



MINUTES
Committee on Public Safety
Thursday, March 17, 2022 @ 4:00 p.m.
City Council Conference Room, 10th Floor City Hall

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Wood called the meeting to order at 4:00pm

PRESENT

Council Member Carol Wood, Chair
Council Member Brian Daniels, Vice Chair
Council Member Jeffrey Brown, Member

OTHERS PRESENT

Renee Richmond, Council Staff
Lisa Hagen, OCA
Mary Bowen, OCA
Judge Buchanan
Judge Ward
Judge Simmons
Anethia Brewer, Court Administrator
Scott Sanford, Code Compliance
Robert Backus, Captain LPD

MINUTES

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER DANIELS TO APPROVE THE MINUTES MARCH 3, 2022, AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public present at this time

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

B. DISCUSSION – Bond Process, Judge Buchanan, Judge Ward & Anethia Brewer

Councilmember Wood began by welcoming everyone and explained that 54A was invited to explain to the Committee some of the processes and procedures concerning bonds and when an individual is arrested and released on a PR. She continued that the Committee wanted an open discussion and stated that the hope is to have the Prosecutor in as well for discussion.

Chief Judge Buchanan began by handing out some information including a blank bond recommendation form to the Committee and referred to Section (b) that lists some criteria on what might be denied when setting a bond during an arraignment, typically in extreme cases of murder, treason, on probation or parole, or it is a violent felony. She continued that it is challenging as the courts may not have all the information in front of them, and summarized Section (c) that if the defendant isn't ordered held in custody, and are released on PR or without bond, they are subject to conditions set forth by the court i.e., can't leave the state, will not commit a crime while released, or they do not present a danger to the public. Judge Buchanan added an additional

factor is with new jail task force reforms that a warrant may not be issued but a summons with a date to respond to court. Councilmember Wood asked if they had any statistical information on when an individual is released and reoffends, how many times were the same offense and how it is affecting the community. Judge Buchanan replied that if legislature pulls the data and changes the law, they could possibly do something but does not believe having that information would change their current process. Councilmember Wood indicated she realizes the ethics and asked if she is understanding they can't pull the data and then lobby to have something changed. Judge Buchanan responded the Michigan Judges Association might, but she cannot say whether lobbying is or isn't done by other organizations. Judge Buchanan asked to go back to Councilmember Woods question on the 10 people on bond, unless they are seeing the same people, they don't know they are repeat offenders, and if they are out on bond, they are not entitled to another. Councilmember Wood asked if they know how many are responding to the summons and have been arrested, Judge Buchanan replied they did not at this time. Councilmember Wood commented in her perspective it becomes a longer process if someone gets a summons and doesn't respond, a warrant is issued and then it's a waiting game if the person gets caught. Councilmember Daniels asked what the jail task force is/was, Judge Buchanan stated those involved were supreme court, judiciary, and prosecution with a main goal to reduce people in jail that were in poverty, life disruption (loss of job because in jail), so thought doing a summons to show up would be better. Judge Buchanan mentioned a CCW, and this is a summons offense unless the prosecutor requests a warrant and the individual poses a risk to public safety, they have had a few where the prosecutor has asked but it's infrequent. She continued that a PR release would be because they turned themselves into the court and are not considered a flight risk. Judge Buchanan then referred the Committee to the blank Bond Recommendation form provided for their review and stated the top half is used in the most serious cases. Councilmember Wood mentioned an incident where an individual had weapons, arrested, and then released on PR, that it happened three separate time, and asked how it gets to that. Judge Buchanan replied without seeing the actual information, there are many factors. She added, the first offense could have been dropped so they were release, and if the 2nd happened quickly but not charged in the first and if no weapon was used. Councilmember Wood then asked if there was anything the Committee, LPD, or OCA could do to help or if they had any recommendations, or thought the laws are enough. Judge Buchanan indicated that understanding the movement behind the bond does not change conduct, the fact that they appear in court then post bond we are still seeing repeat offenders with no criminal records.

Judge Ward thanked the Committee for the invitation and emphasized it's important that they are independent and cannot respond to special interest, even when they themselves live in Lansing and hear gunshots or shootings nearby. One of the reasons they are on the bench is they take it seriously and strive to follow the law. She continued that she was a little uneasy without a defense side as they are used to that too.

Judge Simmons echoed both Chief Judge Buchanan and Judge Ward that it is difficult, but they cannot be influenced by outside factors and are bound by law, she thanked the Committee for having them. Councilmember Wood added the goal was to hear what the Judges had to say so that there isn't miscommunication coming out of the Committee to the public and having a clear and better understanding.

Councilmember Brown summarized a story of a family he assisted in the past on moving because of an individual that was release after a domestic violence instance, and the individual had a gun in the car but did not use it, nothing was done.

Councilmember Daniels agreed with Judge Ward on having a defense side which they hope to at some point and thanked everyone he appreciates all the information he now has to communicate with.

Ms. Brewer indicate if there are any stats available, she will try to get them and send to the Committee, and Councilmember Wood responded they will also look at what they may want and send her an email.

C. UPDATE – LPD; Alleged Casinos raided

Captain Backus gave an overview that illegal gaming cites are popping up all over and reached out to the Michigan Gaming Control Board for assistance and they got involved in shutting down the one in Logan Square. Councilmember Wood asked if this was the Korean family from previously, and he was not sure, but it

was the same in Flint and similar operations. Captain Backus continued there were two cites one in Logan Square (Bourbon Street) and the other on Cedar Street (Triple 7), there was an undercover introduced and a search warrant issued, and they were able to seize the machines and some money. He continued that in late February charges on both operators are still at the AG office, the process is long and estimates it going for another year. Councilmember Wood pointed out that a City ordinance regarding gambling, drugs, and prostitution that the property can be boarded up, are they looking to do that. Captain Backus responded that at Logan Square they had cooperation from the operator and took all the devices, there was no one onsite at the Cedar St location and they seized all the devices there too. Councilmember Brown asked if he knew how many cites total in Lansing there might be, the Captain responded that they are making headway with the help of the MGCB and AG office, potentially 5 but hard to know. He continued they are common in the metro Detroit area and frequent strip malls. Councilmember Daniels asked if it is all machines or tables as well, Captain Backus stated the most recent were machines like video game types that you can unplug and move, but they are big and heavy and can't be done quickly. Councilmember Wood asked if the money seized goes to the state, the Captain finished by stating technically yes, it is forfeited, we can ask for a portion but that is farther down the line.

D. DISCUSSION – 318 Cesar Chavez Avenue; Code Compliance

Councilmember Wood summarized a recent story in the news and asked Ms. Richmond to reach out to Mr. Sanford with some questions regarding the issues. Mr. Sanford began that Code went out and some issues were corrected, the heat was back on that was shut off, and while there they noticed another leaking pipe at which a letter was sent and following up with the owner. Councilmember Wood asked when the property was inspected a year ago if any pictures were taken or is that not done, Mr. Sanford responded unless it is a safety inspection or a claim, photos are not taken. Councilmember Wood inquired about the issues that needed to be corrected, Mr. Sanford said they were addressed, and a three-page letter was received from the owner asking for an extension, it was granted 30 days, and they will go back out. Councilmember Wood then asked if there were complaints since, and Mr. Sanford stated yes, but it is always the same individual about trash and heat. Councilmember Wood verified no other tenants and Mr. Sanford confirmed. Councilmember Daniels asked for specific issues on the last inspections, Mr. Sanford indicated a wall behind a shower was not protected and had water damage, smoke detector not working, holes in walls, nothing major where they could red tag, and finished by stating Code did receive a copy of all pest control receipts.

E. RESOLUTION – Setting a Show Cause Hearing in consideration of Orders to Make Safe or Demolish to the owners of property located at 3601 Deerfield Ave

Mr. Sanford began by informing the Committee of the backstory that Mary Wade owned the home, was elderly and sick, while her granddaughter cared for her. In October of 2021 the granddaughter called her father Mark, who is Mary's son, that Mary had passed and to come quick. He continued that by the time Mark had gotten there the daughter had passed away as well. Mr. Sanford continued that Mark does not have the financial means to fix it, and in the meantime, a guy named Rocky who lives in Delhi Township showed up with a quitclaim deed with Mary's signature and dated February 2022 (after she had passed), for a \$1. Mr. Sanford added they have no legal transfer from Mary and does not know who owns the house, according to the Ingham County Register of Deeds they do not have the ability to go after Rocky. Councilmember Daniels asked if Rocky owns other property and Mr. Sanford stated he believes he owns a bar somewhere. Mr. Sanford presented current photos to the Committee that Rocky has removed the roof and everything inside is down to studs. He continued that Rocky informed Code that he is a licensed builder (which he is not). Mr. Sanford added that Rocky cannot pull permits and as in the photos he has removed the roof, doors, and walls, there was a stop order placed by building safety and it was suggested to Rocky to demolish the home. Councilmember Wood mentioned that the estimate of repairs when Mary owned it was approximately \$71,000 and it would be even more now with the way it is, correct. Mr. Sanford finished by stating according to building inspector it is double now and we ask MSD 60 days.

MOTION BY COUNCILMEMBER DANIELS TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION FOR SETTING A SHOW CAUSE HEARING IN CONSIDERATION OF ORDERS TO MAKE SAFE OR DEMOLISH TO THE OWNERS OF PROPERTY LOCATED AT 3601 DEERFIELD AVE. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

Councilmember Wood asked law for any comment, Ms. Hagen indicated that this is the first she is hearing about it and that Mr. Venker is working with the City Assessor. Mr. Sanford said they are notifying everyone involved but believes Mark doesn't have the paperwork or means to fix it.

OTHER

ADJOURN

Adjourned at 5:02pm
submitted by Renee Richmond,
Administrative Assistant, Lansing City Council
Approved by the Committee on April 7, 2022