

Roll Call

The Kalamazoo City Commission met as a Committee of the Whole on Tuesday, January 17, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers at City Hall.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Vice Mayor Don Cooney

Also present were City Manager Jim Ritsema, City Attorney Clyde Robinson, and City Clerk Scott Borling.

Commissioners Excused

Commissioner Hess, seconded by Commissioner Hoffman, moved to excuse the absence of Vice Mayor Cooney. With a voice vote the motion passed.

Public Comments

When an opportunity was given for general public comments, the following people addressed the City Commission:

In Person

Tobi Hanah-Davies, City resident, thanked the City for included housing in the 2023 budget in a significant way, and she remarked the City had done everything within its ability to include equity in the way housing was funded.

Call In

None

2023-03-01

Presentation on
 Housing Development
 Projects

Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) Director Antonio Mitchell and Housing Development Supervisor Sharilyn Parsons delivered a presentation entitled *Housing Development*. A copy of the slides from this presentation was filed with the papers for the meeting.

In response to questions and comments from City Commissioners, Director Mitchell and Housing Development Supervisor Parson provided the following information:

- CPED has been collaborating with the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety (KDPS), the Parks and Recreation Department, and the Public Services Department to address needs in the neighborhoods. Speed bumps are an example of an issue where departments came together to listen to residents and find solutions.
- the Northside Neighborhood was an example of a declining neighborhood, and the Arcadia Neighborhood was an example of a growing neighborhood.
- the pre-approved house plans will be completed in 2023. These plans will help with infill housing and with the vacant lots owned by the Kalamazoo County Land Bank.

- incomes under 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI) and incomes under 80% of AMI both qualify as “low income,” but the housing rules operate differently for different levels.
- the proposed 2023 budget for CPED included enough funding, but staff would always like more. There was always a resource gap, which is why the City leveraged its funding through incentives. It was important to remember the development timeline was an 18 to 36-month process.
- the City works with approximately 50 developers and was trying to help more small contractors enter the market.
- with the home-share concept in mind, the City’s pre-approved housing plans are being designed to include additional units already built-in.
- regarding out-of-state investors that come in and acquire foreclosed properties, the City has first right of refusal with foreclosed properties, and staff is starting to look at those properties.
- regarding the idea that county housing dollars should be spent outside the City, the City has the greatest need in the county’s housing plan.
- focusing the City’s housing efforts on one income level would hurt the larger housing market in a neighborhood.
- the numbers in the presentation for “preservation” included some of the lead abatement grants. The \$65,000 cost for lead abatement is correct.
- private investment was an indicator of a healthy housing market.
- the City did not partner with Habitat for Humanity in 2021 or 2022.

Commissioner Decker expressed support for the City Brownfield program and the strategy of preserving existing housing stock. Commissioner Decker expressed hope that the City’s incentives would bring more housing for people at 60% of AMI or lower.

Mayor Anderson stated the City sometimes made development harder with inefficient processes and additional requirements, like Natural Features Protection standards. Mayor Anderson noted the best funding leverage for low-income housing was the Low-Income Tax Credits offered by the state.

An opportunity was given for general comments from City Commissioners, but no comments were offered.

The meeting adjourned at 6:16 p.m.

Scott A. Borling
City Clerk

Approved by the City Commission on: _____

2023-03-01

Presentation on
Housing Development
Projects (cont’d)

Commissioner
Comments

Adjournment