



MINUTES
Committee on Public Safety
Thursday, July 15 , 2021 @ 4:00 p.m.

Lansing City Hall, City Council Conference Room
124 W. Michigan Avenue, 10th Floor
Comments can be emailed to city.council@lansingmi.gov before the meeting
City Council can be reached at (517) 483-4177

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Garza called the meeting to order at 4:00PM

PRESENT

Council Member Jeremy Garza, Chair
Council Member Carol Wood, Vice Chair
Council Member Brian T. Jackson, Member

OTHERS PRESENT

Renee Richmond, Council Staff
Lisa Hagen, OCA
Mary Bowen, OCA
Scott Sanford, Code Compliance
Damon Milton
Jan, LPD Social Worker
Lt. Mills, LPD

Minutes

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER WOOD TO APPROVE THE MINUTES JUNE 24, 2021 AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

Public Comment

No public comment at this time.

Discussion/Action Items

RESOLUTION – Appointment; Pastor Damon Milton as an At-Large member of the Board of Police Commissioners for a term to expire June 30, 2023 (PEND-2589)

Council Member Garza asked Pastor Milton if he was born and raised in Lansing and he responded yes and that he went to Sexton High School. Council Member Garza then asked Pastor Milton what made him want to be on the Board of Police Commissioners. Pastor Milton stated he currently serves as the Chaplain in the Police Department and wanted to expand and be a public liaison for the police department and the community which is his biggest passion. Pastor Milton continued that he wanted to make sure the community is educated in

police policy and that everyone is held accountable for their actions and bring the two together. Council Member Garza asked if the Pastor would be willing to promote the LPD to help support and promote Community Policing and one question he typically asks is if applicants are willing to get out of City Hall and into the public, Pastor Milton stated yes absolutely. Council Member Jackson asked how long he has been a Chaplain and as a Chaplain you have officers that confide in you and have private conversations with, as a Commissioner on the Board vs a Chaplain how would you handle investigations, discipline and what people want to know about that information. Pastor Milton state he thought of it as a positive because he can give two points of view and bring both sides together and it is more important to get out with people and educate because I am on the inside, in his current role he is able to bring that love, hurt and human element to the table. Pastor Milton continued that he feels he can bring that feedback to LPD and the Community Police Officers as that is a big part to bringing everyone together and holding them accountable. Council Member Wood indicated she has a couple questions and as a Commissioner what is his intention to reach out to neighborhoods so they are aware that the Board of Police Commissioners are accessible. Pastor Milton said he is big on bringing people together and holding them accountable and as a clergyman he likes to go from park to park as it's one of the best places to meet up in a neutral ground when talking religion for people to be comfortable and some are not comfortable in a faith environment and get everyone more educated on what this Board does and pull the public together and bring the agenda forefront. Council Member Wood agreed and stated that the Councilmembers of the Wards will begin their meetings again with the community and asked if he would be present and represent the Board of Police Commissioners and he responded definitely. Council Member Wood lastly asked knowing there are vacant positions in LPD and funding has been approved for more is one of the things he will be working on is hiring in the LPD and is that something he is willing to do. Pastor Milton stated yes and he has served in the neighborhoods and is looking to continue as a Board Member. Council Member Garza stated that having CPO's in the neighborhoods are very important to build relationships with the community's and residents to know who they can go to for help, and Council Member Wood agreed.

MOTION BY COUNCILMEMBER WOOD TO APPROVE RESOLUTION – APPOINTMENT; DAMON MILTON AS AN AT-LARGE MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2023 (PEND-2589). MOTION CARRIED 3-0

RESOLUTION – Orders to Make Safe or Demolish; 314 Bingham (PEND-2399)

Council Member Garza indicated that this property has been going on for years with multiple extensions and asked Scott Sanford for an update. Mr. Sanford said that the owner is finishing with the plumbing and then will start installing drywall and everything should be completed by the end of the month for move in. Council Member Garza asked if all permits were pull and approved and Mr. Sanford acknowledged yes, siding is done and they are doing windows now. Council Member Wood said based on Mr. Sanford testimony and it no longer meets the MSD threshold she asked it to be Placed on File.

UPDATE – Make Safe or Demolish (1412 W Ionia)

Council Member Garza asked Mr. Sanford is anything has changed with this and Mr. Sanford indicated that there has been no work done and the only permit pulled expires on July 31st, he continued that Mr. Schultz the land contract holder for Jessica Hull said he was foreclosing on her but nothing has been filed with the county and it was tabled for 60 days for him to get permits and he has not done so. Scott continued that the only permit was in Jessica's name and not Mr. Schultz'. Council Member Wood stated that on June 21st Council approved the MSD as well. No further discussion was had.

UPDATE – Make Safe or Demolish (2109 Worden)

Council Member Garza asked Mr. Sanford with this property there was \$15,000 in roof repairs and all repairs totally \$70,000 is that correct. Mr. Sanford stated Dennis Radke phoned him after the last meeting and wanted to fix it up and was going to call a realtor thinking he can get \$100,000 for it. Mr. Sanford said he reached out four times with no response back and when he calls now there is not service to the phone and that Council approved this MSD 60 days on June 21st as well.

OTHER

Council Member Wood asked on a separate topic if she could get an update on Osband Street. Mr. Sanford said his office was out cleaning up and the person in the house was throwing stuff out the back door in the yard. Scott continued that it is now in the court's hands for an order to evict. Council Member Garza asked if there was also an indecent exposure as the squatters were using the neighbors hose to wash up and changing in the street. Lt. Mills from LPD said he had no information on that and Council Member Wood asked if he could check into it. Lisa Hagen stated he had looked up 54A, 54B, 30th and 35th Courts and did not find anything and Council Member Wood indicated it was on the news and Christine Simmons awarded it for eviction. Council Member Garza asked if a gate lock could be used for trespassing. Mr. Sanford said if the owner wanted to do that then yes. Lt. Mills indicated once an eviction order is set it is not LPD that carries it out but the courts. Council Member Wood indicated the owner is 80 yrs old and these people just moved in, they are hoarders and there is trash visible in the windows, there is no utilities or water. Lt. Mills verified the address as 1917 Osband and that Sgt. Garcia and Bob Merritt were aware of the situation.

UPDATE – City Attorney; Auto Zone; 610 N Cedar St

Council Member Garza indicated the letter from OCA went out on June 28th to Auto Zone Corporate with a 14 day response request and that expired on Tuesday and asked Mr. Smiertka if there was any response. Mr. Smiertka indicated nothing from corporate and the manager of the store was not aware of the letter and that the remedy is with no response it would be circuit court to get involved to get a public order to make it safe and secure. Council Member Wood asked Mr. Smiertka what the timeline going forward is and Mr. Smiertka stated the first letter gave 14 days to respond and he could now go to circuit court next week. Council Member Wood stated she has been here long enough that after giving 14 days and then send another letter they move a few branches then more time goes by and it falls off the radar and it all starts over and does not want that to happen in this case. Jan Bidwell explained that it is corporate that is dragging their feet and Lt. Mills included that Officer Reust who is a CPO went out and talked to the manager and they reached out to corporate with no response as well. Council Member Garza asked since local wants to help can we expedite this and Council Member Wood asked if the letter was sent certified and Mr. Smiertka did not believe so that it was sent regular postal service at which Council Member Wood said that they could just say they didn't received the letter. Mr. Smiertka said he could send another letter tomorrow and send it certified so this doesn't fall off the radar. Council Member Wood asked what Mr. Smiertka needs to be successful as there is a group of people in this meeting that can help and he responded that he needs facts of the nuisance issues from the public. Randy Barton and Mark Criss from City Rescue of Lansing that they are looking at 8-12 times their staff is called but are not informed until LPD or LFD are notified and if they can get an email or number of whom to contact that would be helpful and that there is now an encampment established with temporary shelters and tents tied to trees. Council Member Wood asked if we have the managers cooperation can we do a no trespass and have the CPO take it and have it signed and on file. Lt. Mills indicated with the new laws and having to issue a summons instead of tickets the courts won't let us lodge that complaint and Jan offered unless the complaints come in we don't know about them and the two individuals that passed were not visible because of the area. Jan continued that there is broken glass, bottles

and needles and the grass is tall. Council Member Garza asked Mr. Sanford if any code violations have been issued and Mr. Sanford said this is the first he's heard of it and he can have someone go tomorrow and take a look and mow but if there is glass and needles that is a hazard. Ms. Bidwell indicated that the pit is 12 feet deep when LFD has responded to the calls. Mr. Sanford said if it is 12 feet deep we need some type of barrier around it and Jan mentioned a tall fence with barbed wire to keep people out and Council Member Wood indicated that is illegal where Mr. Sanford said it is a light industrial area and Lt. Mills said a light mesh might work. Mr. Smiertka asked if LPD could send what was just described to him and Council Member Garza asked that Council be included and thought it is time to hit them in the pocket book. Council Member Wood asked for the record that she would hope that with law and code to make sure when it does go to court that tickets that were/are written and if Auto Zone Corporate decides to do something that some are not forgiven and that it happens all the time where let's say 10 tickets are written and because the company decides to do something 5 are forgiven and she doesn't want to see that happened. Mr. Sanford stated Code doesn't do tickets but violations and it is direct billing. Ms. Bidwell gave an example that if there is a stabbing and they run there is no report taken with no victim or suspect and Council Member Wood agreed and that if the person ends up at QD that is where it is written vs where it may have happened. Council Member Wood said the game plan then is for Mr. Smiertka to send out a certified letter tomorrow and to come back on the 29th for an update and for Code to go out tomorrow as well.

OTHER

Council Member Garza informed Lt. Mills that all of Council is getting complaints and asked what is being done for the main thoroughfares like MLK, Pennsylvania and Jolly Roads with the speeding and that motorcycles fly down the street. Lt. Mills apologized he was not expecting this question but Sgt. Hahn is taking over the motor unit with Operation Slow Down and he is not aware of the responses so far. LPD had noticed it and it's gotten worse this past year. Council Member Wood said she has seen MSP officers more on the side streets between 5p-6p. Council Member Garza asked for the next meeting on the 29th if statistics on tickets for speeding and/or reckless driving could be proved and how many traffic stops. Council Member Wood then asked Ms. Bidwell how she was doing and she indicated things are stressful and she is worried about everyone in the city. She continued that an officer responded to a call and was submerged by a resident and sometimes they respond to calls and perform CPR on a gunshot wound and then get cleaned up and go right back out, it can be a lot to process there is a good rapid response and community partners are coming together and we can lean on each other.

Public Comment

None

ADJOURN

Adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Submitted by Renee Richmond

Council Administrative Assistant, Lansing City Council

Approved as presented: July 29, 2021