

**CITY OF CHARLOTTE**

**AD HOC CODE ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE**

**April 22, 2021 at 7pm**

**PRESENT:**

Committee Members: Daryl Baker, Christopher Lake, Ann Sovey, Jo Vanderstelt, Tamra Weissenborn, and ex-officio member Bryan Myrkle. All reported their remote meeting location as being in the City of Charlotte, County of Eaton and State of Michigan. Staff: Manager LaPere

**APPROVE AGENDA:**

Motion by Baker, second by Weissenborn, to approve the agenda as published.

Carried. 5 Yes. 0 No. 0 Absent.

**APPROVE MINUTES:**

Motion by Weissenborn, second by Lake, to approve the minutes as submitted.

Carried. 5 Yes. 0 No. 0 Absent.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Priorities**

Sovey provided a synopsis of the conversation from the prior meetings and noted there was consensus that trash or debris, abandoned or junk vehicles, and unsafe buildings were common areas of concern. Members discussed the priorities for recommendation to Council. Vanderstelt noted that education was a key priority. Weissenborn concurred that community outreach and education was a priority. She also added that lawn maintenance, including grass and shrubs was another area of concern along with household furniture left on porches or curbs. Baker agreed that education and awareness was top priority. Myrkle summarized the complaints received were 1) unmowed lawns or junk vehicles, and 2) animals including dogs and non-domestic animals or structural integrity of building.

Baker added that unkempt yards attract wildlife including snakes, raccoons, etc. which can be a public nuisance. He also noted that commercial properties ought to be included in the discussion and provided an example of a property with missing windows and harboring wildlife. Lake agreed that commercial properties should be held to the same standards of property maintenance. He also added that ongoing construction projects can be a nuisance to the neighborhood and should be encouraged to be completed in a timely manner. Members discussed a few commercial sites in town where there has not been ongoing

maintenance of parking areas, excessive vehicle storage, and other maintenance concerns. There was consensus that commercial properties should be included in improved enforcement activity.

### **B. Rental Properties**

Discussion was held regarding registration of residential rental units and inspections of the properties as part of the process. Lake inquired as to whether the tenant or owner is responsible for the maintenance of the property and who is subject to penalties. Myrkle responded that the property owner is responsible and there are some landlords who respond quickly to complaints and others who do not. Sovey wondered whether rental properties were different from an owner-occupied property. Vanderstelt agreed with the idea of registration but did not feel interior inspections ought to be a part of the licensing process. Baker stated that he felt a safety inspection was appropriate and noted there may be concerns for the tenants or if there are elderly occupants in unsafe living conditions. Weissenborn added that she viewed a rental property as a business and the inspection would protect the safety and health of the residents.

### **C. Staffing Recommendations**

The members reached consensus that a full-time person was warranted given the scope of enforcement desired. Lake inquired whether Captain Sloan could serve as back-up enforcement to a dedicated person. Weissenborn and Sovey agreed that community outreach and education would be time-consuming and require hiring a dedicated staff person. Vanderstelt added that having a dedicated person would ensure accountability and part time staff is not adequate. Weissenborn agreed and added that follow-through was essential to be effective

There was discussion about whether to hire a city-staff person or contract out for service and how other communities provide code enforcement. Myrkle commented that a contract employee may be more costly than a city-employee. He noted that a full-time city employee would be eligible for fringe benefits like health insurance that may exceed the city's budget for this work and part-time may be the only feasible option given the economic condition of the city. Vanderstelt emphasized that the position ought to be a dedicated code enforcement official, regardless of whether he/she is full time or part time. Staff will research other communities and information regarding average pay for code enforcement.

A draft document summarizing the recommendations to Council would be prepared and distributed to the members for review ahead of the next meeting.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

None.

### **MEMBER COMMENTS:**

There was consensus that the conversation was beneficial and productive.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion by Vanderstelt, second by Lake to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Carried. 5 Yes. 0 No. 0 Absent.

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Chairperson Sovey