

AD HOC BLIGHT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2020

A meeting of the Ad Hoc Blight Committee was held on Wednesday, September 23, 2020. The meeting was held remotely via video conferencing with real-time messaging available. The meeting commenced at 1:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Kathy Grabowski, Kelly Greve, Andy Lee, Dennis Otto and Joshua A. Glass (Committee Leader)

OTHERS PRESENT: George Saylor

ABSENT: Robert Hornkohl

DISCUSSION

Joshua A. Glass, Chief of Police began the meeting by introducing himself as the new Chief of Police and what he proposes as being the purpose of the committee. Chief Glass also introduced George Saylor, City of Manistee attorney as being a participant in today's meeting.

Chief Glass briefly outlined the current Blight Initiative and how that has been implemented by the Manistee City Police Department. The city has been divided into 8 sections with 1 officer assigned to a section. It is believed this will encourage residents to communicate with the officer in charge of the section in question and will also allow greater accessibility to an officer. At this time, the Blight Initiative has received good feedback from the community as it allows the community an opportunity to reach out to an officer and open a path of communication.

Discussion ensued as to the process in citing an individual for blight. Mention was made that education is the first avenue pursued and if no resolution is achieved through education, the process then moves forward with various measures, such as, letter to property owner, then a citation with the end stance always being to obtain compliance.

Three types of blight issues were identified:

1. Correctable issue. Takes some effort to comply but is most likely does not involve a financial burden for the property owner.
2. Structures: Will take effort to comply but oftentimes a financial outlay will be required by the property owner to come into compliance.
3. Businesses/Buildings/Homes that are not safe.

Discussion ensued as to how to possibly track progress on issues that involve financial involvement by the property owner. Other issues that proper owners may encounter were also discussed, i.e. finding contractors to do the repairs. It was introduced that perhaps a contractor list could be created and possibly these contractors might accept payments or extend the terms for payment due or offer reduced rates when performing blight repairs.

Discussion regarding the possibility of having students assist property owners with minor blight issues where thereby the students might possibly receive some sort of school credit for being involved.

Discussion ensued as to several properties on River Street and where they might be in the blight process. Attorney Saylor advised the owners have permits, obtained through the Historical District and/or the State of Michigan and legal research is being done regarding the State of Michigan permit(s) that have been issued. Mention was made if there is no valid permit, the possibility then exists to possibly pursue litigation.

Mention was made of the possibility of each committee member meeting, in person, the officer responsible for their section and it is hoped that can be achieved before the next Ad Hoc Blight Committee meeting.

Reference vacancies on the Ad Hoc Blight Committee, it was asked to forward names of anyone who might be interested in serving to Chief Glass. At this time, the committee plans to meet monthly and the meetings will be held remotely until further notice.

Meeting concluded at 1:42 p.m.

Bridget Guillen
Police Secretary