



MINUTES
Ad Hoc on Homelessness & Solutions
Tuesday, May 9, 2023 @ 3:30 p.m.
City Council Conference Room, 10th Floor City Hall

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Brown called the meeting to order at 3:42pm

PRESENT

Council Member Jeffrey Brown, Chair
Council Member Adam Hussain, Vice Chair
Council Member Patricia Spitzley, Member

OTHERS PRESENT

Renee Richmond, Council Staff
Lisa Hagen-Lawrence, OCA
Matt Staples, OCA
Mike Lynn
Ulices Rosa, 54A District Court
Rita Dunlop
Jody Washington

MINUTES

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER SPITZLEY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MARCH 28, 2023.
MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER HUSSAIN TO AMMEND THE MINUTES OF APRIL 25, 2023 TO REMOVE LISA HAGEN-LAWRENCE AND ADD MATT STAPLES AS ATTENDING. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

DISCUSSION/ACTION

DISCUSSION – Committee Recommendations and Reporting

Councilmember Brown indicated there were no presentations today and wanted to review what's been discussed previously and look towards recommendations and reporting out. Councilmember Spitzley noted the presenters so far have been very helpful but feels input from the Administration or HRCS is needed prior to any recommendations, otherwise what's submitted is delegitimized. Councilmember Hussain agreed and mentioned bringing in County and State officials, the Committee has to report to COW by September 11th, but can continue meetings afterward until December 11th.

Councilmember Spitzley spoke on last years Ad Hoc and suggested inviting Rep. Emily Dievendorf. Councilmember Brown then confirmed a few members of the Ingham County Board of Commissioners, and Councilmembers Hussain and Spitzley both suggested Rep. Elissa Slotkin, Sen. Sarah Anthony, and Sen. Sam Singh.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jody Washington spoke on that County Commissioners that she has talked to and that they have a bigger voice in the housing decision, it should be more regional and the reps are out there. She continued that one group/department should not be handling the money.

Mike Lynn mentioned he received a call from Krystal at LSJ for an update on the 24/hr warming centers and that the Mayor came back with a 2.2 million dollar cost, with a breakdown of approximately \$600,00 for a facility and \$500,000 for staffing, etc. No address was given and the is was for just one building. Councilmember Spitzley mentioned last years conversation with the mayor was it can't be one place and she had suggested opening Schmidt, Letts, Foster, and Gier Community Centers, but the response was a staffing issue and for people to work overnight was hard to find. Councilmember Brown commented he thought all these may fall with Bishop Maxwell and faith based initiative and getting volunteers. Ms. Washington added maybe open Otto as well, Derek Knox would open, the homeless can't see the alerts on TVs or computers, churches have offered to open up, adding when the fledge opened it was sanctioned.

Ulices Rosa mentioned he is currently trying to help a pregnant/homeless woman get into a shelter since Thursday, and the shelters say no. He also mentioned that the eviction side of things are higher since April 2019, passing pre-pandemic. During COVID people got all this money but nobody helped them be efficient with it, they just spent it and now are getting evicted. He added that he has tried helping over 500 families, need landlords involved, all state shelters. He concluded that they schedule people for eviction diversion but only about 10% may show up. Councilmember Brown asked how many staff Mr. Rosa had, he replied it was just him.

Councilmember Spitzley stated as she recalls the Housing Ombudsman was created as the one stop for all folks, initially was looking at a legal background but not a lawyer, to offer direction and provide help with rental clinics, education and knowing their rights if evicted and/or red tagged, in addition to working with HRCS Department, work with all departments and based out of the Mayor's Office. When the previous administration left, Joe McDonald needed somewhere to go and he was placed in this position and in HRCS. Councilmember Brown asked if Mr. Rosa is working with Joe, Mr. Rosa answered that Mr. McDonald will reach out monthly with some questions, what he does with the information he does not know.

Rita Dunlop introduced herself, she is with RPOAMM, she wanted to come and see how she and other owners can help. Councilmember Brown asked if she's worked with HRCS, she indicated she isn't aware of who they are. Councilmember Brown then asked if her group works with the Housing Ombudsman to help the homeless get placed into units that they may have available, Mr. Dunlop answered at this time they are creating a list, she's received lots of referrals, adding some owners are reluctant to rent/house to the homeless due to they've been isolated and may destroy property and vacant units will not be furnished. Councilmember Brown noted that working with HRCS can help with barriers, and addressing housing, mental health, rehabilitation, etc.

Councilmember Brown asked how many owners, Mr. Rosa answered 135 landlords. Councilmember Spitzley made a recommendation to figure out how much to operate the existing community centers (Schmidt, Letts, Foster, Gier, and Otto). On average Lansing has 10 cold days/year, so to staff, have coffee and a Community Police Officer, maybe an EMS on hand.

Ms. Hagen-Lawrence left at 4:50pm

Councilmember Brown inquired budget wise about taking for example 200k from one department and 100k from another to support eviction prevention and warming centers. Councilmember Spitzley commented they continue with the same issue of too many people doing the same thing. Councilmember Hussain noted Mr. Rosa is doing what the housing ombudsman is doing.

Councilmember Brown asked if funding is going to the housing ombudsman, Councilmember Spitzley stated that is a question for the Internal Auditor.

OTHER

ADJOURN

Adjourned at 4:54pm

Submitted by

Renee Richmond, Recording Secretary

Lansing City Council

Approved by the Committee on June 13, 2023