

AD HOC BLIGHT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2019

A meeting of the Ad Hoc Blight Committee was held on Tuesday, December 3, 2019 in the Second Floor Conference Room, City Hall, Manistee, Michigan. The meeting commenced at 1:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Kelly Greve, Shawn Waruszewski, Kathryn Levy, Kathy Grabowski, Timothy Kozal (Committee Leader)

OTHERS PRESENT: Jim Grabowski

ABSENT: Susie Cooper, Robert Hornkohl, Dennis Otto

DISCUSSION

Discussion regarding previous topics:

Discussion was held regarding a resident who resides on 12th Street who has had issues with ongoing blight issues. Individual is now being assisted by a community agency to obtain a dumpster, with the agency absorbing the costs so as not to pass the costs on for the individual to personally absorb.

The SAFEbuilt program was discussed and note was made that SAFEbuilt will not be handling blight as part of their contract which will begin January 1, 2020.

The issue of burned out structures was discussed with the information obtained referencing those structures being to either remedy the issue (cost absorbed by property owner) or raze the structure, with the municipality possibly having to take action (municipality to absorb the cost) to demolish the structure. Other factors, such as back taxes, can also be an issue when dealing with a burned-out structure.

New discussion:

Discussion was held regarding the Blight Ordinance and how to best achieve suggesting specific changes/modifications to the Ordinance and which areas of the Ordinance may require more specificity.

Discussion was held on fines and the possibility of increasing fines for blight violations and the process regarding how to possibly increase the fines.

Items to possibly bring before City Council were discussed. The following four (4) items are possibilities for City Council to address:

1. Establish a Blight Officer position.
2. Modify/change the Blight Ordinance.
3. Increase fines for violations of the Blight Ordinance.

4. Establish a Rubbish Pickup to be held twice a year (Spring & Autumn) for the pickup of any and/or all items placed out for disposal.

The Ad Hoc Blight Committee would like to present their findings to City Council at the Tuesday, February 18, 2020 City Council meeting. There was discussion on creating a power point presentation for City Council regarding the four (4) items for Council to address (as listed above.)

Some discussion was held on the possibility of holding a public forum for educational purposes regarding blight and the root causes of the issue. Additionally at the forum, an emphasis on fostering pride in the community could be addressed.

Miscellaneous items discussed involved: the Day of Giving and what that entails; asking assistance from area students/student groups with the Day of Giving and any other times their assistance might be beneficial; use of incarcerated individuals who have achieved "trustee" status for assisting in blight issues related to clean up.

The next Ad Hoc Blight Committee meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, January 7, 2020 at 1:30 p.m. in the Second Floor Conference Room, City Hall, Manistee, Michigan.

The meeting concluded at 2:04 p.m.

Bridget Guillen
Police Secretary