

## **COUNCIL OF THE WHOLE MEETING**

### **Topic: Blighted Property**

November 25, 2024

Council President Thad Eikenbary called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and noted the topic was a blighted property located on the corner of Chestnut Street and Central Avenue.

Ringwald, Agler, Moore, and Marshall were present.

President Eikenbary let Agler lead the way. Agler starts by sharing how the city needs to start approaching blighted properties in a new fashion. He suggests starting with the homeowner and avoiding going through the tenant first.

A property on Fulton Ave. that was supposed to have action taken on it as of September of 2023. The owner at that time signed the property over, the purchaser knew it was a blighted property and had intentions at the time of taking action by the September '23 due date. No action has been taken 14 months later.

Law Director Hatcher starts with junk and rubbish ordinances. The way these ordinances are set up, the lessee or the owner can be charged. Hatcher explains that at first, the city will address the problem with the person living there to start. Around 2 years ago, the city took great initiative in these ordinances and Hatcher comments that it has made a big difference.

The person living on the corner of Chestnut and Central has been charged 8 times since we started pushing the ordinances: 4 times in 2022, 2 times in 2023 and 2 times in 2024. Next steps/options include charging parties under the Ohio Revised Code as opposed to the City Code which would upgrade the charge to a 3rd degree misdemeanor (up to 60 days in jail and/or a fine), meaning the owner/responsible party could face jail time.

The Fulton St. Property was recently purchased by a new party. Hatcher plans to meet with Bill Lawson and approach the new buyer with some expectations.

The city has had about 19 blighted houses: 1/3 complied, some went to the land bank and most others are in active litigation. One that is currently in active litigation has a plan set in place and Hatcher feels confident this one will head toward compliance. Another property, the property owner has council and through their attorney, they are working directly with Bill Lawson to come up with a plan. The remainder of properties look as though they will most likely end up being owned by the city. Hatcher clarifies that it's not in the business of the city to take over these properties, but rather turn them around for the good of the city.

From a police standpoint, the city is down from 2022 in cases they have reported. Hatcher guesses there are still between 4 and 5 cases per month and out of those, about half are typically in compliance with photo proof by their court date.


Back on the topic of Chestnut and Central, the Safety Service Director asked why current action taken on the property is not solving the issue. Hatcher states he simply pays his fines and has no interest in complying. Agler reiterates he thinks it should fall back on the homeowner to take a different approach.

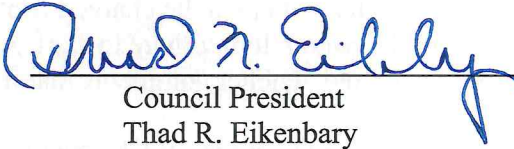
Agler suggests our ordinance states that the city would send a letter to the responsible party and the homeowner. The responsible party would be given a certain amount of time to comply. The homeowner would then be notified that their tenant was given a notice and if they do not comply within their timeframe, the homeowner is at risk of also being charged.

Finally, Agler suggested a “3 strikes your out” rule where the blighted property would have 2 charges at the City Ordinance Level, if it still fails to comply, the third charge would be at the Ohio Revised Code Level. Ultimately, it is at the Law Director’s discretion on course of action.

Joe Jared gave input that the city should prioritize kindness and not “knit pick” at industrious peoples or be mindful of situations at hand and not incriminate people unnecessarily.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:28 p.m.

  
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Clerk of Council  
Stephanie R. Phillips



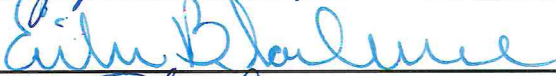





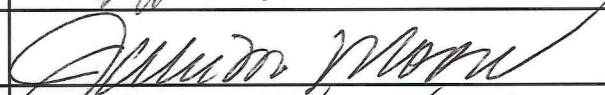
  
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Council President  
Thad R. Eikenbary

December 9, 2024  
DATE

**TOPIC: Council of the Whole Meeting for Blighted Property**

**Date: 11/25/2024**

**COUNCIL/CITY MEMBERS**

Mayor Ken Markward	
Safety Service Director Jay Fleming	
Auditor Erika Blackmore	
Law Director John Hatcher	
President Thad Eikenbary	
Jana Ringwald	
Jeff Kallas	 Not Present
Judy Bowers	Not Present
Jeff Agler	
Julie Moore	
Bill Marshall	