



CITY OF TOPEKA

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

CITY COUNCIL
City Hall, 215 SE 7th Street, Suite 255
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Date: November 20, 2024

Time: 9:30a.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 (Zoom)

Council members present: Councilmember Marcus Miller (Zoom)

City staff present: Property Maintenance Director John Schardine, Public Relations Specialist Taylor Bugg, Community Engagement Director Monique Glaude', Senior Attorney Mathew Mullen, Changing our Culture Program Administrator Nicole Stovall, Senior Paralegal Bonnie Williams, Community Engagement Program Coordinator Amanda Cisneros, Fire Marshall Alan Stahl, and Director of Communications & Media Relations Dan Garrett

Call to Order

Committee Chair Karen Hiller called the meeting to order at 9:30 am. Committee members were introduced.

Approval of October 23, 2024 Meeting Minutes and November 7, 2024 Special Meeting

Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá made a motion to approve the minutes. Committee member Banks seconded. Approved 4-0-0.

Updates:

- a) **Pest Elimination – Implementation:** Committee Chair Hiller spoke that the Ordinance was passed at the Governing Body meeting on November 12, 2024. Property Maintenance Director John Schardine shared with the City of Topeka Legal Department, once he has a publish date and it's published, it will be implemented into policy. Committee Member Valdivia-Alcalá requested that when it does take effect that the full Committee along with the entire Governing Body is notified.
- b) **Website and Handouts:** Changing our Culture Program Administrator Nicole Stovall confirmed that the Spanish version fliers are complete. Website will be

updated in the next couple weeks and once complete the Governing Body will be notified.

- c) **Retaliation Assistance:** Committee Chair Hiller shared there are issues with people being able to access the resources. Changing our Culture Program Administrator Nicole Stovall advised that the focus is to get time sensitive constituents to Housing and Credit Counseling, Inc (HCCI). She added the response time is at two to five days. Committee Chair Hiller and Nicole Stovall concurred that the HCCI has staff to help determine the need for individual retaliation counseling and determine if they can assist or if they need to go to Kansas Legal Services (KLS). Valdivia-Alcalá requested from Nicole Stoval to find details for the KLS contract and when it is expiring. Valdivia-Alcalá also inquired about the staffing at HCCI. Stovall reported they down one person, but this is their off time, so they are working on pushing education and tracking to see how many people are needed to be staffed. Committee member Banks requested that entire committee be informed of the results. Property Maintenance Director John Schardine shared that his staff is passing out all the documentation with every rental inspection to educate the tenants. On properties that should be condemned they work on finding alternative housing for the occupants.
- d) **2024 IPMC:** Committee Chair Hiller reported a 2024 version has been introduced as the International Model Code. She added the City of Topeka is built off the 2012 version. Property Maintenance Director John Schardine spoke to collaborating with Fire Marshall Alan Stahl, City Legal Department, and a new civilian review board including Shawnee County Landlord Association President Steve Vogal, Citizen Advisory Council Vice chair Susan McClacherty, and Oakland NIA President Kevin Cox. The beginning of 2025 will be a meeting to discuss the 2024 adoption process and review codes for input on the civilian side. Fire Marshall Alan Stahl stated they use the International Code Council (ICC) Codes. They are reviewing the Fire Department and Building side of implementing the 2024 International Fire Code and the 2024 International Building Code. Since codes are complimentary, he is working with John Schardine so all code sets will reference each other in a complimentary manner. Alan Stahl met with International Code Counsel and concluded there aren't any major changes. Mainly clarifying changes to help in difficult situations and also addresses emerging technologies; in particular lithium batteries, which have caused fires, are a big part that was added to code. Property Maintenance Director John Schardine added that there will be training for the inspectors to bring them up to date with the adoption of the codes. Committee Chair Hiller reported in six months it will be called Topeka Property Maintenance Code. She requested Committee members review the content of the code changes. John Schardine encouraged any questions and comments. Fire Marshall Alan Stahl

stated that he uses the code with commentary, and added it helps with clarification when making decisions.

Discussion and Feedback:

a) Performance Measurers:

Changing our Culture Program Administrator Nicole Stovall shared the first adopted version of the Changing our Culture of Property Maintenance (CoCPM). She also spoke to the draft version of the Performance Measures Data and the importance to determine the success in various areas. She noted due to the retirement of Wendi Reib the collection of numbers is continuing to be reviewed. Committee Chair Hiller stated the importance of end of the year tracking and discussed a possible six-month cohort analysis. She requested the Committee review the data measurers and provide feedback. Committee member Valdivia- Alcalá expressed her thanks to Committee Chair Karen Hiller and staff for their work.

b) Marketing and Education 2025:

Community Engagement Director Monique Glaude shared potential enhancement initiatives that could be added to the CoCPM Program for 2025. She encouraged two items be chosen.

1. Community Clean-Up Days/Youth Engagement Programs:
 - a. Host monthly or quarterly community clean-up events where neighbors work together to maintain common spaces or streets. Community Engagement will provide small equipment and supplies such as gloves, trash bags, rakes, brooms, to make participation easy upon request.
 - b. Involve local youth in property maintenance through service learning or volunteer programs. Teens could earn service hours or small rewards for participating in neighborhood projects (not on personal property). The focus would be on middle, high school and college students cleaning neighborhoods in the surrounding the schools.
2. Yard of the Month Program:
 - a. Recognize neighbors who exemplify good property maintenance with "Yard of the Month" consisting of a yard sign and award. Winners will receive a small prize, like a gift card, and public acknowledgment (City Council, City 4, social media), fostering pride in keeping properties well-maintained.
3. Property Maintenance Workshops:
 - a. Offer free workshops on basic property upkeep, seasonal lawn care, basic landscaping, exterior home care, driveway and sidewalk repairs. The workshops will be held in the community and led by local experts or experienced community members and provide neighbors with the knowledge to improve their properties.
4. Educational Campaign:
 - a. Run educational campaign on the benefits of property maintenance for property values, neighborhood safety, and overall well-being. Share tips

via social media, newsletters, and flyers to help neighbors understand the importance of upkeep.

Other Partnership Options:

- a. Collaboration with Local Businesses: Partnering with local businesses to provide discounts on maintenance supplies or services for community members. These businesses can also sponsor clean-up events or donate items for recognition programs.
- b. Community Engagement Mini-Beautification Grants: Community Engagement will develop a Neighborhood Mini-Grant Program (Grant amounts: \$50 - \$250) that will provide small-scale funding opportunities for projects that enhance the quality of life in neighborhoods. Designed to empower residents to promote community involvement, this program supports initiatives that create lasting benefits for all neighborhood members. Examples of Eligible Projects: community gardens, safety improvements, shared resources, educational initiatives, shared resources and environmental efforts. There will be requirements, an application process and review process and an informational session.

Committee Member Valdivia-Alcalá supports the Youth Engagement Program. She added the importance to speaking with staff to get the Topeka schools involved.

Public Relations Specialist Taylor Bugg spoke to the Communications piece of the program and added the importance of identifying people through volunteerism.

Community Engagement Director Monique Glaude' acknowledged Destiny Hodges as a volunteer and the importance of recognizing volunteerism in the community. There was continued conversation to encourage programs for enhancements in neighborhoods. She noted that performance measures would be attached to grants for those programs that need items for their neighborhood.

Chairwoman Hiller adjourned the meeting at 10:55am. Next meeting is January 15, 2025 9:30-11:00 a.m.

Meeting video can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/D38Akiwa-Rg>