

	A regular work session of the Kalamazoo City Commission was held on Monday, September 25, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. in the Community Room at City Hall.
Roll Call	COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Vice Mayor Don Cooney David Anderson Erin Knott Matt Milcarek Shannon Sykes Jack Urban COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Mayor Bobby J. Hopewell* Also present were City Manager Jim Ritsema, City Attorney Clyde Robinson, and City Clerk Scott Borling.
Commissioners Excused	Commissioner Urban, seconded by Commissioner Sykes, moved to excuse the absence of Mayor Hopewell. With a voice vote the motion passed.
Discussion Items	Discussion items were considered next.
Discussion of Economic Development and Affordable Housing	The following staff members delivered a PowerPoint presentation entitled <i>Economic Development and Affordable Housing, September 25, 2017</i>: - City Manager Jim Ritsema reviewed the desired meeting outputs. - Community Planning and Development Director Rebekah Kik provided an overview of the action items from Imagine Kalamazoo 2025 (IK2025) that were related to economic development and housing. - Andrew Haan, Executive Director of Downtown Kalamazoo, Inc., discussed the Urban Grown Initiative and reviewed the recent Downtown Retail Market Analysis. *Mayor Hopewell arrived at 6:14 p.m. - Economic Development Director Jerome Kisscorni, provided introductory remarks on the City's efforts to work with small, neighborhood businesses. - Economic Development Coordinator Ryan Simpson and Neighborhood Development and Special Projects Coordinator Dwayne Powell, Jr. reviewed the proposed tools available through a revitalized Economic Opportunity Fund, the areas targeted for strategic investment, and the forms of financial assistance that could be made available. - Assistant City Manager Laura Lam presented an opportunity for the City to partner with the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) for a pilot program that would provide matching funds to address economic development and housing issues in the City.

- Denise Scott, LISC Executive Vice President for Programs, expressed a commitment from LISC to provide 2:1 matching funds through its Catalyzing Economic Activity Initiative to help the City reach its economic development goals. Ms. Scott commented on the connection between affordable housing and economic development.
- Dorla Bonner, Community Development Manager, discussed the challenges and opportunities regarding affordable housing in the City.

Discussion of
Economic
Development and
Affordable Housing
(cont'd)

A copy of the presentation slides was filed with the paperwork for this meeting.

In response to a question from Mayor Hopewell, Mr. Powell explained that "fluidity" referred to connecting with college students to retain their talent in Kalamazoo once they graduated.

In response to a question from Commissioner Urban, Mr. Powell explained the small business accelerator/incubator would be similar to One Place for non-profits, but it would be more vigorous with partnerships and best practices. Mr. Powell stated the first step for the small business accelerator would be a feasibility study, which would suggest where this entity should reside and how it should be supported.

In response to a question from Commissioner Sykes, Mr. Powell clarified the intent of the small business accelerator to focus on businesses within neighborhoods and neighborhood entrepreneurs.

In response to a question from Commissioner Urban, Ms. Scott acknowledged that subsidies were necessary to create affordable housing, and she reported LISC was looking at different housing models and sources for subsidies. Ms. Scott suggested that subsidies might come from the City or might be achieved through reducing the cost of capital.

In response to a question from Commissioner Anderson, Ms. Scott indicated she would continue to be the City's point-of-contact with the national LISC organization.

Commissioner Milcarek cautioned that workforce development in the skilled trades was a complex task, especially when trying to connect it with other economic development goals.

Commissioner Urban suggested retirees as a resource for workforce development.

In response to a question from Commissioner Knott, City Manager Ritsema stated the City was working with LISC to develop a Memorandum of Understanding, which would be followed by a fully developed agreement. City Manager Ritsema indicated the work with LISC, as well as the other economic development and affordable housing projects, would show up in departmental budget proposals and requests for Foundation for Excellence (FFE) funding.

Discussion of Economic Development and Affordable Housing (cont'd)	City Manager Ritsema reviewed the proposed next steps and asked for feedback. Commissioner Sykes thanked City Manager Ritsema and City staff for their presentations. Commissioner Sykes stated the City Commission had heard what they needed to hear, and she expressed excitement about the initiatives that were described. Vice Mayor Cooney remarked on the scope of the work to be done and the need to set priorities. Commissioner Urban expressed concern that the City would overpromise and under deliver on its economic development and affordable housing initiatives. Commissioner Urban recommended these projects be implemented as limited-scale pilots and then expanded. In response to a question from Commissioner Milcarek, Mr. Haan clarified that his reference to the "greater downtown" was a reference to the study area in the Downtown Retail Market Analysis.
Citizen Comments	When an opportunity was given for general citizen comments, the following people addressed the City Commission: Annie Sprague, City resident, spoke about past affordable housing policies and practices that were discriminatory towards black people, and she urged the City to implement policies that would ensure equal access to affordable housing.
City Commissioner Comments	Next, an opportunity was given for miscellaneous comments and concerns of City Commissioners. Commissioner Milcarek spoke about disparities in the community and questioned how the City could break up segregated housing pattern in Kalamazoo. Commissioner Milcarek thanked LISC for its commitment to Kalamazoo and noted the organization usually worked in larger cities. Commissioner Urban remarked on the City's successful use of Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds and stated Kalamazoo was mature and creative enough to face the problem of "two Kalamazoo's." Commissioner Knott thanked Ms. Scott for coming and remarked on the benefits of having a LISC office in the community. Commissioner Knott stated she was eager for the work to begin. Vice Mayor Cooney thanked Kalamazoo County Treasurer Mary Balkema for her work as the head of the Kalamazoo Land Bank. Vice Mayor Cooney urged people to contact their federal legislators regarding a healthcare bill being considered by Congress. Mayor Hopewell suggested the City's tracking and reporting of FFE/IK2025 goals and results include equity and equality measures. Mayor Hopewell offered that the City might need external assistance to ensure its organizational structures and culture did not have a negative impact on its equity goals.

In response to Mayor Hopewell, City Manager Ritsema indicated staff were working to implement dashboard and reporting software, both for FFE projects and the City's open data initiative. City Manager Ritsema indicated these tools would be rolled out by the end of the year. City Manager Ritsema acknowledged the existence of high expectations and thanked staff for their creative work. City Manager Ritsema also expressed appreciation to LISC for choosing to work with Kalamazoo.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott A. Borling
City Clerk

For City Commission approval on October 2, 2017

Approved by: _____
Bobby J. Hopewell, Mayor
Dated: October 2, 2017

City Commissioner
Comments (cont'd)

Adjournment