



City of Belleville
Residential and Commercial
Development Services Committee

Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 20, 2021

Belleville City Hall
101 South Illinois Street
VIA TELEPHONIC CONFERENCING

In Attendance:

Members:

Alderman Joe Hazel (Chairman), Ward 1	Present
Alderman Carmen Duco, Ward 2	Present
Alderman Scott Ferguson, Ward 3	Present
Alderman Raffi Ovia, Ward 4	Present
Alderman Roger Barfield, Ward 8	Present
Citizen Member Tricia Tialdo	Excused

Staff:

Anissa McCaskill, Director of Residential and Commercial Development Services
Matt Eiskant, Assistant Chief of Police

Guests:

Alderman Kent Randle, Ward 3
Treasurer Dean Hardt

I. Call to Order

Chairman Hazel called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

II. Roll Call of Members/Staff

Roll Call of members was taken. Attendance was as provided above.

III. Approval of the Minutes

Motion was made by Alderman Ferguson and seconded by Alderman Ovia to approve the minutes of the December 22, 2020 meeting. Upon roll call vote, the minutes were unanimously approved.

IV. Emergency procedures and departmental update

Chair Hazel reminded everyone to practice safety precautions wherever they might be.

V. Public Participation - None

VI. Old Business

A. Update on the 2020 Demolitions

RCDS Director Annissa McCaskill advised the 20 properties approved via the DCEO grant were successfully demolished by the end of December. In total the City demolished an additional 5 properties for a total of 25 for the year. She further advised that a team approach is being taken involving the City Clerk, the Assistant City Attorney and RCDS staff to create the 2021 demolition list. Chairman Hazel asked where the City is with the new list? Ms. McCaskill advised that staff started review of possible properties for the current year demolition following the December RCDS Committee meeting. A large part of the process is establishing properties' legal status. Chair Hazel asked that Committee members and guest utilize Report A Concern via the City's website. Alderman Randle asked if at some point, Staff can provide an update of the properties on the Aldermanic Vacant Property list form 2016. Additionally, he asked if the property mentioned in Ms. McCaskill's remarks was an address on Berkley that he had previously provided. She advised that it was, and that the insurance adjuster had advised it is still in claims and that they were waiting for action by the mortgage company.

B. Staffing of RCDS Department

Ms. McCaskill advised that as of the date of the meeting, the RCDS Department is fully staffed. A new Planner/GIS Manager (Emma Oldehoeft) started in November, around the same time, the part-time electrical inspector (Ed Escobedo) transitioned to being a full-time employee. Additionally, the City Council approved hire of Steve Thouvenot as Building Commissioner the previous evening and Mr. Thouvenot's first day was the day of the RCDS meeting. She gave an overview of his first day's activities, as well as how he will step into his position. Alderman Randle asked if it was possible to make an overlay map of Public Works' five region street map on the Ward Map.

C. Aldermanic Vacant Housing List

Alderman Ovian asked if aldermen who were elected after the creation of the original list had submitted additional properties. Ms. McCaskill stated it was her understanding that the list provided was the original list as provided to former Health and Housing Staff. No additional properties were added as the list was intended to be a one (1) year pilot. She explained that for the most part, several of the properties were addressed via the existing enforcement process, with several having current building permits. There was discussion amongst the Committee regarding whether the intention of the list was to continue to add properties versus to "work" the existing list and then evaluate; utilization of the Report of Concern tool on the website; the ability for refurbishment of list (and other properties of concern). Discussion shifted to the Vacant Housing Ordinance and its enforcement as it relates to the 2018 list. Ms. McCaskill again advised that the original list was created to test the Ordinance, but most were addressed via existing enforcement process. She stated that if the if the Committee decided to do so, a new list could be created. She reminded the Committee per the Ordinance, the building commissioner is tasked with making the determination if buildings are "vacant," which can be an overwhelming task according to the former building commissioner as only one individual has that responsibility.

Chair Hazel stated the Committee needed to decide as to whether the pilot would be continued or if it will be presented to Council as an addition to the Housing Ordinance. He also addressed that the pilot is in addition to the Report of Concern process currently being utilized. Decisions need to be made regarding whether a new program/pilot is necessary or if a new ordinance is needed. These decisions need to be framed taking into consideration the upcoming election, possible changes to council/staff and the manpower necessary for enforcement. Alderman Ovia stated that per his reading of the Ordinance, the Building Commissioner could task the housing inspectors with the inspections as outlined in the Vacant Housing Ordinance. McCaskill advised that the Housing Inspectors do not have the technical construction background to make such determinations and explained what type of inspections they are trained to do. Alderman Ovia asked why we are employing them if they cannot do a regular housing inspection. Ms. McCaskill explained that if there is an issue outside of what Housing Inspectors are trained to manage, they promote it to the Building Commissioner due to his/her technical expertise. Alderman Ovia asked if the Housing Inspectors could make the determination if a property was vacant. Ms. McCaskill reminded that the Ordinance differentiates between a property being vacant and being empty, which is currently within their area of expertise; if the Committee determines that is the interpretation desired, that can be discussed.

Motions and Discussion:

Alderman Scott Ferguson stated that based upon what he has heard in the current and previous discussions, the Ordinance and pilot are not working. He made a motion to end the pilot program and the Vacant Housing Ordinance and encourage utilization of Report of Concern. Alderman Hazel seconded the motion. During discussion Chairman Randle asked that disposition be given to the Alderman who provided properties for the list. He asked that the list be updated to show what has happened to the properties since it was created. Alderman Hazel agreed a reasonable request, he mentioned that perhaps the pilot program could be sunset, but the properties could still be followed through the existing enforcement process. Director McCaskill advised that she could provide what was requested as well as current pictures. Roll call vote: Duco yes; Ferguson yes Alderman Ovia asked for clarification as to what was being motioned. Alderman Hazel stated the vote was to allow the pilot to expire. Alderman Ovia asked if the vote could be to table instead. He stated his vote was "no" as presented due to the amount of work that had been done thus far. Chair Hazel asked if he was instead making a motion to table to a later day. Alderman Ovia stated that was correct. Alderman Barfield seconded the motion to table. Chair Hazel asked if the motion was to table indefinitely or by a finite date. Alderman Ovia stated he preferred that the discussion be tabled until the next meeting. Alderman Ferguson asked if motions could be amended. Chair Hazel said they can be if the vote for the amendment is approved. Alderman Barfield asked if they could vote to table the discussion for a period of 2-3 months, which would give the new Building Commissioner enough time to become acclimated to the position. Alderman Ovia stated he had no objection to that. Chair Hazel asked if they could table discussion until the April meeting. Alderman Ovia asked if there would be a Committee meeting. Ms. McCaskill advised that if the Committee tabled until April, that would mean it was creating an agenda item for that meeting. Alderman Ovia stated that April would allow for each alderman to provide new properties for a pilot list. Ms. McCaskill asked for clarification as to whether the discussion for April was dispensation of the existing list or a new list to be created. Alderman Ovia

stated that he is asking for each alderman to be contacted and ask if the properties they provided in 2018 is current and allow them to substitute if necessary. Alderman Hazel restated the original motion to sunset the pilot list and the amendment. Alderman Ferguson asked if perhaps the discussion should be tabled to May or June. Chair Hazel asked Alderman Ovian if he wanted to rescind his amendment to allow Alderman Hazel to make a new motion. Alderman Ovian advised that he is fine with tabling until May, however, he wants to see the list prior to the meeting. Chair Hazel attempted to clarify that the pilot is not being eliminated. Ms. McCaskill asked for clarification as to what staff is to have prepared: a new list provided by aldermen or the dispensation of the existing list. advised that to all allow any new aldermen provide a new list for discussion. Alderman Ovian stated it should be a new list. He stated it is not hard nor “rocket science.” Alderman Hazel stated he would like to move the discussion back to Alderman Ferguson’s motion.

Alderman Ferguson made a motion to table discussion until June. The motion was seconded by Alderman Barfield.

Roll Call Vote:

- Duco – Aye
- Ferguson – Aye
- Ovian – Aye *provided there is a current list.
- Barfield – Aye
- Hazel – Aye

VII. New Business – None

VIII. Other business to come before the Committee – None.

IX. Adjourn – Motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Ovian. It was seconded by Alderman Ferguson. By roll call vote, the motion carried, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:47pm.

Joe Hazel, Chairman
Alderman, Ward 1

Date