brian McGrain, Economic Development Director
Andi Crawford, Neighborhoods and Citizen Engagement Director
Angie Bennett, Finance Director
Nancy Mahlow
Elaine Womboldt
Kathy Miles

Approval of Minutes

MOTION BY COUNCILMEMBER WASHINGTON TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 3, 2018 AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED 8-0.

Public Comment on Agenda Items

Ms. Miles spoke directly to the Mayor and asked him to screen appointment candidates based on past job performance and experience with working with neighborhoods.

Ms. Womboldt referenced the Executive Order on the reorganization plan for Economic Development and Planning, and provided her opinion on the future of the departments and code enforcement. Ms. Womboldt then asked the Mayor to consider a City Employee business development position.

Ms. Mahlow asked the Council and the Mayor to consider appointments to be transparent so they can find out the candidates experiences with the neighborhoods.

Presentation

Mayor Schor Executive Order 2018-01; Reorganization of Planning and Neighborhood Development

Mayor Schor presented to the Committee based on what he stated was communications he had over the last couple months with residents on the economic development of the City. And in looking at the structure of the Department, he decided he wanted to do something on neighborhoods and the community, therefore he was proposing to create an Economic Development & Planning (EDP) Department and Neighborhood & Citizen Engagement (NCE) Department. This would take the current Planning and Neighborhood Development (PND) Department and break in out into these two new departments. A glow chart on the new layout of departments and leadership was presented at this time to the Committee. An additional handout was presented on the financial impact of this and that was to be addressed later in the meeting by Ms. Bennett. Mr. McGrain assured the Committee that the new EDP Department will be similar to the current PND, but they will also bring code compliance back into the department and LEPFA, DDA and LEAP will also report to the new EDP.

Council Member Spitzley asked what role the City will take with LEPFA and LEAP. Mr. McGrain acknowledged his understanding of the downtown assets the City has and they want to increase those to provide revenue and benefit to the residents. Council Member Spitzley again stated her support of a market in the downtown area, and encourages Mr. McGrain to consider a plan to better utilize the market that is current there in a better capacity. Mayor Schor assured the Committee that Mr. McGrain will have oversight over LEPFA. Mr. McGrain agreed with Council Member Spitzley on her interests and statements and noted he looked forward to meeting with Council and having discussions on their vision for downtown.

Council Member Washington referred to the Executive Order, and asked the Mayor to consider looking at all housing aspects not just low income and moderate housing. She then asked the new staff members to spend time looking at the corridors into Lansing, and start diversifying the housing in the city. Mr. McGrain acknowledged her concerns and stated they have been advised by the Mayor to take a look at the master plan map and look at all those areas as moving forward, which will include looking at businesses and corridors.

Council Member Hussain spoke in support of the move of code compliance back to PND/the new EDP, so then asked Mr. McGrain of his plan for that. Mr. McGrain stated that moving forward they will all work together with other components of the department and also agreed with statements made at other meetings that Code is understaffed, and they also need to plan to look at data and places where they can economize and better to know where things are working where they are not to be more efficient.

Council Member Dunbar reminded the staff and Mayor that an economic and demographic research study was done in the past that they could start with, and offered to provide them with copies. Mayor Schor noted he sponsored a House Bill at the State on housing and it continues in motion.

Council Member Spadafore spoke in support of investing more into code compliance.

Council Member Jackson asked if with the proposed staffing changes, if there was any room in efficiencies or non-duplicating work. Mayor Schor stated he was still looking at that, but was confident there will be some efficiency from this change. They will have to locate the Neighborhood Engagement Department, and so there will be relocation costs, but he believed

that would balance out moving forward. On a side note, he too was interested in the increasing of staff in Code Compliance. Council President Wood supported commercial code enforcement, as Council has asked for in the past, and reiterated it was critical. She also asked them to look at sign enforcement to work on the current blight. Council President Wood then moved the topic to the Downtown Inc., in comparison to Old Town, where the City collects taxes for their Old Town, and then gives it back to them in a grant. She asked if there was any discussion on creation of an ordinance to collect and give right back. Council President Wood asked the new staff members to plan to attend a future Committee on Public Safety meeting to talk about the community aspects on registration on rentals, and frequency of inspections on rentals. A request then was placed by Council President Wood for Mr. McGrain to provide a list of all the heavy and light industrial zoned areas in the City. Mr. McGrain confirmed he was aware of issues in those areas and they were already on the department radar.

Council President Wood asked if the reorganization would create any new positions, and if there are currently vacancies in the department. Mr. McGrain confirmed that Code Compliance does have vacancies, however he is still evaluation the full department. Ms. Crawford stated that HR is looking into filling vacancies and why there are still vacancies. Her only vision for a new staff position would be a business ombudsman, but that would be proposed in the next budget.

Council President Wood pointed out to Ms. Crawford and Mr. McGrain that Council in the past has had concerns with so many contracted employees. Ms. Crawford confirmed they will look at contract positions and getting filled.

Council Member Washington spoke in support of an earlier statement on straightening out the Old Town assessments, but then also added to the conversation by asking if the new staff had considered having staff in Code Compliance work after 5. This would help in addressing red tagged homes, front yard parking, and other nuisances that happen after people come home from work. Council Member Hussain supported that suggestion, and also was encouraged with the potential of a commercial code enforcement officer, which could also address signage.

Ms. Crawford, the new department director for Neighborhood and Citizen Engagement outlined her plan for the department which she stated was a design that was up to the citizens, and they will ask for more input on what resources they want to engage. She noted that organized neighborhoods are good, but they also will look where there are no organizations. They want to be responsive to the residents and will get input before they plan on what to do. One thing she noted they will do first is centralize communication, and allow community engagement to come through one department. The plan is that when staff is working with citizens, they will provide communication details with each department, keeping a focus on how citizens will get the answer they need. Secondly they will launch a city wide service plan, with opportunities to increase involvement in the community including the partners in community based. Ms. Crawford noted that currently she is running LINKS meetings, 3 times a month. This meeting is to allow a connection between communities and listen to the residents. Council Member Washington asked Ms. Crawford, that if a developer wanted to do a charrette or community engagement, can her department coordinate that for them, and Ms. Crawford confirmed they could.

Council Member Jackson asked Ms. Crawford her plan on how she was going to engage with the residents for their input. Ms. Crawford noted that community engagement for input and information is crucial, and the City needs to be clear on the transparency of what the plan is, and so sometimes that will be input and sometimes the engagement will be providing them

with information. They believe what is important is that the citizen understands what it is about. Council President Wood pointed out to Ms. Crawford that there are neighborhoods that do not have nor do they want neighborhood organizations, and therefore she would encourage them not to push them on the residents. She secondly asked them to look at projects such as CSO, which is going to be important with its impact on trash, driveways, etc., with road, sidewalks. There should be meetings and information provided to residents in more than enough time before the work begins. Mayor Schor assured the Committee that the Departments are talking about what projects are coming up and how to let people know.

Council President Wood turned the subject to the budget and community engagement, regarding volunteer hours. As an example, there is a volunteer that mans the front desk of patrol that is saving the City money for 17 years, so what would the budget look like if the City had to fill the position with a paid employee. That figure needs to be made part of the budget so it reflects what that position is saving the City now, and what the City will have to do if they have to fill it.

Council Member Spitzley encouraged the Mayor and new staff to look at all the data, and systems and recognize the aging population. Ms. Crawford agreed, and notes that is why this is crucial for this department, there are a lot of resources that need to be gathered and looked at an analysis of what exists. In addition, she acknowledged the earlier statement by Council President Wood on neighborhood organizations, noting they will try to come together and be engaged without an organization, and there are some issues that will be citizen led.

Council President Wood asked if the new NCE will reach out to the churches, and Ms. Crawford confirmed they will and there is a small communications committee and they will also work with Bishop Maxwell and Marilyn Plummer in the Mayor's office.

Council President Wood then asked Ms. Crawford if she had any additional staffing plans for her new department or if she was relying on the current staff from PND. Ms. Crawford stated that NCE and EDP will coordinate to cross function the staff however at some point they will need administrative support. Currently she stated there are two Ameri-Corp Vistas that are fully funded, and two new members from the Power of We, but they are not proposing any new ones on this time.

Council President Wood asked Mayor Schor if Mr. McGrain and Ms. Crawford were his picks for these positions. Mayor Schor confirmed and assured the Committee that he believed they are the best individuals for the roles. He noted they will reach out to the neighborhoods in the future for input on appointments and filling positions but with Directors positions he felt he needed to do his due diligence and felt confident all directors he chose will be transparent, and provide a source of outreach to the neighborhoods.

Ms. Bennett presented the budget illustration on the executive order delegating the two new departments. The handout depicted a reduction of \$424,800 from the Office of Financial Empowerment and moving it to the new NCE Office of Financial Empowerment, and a reduction of \$250,000 from EDP Neighborhood & Citizen Engagement costs to the new NCE department. The bottom line is the same amount showing the changes are neutral.

Council Member Jackson asked if there was a reorganization cost, and if it was depicted in the numbers they were just presented with. Ms. Bennett stated those costs have yet to be determined. There will be some office spaces and some additional operating costs. Ms. Harkins added in that the Administration will be meeting later to look at details, then will come back at the public hearing with those numbers.

Council President Wood went through the time line that being the hearing would be set tonight at Council for January 22 then after the hearing, they will be back at the Committee of the Whole on February 12, 2018. Any questions that were asked or number requests should be answered on January 22, 2018 during the public hearing. The cost breakdown should be for the remaining 6 months of this fiscal year, if there is a savings or additional costs, and any estimates on relocating. This should take into account any uniform change costs when moving Code from the Fire Department to the new department.

DISCUSSION/ACTION

RESOLUTION – Set the Public Hearing on the Executive Order 2018-01 on Reorganization of Planning and Neighborhood Development

Council President Wood clarified for the public and the Committee that per the Charter the Mayor does the reorganization, and Council can act on the recommendation, but no action can go into effect for 90 days and after a hearing. During the waiting period and public hearing Council can make recommendations to the plan. By setting the hearing for January 22, 2018 and making a decision after that the Mayor will not need to wait 90 days.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER SPADAFORÉ TO SET THE PUBLIC HEARING ON THE EXECUTIVE ORDER 2018-01 FOR REORGANIZATION ON THE PLANNING AND NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT FOR JANUARY 22, 2018. MOTION CARRIED 8-0.

Council President Wood asked for a brief overview to be provided at the Council meeting prior to the public hearing on January 22, 2018. Any questions from this meeting and the later Council meeting will be sent to the Administration so the answers can be provided before the hearing.

Mayor Schor, Mr. McGrain, Ms. Crawford and Ms. Bennett left the meeting at 6:34 p.m.

RESOLUTION- 2018 Ad Hoc on Diversity and Inclusion Committee Establishment

Council President Wood and Ad Hoc Chairperson addressed the resolution and noted the members who attend would be interested in have it as a

Mayor Schor returned to the meeting at 6:36 p.m.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER SPITZLEY TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION FOR THE AD HOC ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE ESTABLISHMENT.

Council Member Washington suggested making a Commission on Diversity and Inclusion in the future with appointments by the Mayor so as to include members of the groups that have been attending the Ad Hoc meetings over the last couple years.

Council Member Spitzley noted that diversity and inclusion encompasses more than race, and the Ad Hoc is currently working the board appointment application to present to the Mayor in the future to address a broader scope when looking at future appointments.

Council Member Hussain suggested changes to the resolution or clarity. Second WHEREAS, add “to” before “foster”; remove “to” after “diversity” and add “within”; in line three of the same paragraph, change “policies” to “policy”; last line remove “the” between “for” and “a”. The new second WHEREAS should now read:

“WHEREAS, this Committee will work to communicate information and to foster diversity within various City Departments and organizations; also to create a template to review any

ordinance or policy changes as to how these changes will affect our diverse populations and what accommodations may need to be made for a particular population; and”

Council Member Spitzley accepted the amendments to her motion, and the consensus of Council was to also accept the amendments to the resolution.

MOTION CARRIED 8-0.

Council President stated to the Committee she will be speaking to the Mayor regarding establishing a Commission on Diversity and Inclusion in the future so the AD HOC would not need to be acted on annually, and outside members could be part of the Commission.

RESOLUTION-2018 Ad Hoc on Housing

Council President Wood read through the proposed resolution which would establish a housing committee for one year and include stakeholders from the Greater Lansing Association of Realtors, Chamber of Commerce, Michigan State Housing Authority, a residential housing builder, a community member, a member of the Rental Property Owners Association of Mid-Michigan and a representative from the Planning and Neighborhood Development Department.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER WASHINGTON TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH THE 2018 AD HOC ON HOUSING TO DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS AND POLICIES TO IMPROVE HOUSING. MOTION CARRIED 8-0.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Sherrie Boak, Recording Secretary

Lansing City Council

Approved by the Committee on January 22, 2018