

Roll Call

The Kalamazoo City Commission met as a Committee of the Whole on Monday, April 19, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. This meeting was held as an electronic meeting under the authority of the Michigan Open Meetings Act (PA 267 of 1976) as amended by PA 254 of 2020.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Mayor David Anderson
Vice Mayor Patrese Griffin
Eric Cunningham
Jeanne Hess
Erin Knott
Chris Praedel
Jack Urban

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

None

All members present indicated they were physically located in the City of Kalamazoo.

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

Public Comments

Next, an opportunity was given for general public comments, but no comments were offered.

Review of Items on
Upcoming City
Commission Agendas

Deputy City Manager Chamberlain reviewed items for upcoming City Commission meeting agendas, including the public hearing items on the agenda for the 7:00 business meeting and the following topics for future Committee of the Whole meetings: elections; diversity, equity, and inclusion; the use of federal stimulus funds; and Public Safety.

2021-00
Retreat Follow-Up:
Housing

City Manager Ritsema provided introductory remarks for a discussion about housing as a follow-up to the City Commission retreat on March 13th.

The following staff delivered a presentation entitled *Community Investment in the City of Kalamazoo*: Community Planning and Economic Development Director Rebekah Kik, Community Investment Manager Antonio Mitchell, Housing Development Project Coordinator Sharilyn Parsons; Community Development Compliance Specialist Chris Raschke, City Planner Christina Anderson, and Deputy City Manager Laura Lam. A copy of the slides from this presentation was filed with the papers for this meeting.

Commissioner Praedel recommended that people talk with “T” at Kalamazoo Neighborhood Housing Services if they had questions about lead safety in the home. Commissioner Praedel spoke about the importance of providing assistance to people who needed to clear up a clouded title on their property.

In response to questions from Commissioner Praedel, City Planner Anderson stated both attached and detached Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU’s) were allowed in every zoning district. Ms. Parsons stated the City was encouraging ADU’s wherever the lot size would support it. Ms. Parsons stated ADU’s were a great opportunity for infill lots to increase density and to enable wealth-building. Mr. Mitchell stated the City was planning to educate the community about ADU’s. Regarding the project review and assistance meetings, Ms. Parsons stated interested people needed to sign-up for these meetings to ensure there was enough

time to discuss everyone's projects and to make sure the right staff were there to answer participants' questions. Regarding title clearing, Ms. Parsons indicated the City would continue to provide clearing services for clouded titles. Ms. Parsons stated there was a need to fast track these services.

In response to questions from Vice Mayor Griffin, Director Kik stated unrestricted funds would be especially helpful for critical repairs and home rehabilitations – areas where the regulations on funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development were holding the City back. Regarding policies, Director Kik stated Chicago had an affordable residence ordinance that required developers of multi-unit housing projects to set aside a certain percentage of units as affordable. Director Kik indicated she was exploring this ordinance as a potential ordinance or incentive policy for Kalamazoo.

In response to a question from Commissioner Urban, Mayor Anderson indicated the City was working with the Kalamazoo County Continuum of Care (CoC) to address the gap between immediate housing needs and long term, permanent housing solutions.

Deputy City Manager Lam explained the City needed location, capacity, and resources to address housing needs. Deputy City Manager Lam reported staff were looking for locations for both short- and long-term housing solutions. Deputy City Manager Lam indicated there was a sense of urgency with this work, but she noted there was a need to balance immediate housing needs with the need for long term sustainable housing.

Mayor Anderson stated there were a lot of good things happening in the City of Kalamazoo with regard to housing, and he thanked Mr. Mitchell for his leadership.

In response to a question from Mayor Anderson, City Planner Anderson stated the Northside rezoning project would create appropriate zoning for a large area in the neighborhood that was zoned manufacturing but had mostly residential and commercial uses. City Planner Anderson noted one of the proposed rezonings on the business meeting agenda was a parcel in this area. City Planner Anderson stated the other proposed rezoning was being done to align the zoning of two adjacent parcels on Ampersee Avenue and Riverview Drive.

City Manager Ritsema reported he was working with Demarra West to schedule some mini retreats on various topics as follow-ups to the City Commission retreat in March. City Manager Ritsema indicated one of the mini retreats would be a discussion around the definition of success for the housing focus area for 2022.

Next an opportunity was given for comments from City Commissioners.

Commissioner Hess thanked CPED staff for their work.

The meeting adjourned at 6:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott A. Borling
City Clerk

2021-00

Retreat Follow-Up:
Housing (cont'd)

Commissioner
Comments

Adjournment

For City Commission approval on May 3, 2021

Approved by:

David F. Anderson, Mayor

Dated: May 3, 2021

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