MINUTES
Committee on Public Safety
Wednesday, December 6, 2017 @ 3:30 p.m.
City Hall, Council Conference Room

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

ROLL CALL
Councilmember Adam Hussain, Chair
Councilmember Carol Wood, Vice Chair
Councilmember Tina Houghton, Member

OTHERS PRESENT
Sherrie Boak, Council Staff
Andy Kilpatrick, Public Service
Chief Talifarro, LFD
Scott Sanford, Code Compliance
Nick Tate, Assistant City Attorney
Elaine Womboldt
Kathy Miles
Bruce Kruger

MINUTES
MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER WOOD TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 15, 2017 AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT
No public comment at this time.

DISCUSSION/ACTION:
RESOLUTION – Appointment of Archill Emmons; Electrical Board; Term to Expire June 30, 2020
The applicant was not able to attend and will be placed on the next Committee agenda.

RESOLUTION – Make Safe and Demolish Order: 123 N. Hayford
Mr. Sanford provided information on the property off the spreadsheet in the packet including the original red tag date of 11/4/2013, the demolition board held their hearings on 1/27/2017 and 8/31/2017 and the order to make safe or demolish came from that Board on 9/30/2017. Mr. Sanford relayed the information that the owner had planned to sell the property to the Landbank, however the process could not be completed because of the outstanding fire escrow funds. Therefore the owner paid the bank and taxes and is now walking away from

any work. Once the home is demolished he could possibly propose it back to the Landbank. The estimated costs of repairs at this time are $123,200, and staff is asking for 30 day make safe demolish. Council Member Wood asked what the estimated cost for the demolition would be, and Mr. Sanford confirmed it could be between $6,000 - $8,000, and the escrowed funds could cover that however there could be additional fees from the City. Those fees could be waived if the owner addresses some of the charges. Once the home is demolished the current owner will maintain ownership of the vacant lot. Once the demolition order is approved, it will take 15 days for the bids, then the contracts will be awarded.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER WOOD TO SET THE SHOW CAUSE HEAIRNG FOR JANUAREY 8TH, 2018. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

Council Member Wood asked about the timeline for the demolition of the structure at Pennsylvania near Chestnut. Mr. Sanford informed the Committee they hoped for a search warrant by the end of the week.

UPDATES

3801 Walton Property Inspections and Next Steps

Council Member Hussain recapped the November Committee meeting, where the Committee was informed there was an inspection to take place so they stopped their discussion and are now reopening the discussion for updates and how to proceed

Mr. Sanford distributed an email from Vince Cantrell with the Fire Marshall's office, which stated an inspection was done 8/21/2017 and a recheck on 11/28/2017 when he walked through every unit. The owner, Mr. Kruger was present on site at the time and completed everything on the correction order and was working on complying with other things. Another site visit is scheduled for 1/14/18 for a recheck. Unit 11 was retagged for lack of electricity, which was the red tag on the furnace. Mr. Sanford added that because of that the tenant was vacated. Unit 10 was evicted and the paperwork has started on evicting Unit 11.

Council Member Wood asked Mr. Kruger for an update on the installation of cameras on site, and Mr. Kruger stated if that is what Council wants he will work on it. Mr. Tate informed Mr. Kruger that if he places cameras, and there is a situation with trespassing or littering, the video will help the court case for prosecution. Mr. Kruger stated he would try to get the camera's up in 30 days. Council Member Wood then asked Mr. Kruger if he has spoken to the LFD on closing off one of the driveways for access and egress. Mr. Kruger admitted he had not, but was told seven (7) years ago he couldn't do it. Council Member Wood asked Mr. Kruger to ask again and see if they will grant permission because it was also recommended by the LPD. Chief Talifarro stepped and stated he took note of the request and would ask the Fire Marshall to visit the site to make a determination.

Council Member Hussain asked Mr. Kruger if he had started working with the LPD on screening applicants. Mr. Kruger admitted that three of his tenants had left, and were a cause of issues, and he filled the units with people he personally knew so he did not have them screened.

Council Member Hussain asked for a 30 day timeline for cleaning up the inside of the properties.

The Committee briefly discussed with the owner the ownership of a fence on the property, and Council Member Hussain admitted he met with a representative from Eyde and they did fix their portion of the fence. There is a portion Council Member Hussain believed Mr. Yono owned and he would reach out to Ms. Sumner in Law to address.

Ms. Womboldt spoke in support of the repairs on the property.

Council Member Hussain asked Mr. Kruger for an update on the removal of his property at 1921 W. Holmes. Mr. Kruger stated they are still waiting on the utilities and are working on getting it down.

Logan Square Property Inspections and Next Steps

Council Member Hussain asked for an update on the property and the previously scheduled Fire Marshall, Building Safety inspections and zoning. Mr. Tate confirmed that Mr. Bennett with Building Safety asked Law to reach out to coordinate with Fire and Planning and Neighborhood Development, and the Law office is still working on the coordination. Council Member Hussain noted the item will remain on the agenda for the December 20th meeting for any updates.

Holmes Street School Property Inspections and Next Steps

Council Member Hussain asked for an update since the compliance letter deadline of November 20, 2017. Mr. Sanford confirmed the board up was done, however broken glass and trash is still on site. It was noted by Mr. Sanford the owner did acknowledged he received the notice and is responsible. A ticket was issued and he has 10 days to respond from December 4, 2017.

Council Member Hussain noted this item would be forwarded to the 2018 Committee on Public Safety for their consideration of any updates in 2018.

Ms. Womboldt asked for a faster process and progress with the violations and concerns at Logan Square.

OTHER

Express Court

Mr. Kilpatrick informed the Committee he had visited the site the week before this meeting, and the school volunteer crossing guards were doing well. The average time is 15 minutes for drop off and pick up and drop off. On the north leg there are 75 students that cross and 30 that cross at Holmes. The department is looking into making sure the school volunteer crossing guards have the appropriate training, but they have also discussed possibly putting a City crossing guard on site also. Council Member Hussain suggested addressing it again in early August 2018 before school starts up again. Mr. Kilpatrick agreed, and added that there have been orange cones placed on the property to direct people to only turn right out of the drive.

Ms. Miles asked if the crossing guards could stop traffic. Mr. Kilpatrick stated the school volunteers are not trained for that, and the department is looking into verifying their training.

Mr. Sanford asked Mr. Kilpatrick before he left the meeting if his office could look into the time delay on the light at MLK and Shiawassee. Mr. Kilpatrick stated the light should be timed for the speed limit, but would double check.

LFD Chief on Fire Department Positions and Budget Impacts

Chief Talifarro informed the Committee that he had posted a vacant Code Enforcement position that was available and was approached by the City Chief Operating Officer who informed him there were residuals to put two (2) Code Officers in place in consideration of a re-organization. So they decided if they were going to look at re-organization, they should look at more than just filing a Code Enforcement, especially if have to remove from Fire

Marshall and re assign the position. The Department has heard the concerns made by Council on Code Enforcement and their demands, so this is the enforcement piece, but they are also working on community engagement and a community education piece. So the Department decided that instead of inserting a Code Enforcement position, the re-organization plan he submitted includes a Lead Housing Inspector. This would make 8 Code Enforcement positions and 2 Lead Housing Inspectors. This would eliminate one part time Premise Officer and create a 4th full time Premise Officer. They will now go from 3 FT and 2 PT to 4 FT. This is a net budget gain and this would also allow retention and better succession planning to move people up in Code Enforcement. During the re-organization, they have looked into teams – 1 Lead Housing Inspector, 4 Code Enforcement and 2 Premise Officers. Once thee positions are set they will begin working on the education piece and community engagement. A spreadsheet was given to the Committee which outlined the pay period savings and net budget impact. The department believes they are $187,000 ahead in the vacancies and overtime expense.

Council Member Wood stated the vacancy dollars are equated in the budget for the overall budget, and the vacancy dollars in a position are not for LFD but are put into the overall pool. When Council passes a budget they also pass staffing levels. Unless the Department asks to add a position by coming back to Council, they cannot add staff. (Referenced a City Attorney opinion from 2003-2004 mid budget). Council Member Wood did acknowledge her support of additional Code Compliance staff. The Chief was then asked for the status of the recent posting. Chief Talifarro noted they are preparing interview questions, developing the test and intend to move forward, noting the decision to post was not done without talking to the Administration. Council Member Wood stated to Chief Talifarro that there were no conversations or approvals with Council.

The Committee then briefly discussed the rental inspection timelines and smarter approach to addressing complaints. Chief Talifarro confirmed they have increased the number of rental inspections, and written more tickets. They are looking into the number of inspections based on the number of units in the building, however will not neglect any property or not hold the owner responsible.

Council Member Houghton acknowledged that there should be a benefit to the good landlords and the inspectors should understand their inspection requirement in comparison to bad landlords.

Council Member Hussain stated he would pass along the topic to the 2018 Committee for their continued updates on the topic.

Ms. Womboldt spoke to the Committee about a concern she had with recent purse snatchings and seniors being approached. Council Member Hussain added that the same incidents are occurring in the Colonial neighborhood also, and Council Member Wood acknowledged they are occurring in her neighborhood as well with day light break ins. Council Member Hussain stated that the LPD is aware and there is a partnership with the community and LPD to catch the perpetrators.

Council Member Houghton left the meeting at 4:35 p.m.

Ms. Miles asked why the situation that was just discussed had not been made known to the public via the news, and asked if the neighborhoods should contact the LPD for exposure on the issues. Council Member Hussain assured her that Councilmembers have been reaching out and it is occurring all over the City.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 4:39 p.m.
Submitted by,
Sherrie Boak, Council Office Manager
Lansing City Council
Approved: January 24, 2018