

Roll Call

The Kalamazoo City Commission met as a Committee of the Whole on Monday, February 7, 2022 at 5:01 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers at City Hall.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Mayor David Anderson
Vice Mayor Don Cooney
Qianna Decker
Jeanne Hess
Stephanie Hoffman
Esteven Juarez
Chris Praedel

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

None

Also present were City Manager Jim Ritsema, City Attorney Clyde Robinson, and Deputy City Clerk Shelby Moss.

Public Comments

Next, when an opportunity was given for general citizen comments, the following people addressed the City Commission:

In-Person Comments

Jane Gosh, President and CEO of Discover Kalamazoo, invited the Commission to participate in the Destination Next survey and to attend the world premier presentation of John McGivern's film *Main Street* featuring Kalamazoo on April 12th. Ms. Gosh stated she would be making a more formal presentation about Discover Kalamazoo to the City Commission at the February 21st City Commission Business meeting.

Call-In Comments

None

2022-00

Presentation: Affordable Housing

Lee Adams, Director of Community Development at the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research; Emily Petz, Community Development Coordinator at the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research; Tiyan Williams, Continuum of Care Associate for the United Way of the Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region; and Community Planning & Economic Development Director Rebekah Kik delivered a presentation entitled *Committee of the Whole Work Session: Affordable Housing*. A copy of the slides from this presentation was filed with the papers for this meeting.

In response to questions from Commissioners, the presenters provided the following information:

- mid-priced housing units had the highest market demand.
- the W.E. Upjohn Institute (Upjohn Institute) team will be working with local shelter organizations to distribute the housing survey to the unhoused population. The unhoused population would receive more time to return surveys than housed participants.
- the housing survey will be distributed evenly by population throughout Kalamazoo County.

- social media platforms would be utilized to distribute the housing survey.
- the housing survey would be distributed to residents in Kalamazoo County, but survey results specific to the City could be extracted, as long as survey respondents answered the question regarding their jurisdiction.
- new home construction fell dramatically in 2021 due to increased construction costs, labor shortages, and a reduced amount of developable land.
- “Single Family Detached Housing” categorizes a traditional single-family home that may or may not have a garage attached, but it is not attached to another home.
- “Single Family Attached Housing” categorizes a duplex house or a unit with no more than four individual units within a structure.
- Kalamazoo County Government was funding the housing survey through a contract with the Upjohn Institute.
- the Upjohn Institute had been providing relevant housing data to the City throughout the survey process.
- the Kalamazoo County Continuum of Care program was working to update their *10-year Plan to End Homelessness* as required by The Department of Housing and Urban Development. The updated plan was tentatively scheduled to be completed by the end of 2022.
- the Kalamazoo County Continuum of Care program provides a space for communitywide collaboration from all housing partners because all perspectives were important when developing a housing plan to meet the community’s needs.
- the Kalamazoo County Continuum of Care was held accountable by a board, team members, partners, and community residents.
- in reference to slide 10, individuals who identified as white, or Hispanic were categorized as white. When collecting demographic information from individuals experiencing homelessness the questions of race and ethnicity were asked separately.
- cultural competency and racial equity were embedded in the Continuum of Care programs.
- the Kalamazoo County Continuum of Care Board was a diverse team; positions would be opening up soon, and attention would continue to be paid to having a diverse board.
- information would be provided at a later date regarding the total population of Black or African Americans in Kalamazoo County vs. the 56% of Black or African Americans identified on slide 9 of the presentation.
- in reference to slide 8, the data described individuals receiving services from providers that had the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

2022-00

Presentation: Affordable Housing (cont’d)

2022-00

Presentation: Affordable Housing (cont'd)

- more information on how to access the HMIS system was being provided to other agencies providing services to those experiencing homelessness.
- the City's 2022 housing development budget included almost 3.5 million dollars for new housing. The money was allocated to specific projects within the City. The City was not directly building new housing but worked with developers and organizations such as Kalamazoo Neighborhood Services, Community Homeworks, and Habitat for Humanity.
- the City used budget dollars and taxing strategies to assist developers and encourage their affordable housing projects.
- the City's housing budget included costs for building 10 new houses in 2022, with construction starting in April.

Commissioner Hoffman requested that reparations for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) be considered as part of the housing strategies and an intentional commitment be made to work with local shelters to reach the unhoused population with the housing survey.

Commissioner Hoffman, Executive Director for Open Doors Kalamazoo, Commissioner Praedel, Executive Director for Community Homeworks, and Mayor Anderson, Director of Housing and Facilities at Integrated Services of Kalamazoo each spoke regarding housing challenges and strategies from the perspective of the organizations they represent.

City Manager Ritsema announced the City Commission would continue the conversation of affordable housing at their upcoming retreat on Saturday, February 19th.

Commissioner Comments

Next an opportunity was given for comments from City Commissioners.

Commissioner Decker expressed her excitement for the affordable housing work in the City, and she requested the housing survey be provided in Spanish.

Vice Mayor Cooney thanked his fellow Commissioners for their presentations and perspectives. Vice Mayor Cooney stated the current housing system was broken, and the Commission needed to advocate for long term economic and political solutions to housing.

Commissioner Praedel stated the Commission had an opportunity to think outside the typical housing system and create solutions that address the needs of the community.

Commissioner Juarez highlighted the need to create housing strategies that were creative and strategic with targeted approaches that gave honor to different cultures in the community.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Shelby Moss
Deputy City Clerk

Approved by the City Commission on: _____

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