

AD HOC BLIGHT COMMITTEE MINUTES OF WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28, 2021

A meeting of the Ad Hoc Blight Committee was held on April 28, 2021. The meeting was held remotely via video conferencing with real-time messaging available. The meeting commenced at 11:03 a.m.

PRESENT: Mitch Deisch, Kathy Grabowski, Mary Russell, Chief Glass (Committee Facilitator), Kelly Greve (joined the meeting at 11:10 a.m.)

ABSENT: Andy Lee, Robert Hornkohl, Dennis Otto

OTHERS ATTENDING: None

DISCUSSION

The proposed resolution to present to City Council was discussed. Items # 1 – 6 are recommendations and are fine as listed on the resolution, with the exception of modifying item #4 so that item might be presented in a more positive manner. There exists the possibility of adding item #7, which would be a commitment to the resolution. A mission statement needs to be drafted for the resolution. The resolution will be presented to the City Manager. If approved by City Manager, the Ad Hoc Blight Committee would have fulfilled its purpose and the committee would cease to exist.

The Ad Hoc committee feels there will be value in creating a Standing Blight Committee once the Ad Hoc is dissolved. If this is to happen, a mission statement will need to be drafted to ensure City Council understands the reason why a standing committee should be adopted and what purpose the committee might serve. Discussion ensued on possible language for the mission statement.

Public blight versus private blight was discussed with conversation regarding public blight being present in regard to the Cherry Street islands in the roadway. It is the hope of the committee that the City of Manistee Department of Public Works department can address the island issue and maintain the islands appropriately. Also mentioned was possible removal of the islands if they cannot be maintained adequately.

Discussion centered around the possibility of a citizen's blight committee to allow for identifying blight issues. It is believed that 80– 90% of blight is private blight. This committee would benefit from a specific purpose and mission/vision statement. It is thought the citizen's committee might be able to assist with who is following up on blight and how often that is happening. A mission statement would be needed for such a committee and would need to be approved by City Council.

It was pointed out to that the Manistee City Police Department will continue to handle blight enforcement and has allocated the most resources ever toward blight enforcement. Questions surrounding assisting the police department in regard to enforcement were discussed, which led to discussion on the importance of citizen's groups being involved as government performs more effectively with engaged, active citizens.

The incoming city manager will maintain the focus on blight. City council continues to be adamant on blight issues. It is thought that interviews for the city manager position will be upcoming shortly.

MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

Can a citizen's committee be beneficial to the police department in providing assistance for blight issues?

Various ordinance definitions as regarding campers, RV's on city street/driveways, etc.

Manistee Proud, civic volunteer group, will assist with clean-up on a case-by-case determination as made by the command staff of the police department. Chief Glass informed committee of the City Attorney's decision that a volunteer group would be permitted to act on its own if that group wished to assist with blight efforts geared toward eradicating minor blight issues.

The house at 1018 High Street is slated for demolition; it is desired that more funds be set aside for demolishing blighted structures.

TOPICS TO BE ADDRESSED AT MAY 2021 MEETING

Complete the resolution that will be presented to City Manager, along with the mission statement.

Meeting adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

Submitted by:

Bridget Guillen
Police Secretary