



CITY OF TOPEKA

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

CITY COUNCIL
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Date: October 23, 2024

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Location: 1st Floor Conference Room; Cyrus K. Holliday Building 620 SE Madison
(*virtual attendance option also available*)

Committee members present: Councilmembers Karen Hiller (Chair), Christina Valdivia-Alcalá, David Banks, and Spencer Duncan

City staff present: Property Maintenance Director/Code John Schardine, Planning and Development Director Rhiannon Friedman, Public Relations Specialist Taylor Bugg, Community Engagement Director Monique Glaude', City Attorney Amanda Stanley, Senior Attorney Mathew Mullen, Budget Manager Josh McAnarney, Changing our Culture Program Administrator Nicole Stovall.

Non-Staff: Shawnee County Health Department Craig Barnes; Teresa Fisher, Healthy Neighborhoods Board member Danielle Twemlow.

Call to Order

Committee Chair Karen Hiller called the meeting to order at 10:00am. She introduced staff and committee members.

Approval of April 16, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá made a motion to approve the minutes. Committee member Banks seconded. Approved 3-0-0.

Action Item: Pest Elimination Amendments

Committee Chair Karen Hiller spoke concerning pest elimination responsibilities set forth in the 2012 International Property Maintenance Code, retaining the definition of the Pest Elimination in Section 202 of said code and amending 8.60.170 of the Topeka Municipal Code. Hiller added that Topeka's adopted version of the International Property Maintenance Code is unclear about what happens and who is responsible in the case where multiple units are infested in a multifamily property.

Committee member Christina Valdivia-Alcalá expressed her appreciation for the work of Committee Chair Karen Hiller has done on the Pest Elimination Amendment. She stated there is an urgency for this amendment to help families and will enable the City of Topeka to take action for necessary code compliance.

MOTION: Committee member Christina Valdivia-Alcalá made a motion to approve the

Resolution for pest elimination responsibilities for the Topeka Municipal Code and proceed for action at the Governing Body meeting November 12, 2024. Committee member Banks seconded. Approved 3-0-0.

Other Items:

Committee Chair Hiller gave several updates below:

Changing Our Culture of Property Maintenance Committee: Meetings are two times per month. Nicole Stovall is the new Project Manager. She will be working to set Performance Measurers for the Master Plan. The next Public Health & Safety Committee meeting is on November 20, 2024, and the performance data report will be presented.

Committee Chair Hiller requested Property Maintenance Division Director John Schardine share the calendar for International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC) at the November meeting. Schardine added he is asking for assistance from Shawnee County Landlord Association and President of Oakland Neighborhood (NIA) to help review the requested changes and adoptions. He added possibly creating an outside independent review board within the next 6 months. Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá questioned how many people would be on the Review Board. John Schardine responded 3- 4 members.

Committee Chair Hiller asked that John Schardine and Fire Marshall Alan Stahl have report available regarding apartment inspections for November 20, 2024.

Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá requested a report from Housing and Credit Counseling, Inc (HCCI). She added the importance to end the year with highlights from the program. Committee Chair Hiller replied that it is possible and spoke to getting the data that is being collected in terms of how many people HCCI has seen, related to our retaliation and Code Compliance processes, and getting details on how many have gone to Kansas Legal Services.

Mowing and vegetation: Phone calls have gone down this summer. Code Compliance is fully staffed which could result in increased citations.

Retaliatory Evictions: Continuing to observe the needs for tenants. The Communications Department is working to have a video for networking to help people. She also spoke to the retaliation for a Contract for deed and reported the City of Topeka legal staff is actively reviewing the standards to have a recommendation for an update.

Committee member Valdivia-Alcala expressed the importance to have collaboration with Topeka Habitat for Humanity. She also added the value with Shawnee County and the State of Kansas to be involved.

Neighborhood Profiles: Goal is to have a positive profile of the organized neighborhoods.

Vacant Properties: Land Bank Committee and the Planning and Development Department are working on issues, two items passed for redevelopment, updates with allowable density, and setbacks. She added The Neighborhood Revitalization Program has been renewed for 3 years.

Property Maintenance Records: Property Maintenance and the Fire Department are working with Tyler Technologies to prepare an inventory list of, vacant properties and structures. There will be a Master database to include contact and address information, from the Police, Fire, and Public Works Departments to allow staff to see all property cases. Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá stated the importance of Records Retention and that the information will need to remain in the system.

Website and handouts: Are up to date. Spanish translation will be available. Resource packets will be available online at the City of Topeka Changing Our Culture of Property Maintenance website or as a handout.

Timberlee Apartments: Committee Chair Hiller thanked Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá for her work and advocacy with the recent actions with Timberlee Apartments. Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá thanked U.S. Senator Jerry Moran for his help at the State of Kansas and Washington D.C. level.

John Schardine shared that there have been issues similar at Highland Park Apartments. The Property Maintenance Department has been very aggressive addressing issues due to what was learned from the Timberlee Apartments. He added that crime has dropped 52% within forty-five days. Committee Member Banks thanked John Schardine for all his work Highland Park area.

Planning Director Rhiannon Friedman spoke to the need to have a Conditional Use Permit for a zoned residential property that sits between two residential lots; in the case there was a fire that a structure will need to be demolished. Committee member Banks supports a parking lot vs having property that has weeds and grass.

Committee member Spencer Duncan joined meeting.

Presentation Focusing on Social Determinants of Health

Craig Barnes Division Manager Shawnee County Health Department spoke to the presentation:

- Public Health Approach: Surveillance. Risk Factor Identification. Intervention Evaluation and Implementation.
- Public Health Wheel: Assessment; Monitor Health, Diagnose and Investigate. Policy Development; Inform, Educate, Empower. Mobilize Community Partnership and Develop Policies. Assurance; Enforce Laws. Link to/Provide Care. Assure Competent Workforce. Evaluate.

- Social Determinants of Health: Health Care Access and Quality, Neighborhood and Built Environment, Social and Community Context, Economic Stability, and Education Access and Quality.
- New publication of Community Health Needs Assessment was distributed to the committee.
- Collaboration in Public Health for a Healthy Community; Emergency, Management and Public Safety, Recreational and Natural Resources, Public Health Agencies, Environmental Health, Planning and Community Development, Non-Governmental Organizations, Business Community, Health Care Delivery System, Behavioral Health and Social Services
- Community Health priority's: 1) Behavioral Health which includes both mental health and substance misuse. 2) Neighborhood Safety and Housing which is a new one for us. 3) Food Security making sure community has access to healthy foods. 4) Health Equity which focuses on STI rates, infant mortality, maternal, child health and obesity rates.

Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá supports that the communication continue and suggests the entire Governing Body have a presentation from Shawnee County Health Department. She also suggested that there should be more conversation with the Shawnee County, Kansas Delegation. There was a request to have the presentation from SNCO Health Department go to the new Topeka Police Chief once selected.

Danielle Twemlow Community Action Team Chair provided information on the infant mortality rate in Shawnee County is 7.9 as of August 2024. There is a significant difference between African American babies dying at 2.5 times the rate as white babies.

Committee member Spencer Duncan spoke to the importance of not duplicating resources and giving those groups information to know where they can specifically give resources.

Teresa Fisher Director Shawnee County Health Department spoke to new partnership with the City of Topeka and looks forward to continuing to work together for public community health.

Chairwoman Hiller adjourned the meeting at 11:05am.

This meeting can be viewed online at: <https://youtu.be/L8-IVZ-dR3g>