

**CITY OF HAZELWOOD
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
NOVEMBER 8, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER

A Council work session was called to order by Mayor Matthew G. Robinson at 6 p.m. on November 8, 2023, in the Council Chambers at Hazelwood City Hall.

On roll call the following members of the Council were present:

Robert M. Aubuchon
Don W. Ryan
Kelly Wadlow
Matthew G. Robinson
Lisa M. Matlock
Warren H. Taylor
Robert C. Smith
Jen Hatton
William C. Hoops, Jr.

City Clerk Julie Lowery declared a quorum was present. Also present was City Manager Matt Zimmerman.

SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

ORDER OF AGENDA There were no objections and the order of the agenda was adopted as printed.

CODE ENFORCEMENT Code Administrator/Building Official Jared Kertz was present to answer Council's questions relating to Code Enforcement.

Mr. Kertz introduced himself and the other Code Enforcement officers in attendance. He explained all officers and building inspectors are required by the City to hold a Property Maintenance/Housing Inspector certificate from the International Code Council (ICC). To obtain this certification, an employee must pass a test from ICC and are required to maintain the certification through continued education yearly. Mr. Kertz stated Code Enforcement's largest responsibility is issuing property maintenance and nuisance violations. The process is outlined as follows:

1. Complaints are received by our office through phone/email/website. Complaints are by longstanding City policy kept anonymous.
2. A code enforcement officer inspects the property, usually the same day.
3. If a violation exists, the code officer writes a courtesy infraction notice to the owner/tenant. In the violation notice the code officer would detail what the violation is and how many days they have to come into compliance. Most exterior violations (siding, gutters, etc.) have a 30-day timeframe. Grass and trash violations have a

5-day timeframe because they are much more time sensitive and need to be taken care of quickly. Other violations such as improper exterior storage (mattress at curb) have a 10-day timeframe.

4. The code officer reinspects the property to see if the violation has been abated by the expiration of the violation notice. If the violation(s) have been taken care of, the violation is closed out and no further enforcement action is needed. If not, staff proceeds to the next step.
5. If the violation still exists after reinspection, the next step is to issue a municipal court summons. For certain violations like grass and trash an administrative warrant is also applied for so the City has the authority to abate the violation and charge the property owner for the work. If the owner does not pay the invoice, a lien is placed against the property that is paid when the property is sold or taxes paid.
6. In the event of a life-threatening or extremely serious violation, the inspector might write a summons the same day in lieu of a courtesy infraction notice.
7. The final stage is the owner appearing in municipal court for the violation. This can be a lengthy process within the court system. Most times it can be many months until there is a resolution with the case. The City Prosecutor is responsible for filing charges and representing the City before the Municipal Court Judge. The Judge determines whether a defendant is guilty (most plead guilty) and determines the punishment (usually a small fine). Pursuant to Missouri Supreme Court rules, the City Council or senior management cannot make issuing fines or maximizing court revenue a condition of appointing or retaining the Municipal Court Judge. Once a resolution has been received (a finding of guilty or not guilty), any future violations must start the process all over again.

Mr. Aubuchon stated he would like Code Enforcement officers to take more initiative. He stated if they are called out to a property, they should take the time to look around at other properties.

Mr. Smith asked about the apartment complex at 5230 Ville Rosa Lane.

Ms. Wadlow stated the building is in poor condition and should be boarded up.

Code Enforcement Officer Rachel Fry replied that the owner of the building is currently in the court process.

Ms. Wadlow stated it would be helpful if the monthly code reports indicated an "in court" status.

Mr. Smith asked how long offenders who park cars on grass and sidewalks have to comply.

Code Enforcement Officer Angie Pingel responded they are given five to ten days.

Ms. Hatton asked if complaints were anonymous.

Mr. Kertz replied affirmatively.

RENTAL HOME
REGISTRATION
PROGRAM

Police Chief James Hudanick was present to answer to answer Council's questions relating to a proposed rental housing registration program.

Chief Hudanick stated the Police Department has noticed, in their response to calls, that they are continually having to deal with certain properties, their occupants, and their compliance with City of Hazelwood Municipal Codes. They are finding that more and more of these properties are rented and this includes single family residential properties as well as apartments and condominiums. Chief Hudanick stated introducing a Crime Free Rental Housing type program is a good step in the right direction, and this program would bring Law Enforcement and Code Enforcement together with the landlords to solve issues surrounding criminal activity at their properties as well addressing quality of life issues like trash and debris, derelict vehicles, high weeds, and grass etc.

Chief Hudanick gave an outline of what the program could look like. He stated the program would require licensure of all residential rental properties in the City of Hazelwood and no entity would be able to rent/lease their property without one. Once licensure is obtained then a three-phase program is initiated, which would be conducted by the Police Department. In Phase 1, Officers provide rental property owners information and resources in screening applicants, leasing, eviction, housing codes, CPTED concepts (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) etc. This is mandatory attendance for the property owners or their representatives. In Phase 2, The Police Department officer, trained in CEPTED, will offer voluntary surveys to assist the property owner in this area. Phase 3 would be a voluntary annual event for residents in a multi-rental complex to get together and receive information on crime prevention, meet one another and be able to speak with an officer about their individual issues. Upon completion, a dedicated team (Police Officer and Code Enforcement Officer presumably) would enforce City municipal codes as well as work in partnership with the rental property owners or their representatives to ensure compliance.

Chief Hudanick stated in checking with other local municipalities, Florissant, Berkeley and Bellefontaine Neighbors each have a type of rental housing program with a rental registry.

The City of Hazelwood does not currently have a rental registry for which to track rental properties thus the following data sources was utilized:

According to the latest census data, the number of rental properties in the City of Hazelwood suggests that of the 11,137 households in Hazelwood 58.4% are owner occupied. This means 41.6% are rental or roughly 4,633 properties. A check of Code Enforcement's Property Database whose accuracy is uncertain found there are 1,415 single-family rentals, 464 condominium rentals and 3,499 apartments in the City Limits. Chief Hudanick stated there is a disparity in the exact number of residential properties in the City of Hazelwood so before full implementation this issue must be reconciled. He stated that implementing a Crime Free Rental Housing type program which would have

dedicated employees (one from the Police Department and one from Code Enforcement) respond to and address issues at all rentals properties as well as the nine hotels in the City. A fee schedule associated with the program would need to be established and this would finance its operation entirely. Chief Hudanick stated there are steps that need to be addressed prior to implementing this program. For example, there would be a need to initiate a process to create relative legislation, some procedures and forms created in Code Enforcement and an accurate count of rental properties. We feel that if the Council wishes to go forth, a year of rental property data collection is in order along with notifications to current rental properties.

The Council would like staff to continue researching and gathering more details for their review.

COUNCIL'S STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES Ms. Hatton asked for clarification regarding the City Manager and City Clerk's roles to the Council.

Ms. Hatton asked about setting the agenda.

Mayor Robinson replied that two Council Members can request an item be put on an agenda and that would be done by a request to the City Clerk. He stated the City Manager handles normal City business being put on the agenda.

Ms. Hatton asked about setting an agenda forward and town hall meetings.

Mayor Robinson responded the Council should work with the City Clerk.

ADJOURNMENT The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Matthew G. Robinson - Mayor
City of Hazelwood, Missouri

ATTEST:

Julie Lowery, CMC - City Clerk
City of Hazelwood, Missouri