



MINUTES
Committee on Public Safety
Tuesday, January 23, 2024 @ 4:00 p.m.
City Council Conference Room, 10th Floor City Hall

CALL TO ORDER

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

PRESENT

Council Member Ryan Kost, Chair
Council Member Trini Pehlivanoglu, Vice Chair
Council Member Peter Spadafore, Member - excused

OTHERS PRESENT

Sherrie Boak, Council Office Manager
Lisa Hagen-Lawrence, OCA
Joseph Abood, OCA
Walter Allen, Code Compliance
Rawley Van Fossen, EDP Director
Nick Montry, EDP
Susan Stachowiak, EDP
Joe Neller, SIMTOB

MINUTES

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER PEHLIVANOGLU TO PLACE THE MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 5, 2023, ON FILE AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED 2-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Neller stated he was present at the meeting to listen to the ongoing issues with the red and pink tag issue, in addition to listen to the policies proposed and any future plan to provide updates. He added that regarding properties with issues in 2023, he assured them they are working on those and they hope to have them back open in the next 60-90 days.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

RESOLUTION – Orders to Make Safe or Demolish to the owners of 3301 Turner Street

Council Member Kost recapped that in 2023 this was before Committee multiple times, and the Committee at the time agreed to have it back on the agenda to provide updates with the remodel and work with Code Compliance before taking action on a Make Safe or Demolish. Mr. Allen stated that Code Compliance has not had any communications, but Building Safety Office has had and on 1/10/2024 their rough electrical passed, on 1/16/2024 a mechanical inspection was scheduled but it was a no show. Council Member Kost asked EDP staff if Council should move on the Make Safe, and Mr. Van Fossen asked for a grace period since one inspection was done and they can reach out to the applicant.

Council Member Pehlivanoglu asked if this has been an issue since 2017 per the spreadsheet and was informed this is a new owner now. Council Member Kost stated they will move to the next meeting on February 13, 2024.

DISCUSSION – Economic Development & Planning Office

Council Member Kost noted that he had provided a list of topics and questions for EDP and after today's meeting if there are topics the Committee wants to continue to discuss or were not satisfied with the information it will appear on future agenda's as "pending".

Mr. Montry went through the list.

- Number of current Red tags-550
- Number of New red tags since December 1, 2023-33
- Number of Pink Tags-297
- Number of Pink Tags since December 1, 2023-85
- Number of NEAT properties- 453

Mr. Van Fossen and Mr. Montry noted there is a report monthly on the City website, and if for privacy reasons, Council Members can be asked to be put on a list that gets distributed that outlines which properties addresses. It is not public because they do not want to release information that would inspire potential criminal activity at vacant properties.

- What number of properties have been dormant in repair longer than six months, and is there a plan?

Mr. Montry asked for additional information such as is this not being repaired, pink tag or red tag or NEAT, etc. Council Member Kost clarified that it was not in repair, red and pink tags and those 6 months in NEAT.

Council Member Kost stated he wants to work with EDP and looking to have creative ideas to jump start homes that are dormant, and Mr. Montry agreed with that idea.

- Has an action plan been created to continue to get the housing stock back in compliance?
Mr. Montry stated they are daily practices. Council Member Kost asked what plan they have to move forward instead of moving towards a bulldozer. Mr. Van Fossen added to the conversation that they do their best to encourage the repairs and who to work with in outside partners on sponsors to help these housing stocks back in compliance. Council Member Kost asked if there is anything City Council can do if EDP is feeling their hands are tied. Mr. Van Fossen clarified that they mean their "hands are tied" when it come to what they can do as local government and what individual property rights are; their job is to enforce the code.
- Update on red tags older than ten years – a list was submitted and made part of the packet.
Mr. Van Fossen noted that the majority of these are in the process in the Make Safe phase with Demolition Board. Council Member Kost asked about 651 E Jolly and if those notes were current and if they came in paid for their permit. Mr. Montry stated he would have to double check that one. Council Member Pehlivanoglu asked if there was a typo for all those with the dates of March 2023, and Mr. Van Fossen confirmed it should be 2024.
- Staffing updates
Mr. Montry confirmed they hired a new premise officer that started 1/8/2024; they still have five (5) code vacancies and candidates coming in. He spoke to HR today, and there were 3 applicants that did not pass vetting, so he asked to see those applications anyways. They have encouraged HR to look at other platforms to expand the pool of candidates.

- Any new policy that we have taken or changes.
Mr. Montry stated they will be starting the new BSA policy in the near future. Council Member Kost asked if they could share that policy with Committee and Mr. Van Fossen stated they are working on the policy that will be department wide over all the divisions, including a policy that speaks on appropriate photos, if insensitive photos come into questions and how to document.
- Any policy Council could ask the law to look into
Mr. Van Fossen confirmed they are having robust discussions, and working on new policy ideas, adding he is open to knowing what areas of interest this committee has that EDP could consider. Council Member Kost stated too was open to assisting them in any way. Mr. Montry added that they will have more to share once they have the fee study back, they will have data that will lead them on moving forward with initiatives.
- Are the tablets up and running for the staff in the field.
Mr. Montry confirmed they do not use them because the initial pilot program proved that that platform does not work well in the field. They do have cloud and BSA is slated to start in March or April, and once that takes place they will revisit.
- Has the way a day for the staff of running back and forth to the office all day changed?
Mr. Montry explained their office hours but assured the Committee they are always taking the opportunity to look at staffing hours and make adjustments. Council Member Kost asked if the employees can do their “office hours” in the field and was told they could but Mr. Van Fossen added that there are a variety of factors. Mr. Allen interjected stating they like to have set office hours so that the public can come in and speak to someone in person.
- Any updates on Autumn Ridge
EDP informed the Committee on that January 12, 2024 they did a code visit due to lack of valid rental certificates. The entire property is pink tagged, they have 30 days and can request an extension. Owners can call and pay past due fees and schedule inspections and EDP will accommodate in the best way. They did add that currently they are having conversations with the OCA on the next steps. Council Member Kost asked the OCA what the next steps are, and Mr. Aboud could only say it would depend on the owners’ responses.
- SIMTOB update
Mr. Montry first by stating they have communications daily with SIMTOB, progress is being made, and they have a number of properties. Regarding if the City and EDP is satisfied with how things are moving, they are not, but they do see overall progress. In some situations it is slower than they would like, but in this case, they pull permits, have daily communications, and ask questions. When there are issues with tenants, they have been proactive in getting on site, doing repairs and trying to keep tenants in homes.
Council Member Kost asked about 2222 W Holmes which is still boarded up, along with the property on Kalamazoo still boarded up. Council was told that there were court orders with Judge Jamo and another agreement in November but the deadline dates have already passed. Mr. Van Fossen confirmed their goal is to get into compliance. Regarding the 2222 W Holmes, there are open permits for plumbing and repair. When a permit is pulled, they can assume they are making an attempt, but cannot govern that work has to be done in 24 hours. They are looking at their portfolio wide but have made head way since last time.
Council Member Kost asked if the non-complied properties are on the NEAT, and anyone of those pink tags should be red tags. Mr. Montry stated they have 11 red tag units in entire portfolio and some are NEAT. Council Member Kost asked if the 32 on Holmes are still red tagged by Building Safety. Mr. Montry stated those are not included in the total.
Council Member Pehlivanoglu questioned the fees on multiple units, and why not all red tag properties are on the list, how are they grouped and can they be separated and creating the list.

Council Member Kost asked for per address vs property and how one address on the property can be on the NEAT team and another one not. Mr. Montry stated the ordinance is written where they have one building one fee, for 32 units. Council Member Pehlivanoglu asked how two properties that are red tagged and owned by the same company don't all appear on the list, with one on the NEAT and one not. Mr. Montry said it depended on when they were red tagged, because they stay red tag for a certain time before NEAT. Council Member Kost OCA if there was a way to correct the ordinance to make sure people are properly being assessed as others. Mr. Montry stated the current fee study addresses a lot of these issues, and there is time needed to provide the monitoring for multiple units. Council Member Kost asked if the ordinance is stopping them now. Mr. Montry stated it is \$150 per tag or structure, but if the questions is why does a 10 unit count as one red tag, it is because there is a red tag on the entire building, individual units as well. Currently the count is, if the entire structure is red tagged, it counts as one red tag. Looking at it to reflect the actual red tag total, is being addressed with the recent fee study and changes to the fee schedule.

- Is the fee study complete?
Mr. Montry stated they have the draft within the past week and it is under EDP review. After having other members of the Administration review it will be referred to City Council.
- Would a fine system be more effective for code to get enforcement completed?
Mr. Montry stated there is difference between fines vs fees; fines are punitive measures for offenses, and fees are a cost of service. Code cannot be punitive, that is what court order tickets are. In the recent fee study there are recommendations, and EDP is currently exploring every avenue to enhance enforcement techniques.
- How many compliance issues has LHC and the properties they manage for SK had in the last 6 months.
Mr. Montry submitted a document of 12 correction notices/violation notices issued with one additional over the last 6 months. There is a total of 227 different properties. The listed included the following addresses:
315 Hylewood
3025 Sheffer
1553 Roosevelt
1435 Perkins
5018 S Washington
3121 Viking
3108 Tecumseh
1904 Hoyt
6036 Haag
908 W Miller
3419 Jolly
2400 Pollard
- A list of open enforcement against LHC and SK including the address and issue.
They provided a list of open enforcement and it became part of the packet.
- List of "Sent" letters as the current action on properties they were sent. These would be only outstanding "sent" letters, not completed items.
Mr. Montry asked for clarification if the request is for letters for NEAT or red tag. Council Member Kost stated properties owned by one person, that has multiple open letters, and there could be an opportunity in the back end, public side. Mr. Van Fossen added that if there are specific address provided, they can target those for lists, and if the request is for City wide it will take time and with staffing shortages it could take longer. With the new BSA coming in cloud

staff is excited for that for better query and pull out. They did add that they cannot commit to have a list by the next meeting.

Mr. Van Fossen asked that in the future, to help things move forward, all questions on items be sent directly to himself and Mr. Montry, and if Council could refrain from reaching out directly to staff right now. Council Member Kost stated the Charter allows Council Members to ask staff directly and get responses from them, and respectively acknowledged Mr. Van Fossen and Mr. Montry, but Council should be able to reach out to staff. Mr. Van Fossen and Mr. Montry acknowledged the statement and reiterated it was a courtesy request.

DISCUSSION – Ordinance Amendment on Abandoned Signs

Ms. Hagen-Lawrence stated the OCA is working with EDP on a full overhaul of the ordinance, and just met 1/23/2024. They are finalizing and getting close to final form.

Council Member Kost stated this will appear again on the February 13, 2024 meeting.

OTHER

No other topics.

ADJOURN

Adjourned at 4:52 p.m.

Submitted by

Sherrie Boak, Recording Secretary

Lansing City Council

Approved by the Committee on February 13, 2024