



OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

BIANCA L. TIRADO, CITY CLERK

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT AND RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

MARCH 06, 2024 6:00 P.M.

Community Investment
Committee Members Present

Rachel Tomas Morgan, Ophelia Gooden-
Rodgers, *Sherry Bolden-Simpson, Kaine
Kanczuzewski

Community Investment
Committee Members Absent

Troy Warner

Residential Neighborhoods
Committee Members Present

Karen L. White, Ophelia Gooden-Rodgers,
Sheila Niezgodski

Residential Neighborhoods
Committee Members Absent

Canneth Lee, Amika Micou

Other Council Present

None

Others Present

Bianca L. Tirado, Danica Kulemeka,
Matthew Neal

Presenters

Elizabeth Maradik, Caleb Bauer

Agenda

- I. Call to Order
- II. Comments from Chair Warner and Chair White
- III. Follow up on the February 12, 2024
Discussion on Parking Issues in
Neighborhoods
- IV. Code Enforcement Processes & Outcomes
- V. Updates on Home Repair Program
- VI. Adjournment

Members marked with an asterisk (*) are present digitally

Please note the attached link for the meeting recording:

<http://docs.southbendin.gov/WebLink/browse.aspx?dbid=0&mediaid=381021>

Please note the attached link for the presentation:

[https://docs.southbendin.gov/WebLink/0/edoc/381043/2024.03.06%20Council%20Presenta
tion%20-%20Parking%20%20Neigh%20Outcomes%20%20HRP.pdf](https://docs.southbendin.gov/WebLink/0/edoc/381043/2024.03.06%20Council%20Presentation%20-%20Parking%20%20Neigh%20Outcomes%20%20HRP.pdf)

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Danica Kulemeka
CHIEF DEPUTY/ CHIEF OF STAFF

Elivet Quijada-Navarro
DEPUTY/ DIRECTOR OF POLICY

Matthew Neal
DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL PROJECTS

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Committee Chair Karen L. White called to order the Community Investment & Residential Neighborhoods joint committee meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Vice Chair Tomas Morgan relayed an apology from Chair Troy Warner who was not able to attend the meeting.

Committee Chair White stated that today's meeting is a continuation of the February 12, 2024 discussion.

Caleb Bauer, Executive Director of Community Investment, with offices on the 14th floor of the County-City Building, stated that he will have Elizabeth Maradik take the lead on the presentation.

Elizabeth Maradik, Chief Neighborhoods Officer, with offices on the 14th floor of the County-City Building, explained the procedures for enforcing environmental, property, and Rental Safety Verification Program (RSVP) violations.

Committee Member Ophelia Gooden-Rodgers stated that South Bend's westside needs to be cleaned up of its numerous environmental violations, and asked how areas are being patrolled for violations.

Elizabeth Maradik stated that the City has six (6) environmental inspectors, two (2) housing/property inspectors, and four (4) RSVP inspectors. Environmental inspectors respond to complaints and are out in the City looking for violations. Each of the six (6) environmental inspectors are designated to their own area. Any specific addresses Councilmembers have with violations can be sent to Community Investment.

Committee Member Kaine Kanczuzewski asked if unpaid fees can eventually be applied to the county tax bills.

Caleb Bauer responded yes, and added that special assessments are actively used but need to be done cautiously to balance recouping costs and not having residents lose their home in tax sales.

Committee Member Kanczuzewski asked if boarded-up windows are considered temporary measures, or if they accrue continuous fines.

Elizabeth Maradik stated that a boarded-up window would not be considered in-compliance, and would require a remedy.

Committee Member Kanczuzewski asked if the online code enforcement submission tools are working.

Elizabeth Maradik stated that there is a way to submit reports through the three-one-one (311) online portal.

Committee Member Gooden-Rodgers asked how long a burned building can remain standing.

Elizabeth Maradik stated that the timeline for burned building demolitions can vary.

Committee Member Sheila Niezgodski asked for clarification of the RSVP inspection numbers.



Elizabeth Maradik stated that the number of inspections do not match the number of rental units certified because units often require multiple inspections.

Committee Member Niezgodski asked if there is a list of RSVP properties that have not yet passed inspection so that families are not moving into unsafe rentals.

Elizabeth Maradik stated that there is not a list of violations available publicly, but renters can check homes' certification status on the open data portal.

Committee Member Niezgodski asked if the RSVP process is affected when the unit in question is rented out to a new tenant.

Elizabeth Maradik stated that the RSVP process is tied to the unit and therefore the process would not need to restart if a new tenant were to move in, but that there are more serious penalties if it is found out there are people occupying a condemned unit.

Committee Vice Chair Tomas Morgan asked what capabilities the City has to prevent owners from renting out non-compliant units.

Elizabeth Maradik stated that the main coercive force used is a weekly two hundred and fifty dollar (\$250) fine for having a unit in non-compliance.

Caleb Bauer stated that theoretically owners can rent out non-compliant units. There is state legislation currently being considered that would strengthen the City's ability to prevent the release of failed units.

Committee Chair White inquired about two (2) homes on Indiana Avenue that have suffered severe fires and have been left untouched for years.

Elizabeth Maradik stated that the two (2) homes in question have been awarded to a contractor for demolition. The speed in which the timeline is executed depends on a few factors such as how quickly a contractor can be awarded.

Committee Chair White asked how many staff there are to address graffiti, and what are their other tasks.

Elizabeth Maradik stated that the six (6) environmental inspectors look for graffiti throughout the City, and once the violation is sent to VPA there are one (1) or two (2) individuals who will focus on graffiti clean-up.

Committee Chair White stated that there were funds associated with graffiti clean-up and would like to know more information regarding graffiti. Committee Chair White asked what else other than fines can be done to make sure residents are living in homes that are safe.

Elizabeth Maradik stated that Community Investment is currently working with the Housing Authority on developing a Memorandum of Understanding so that the City can more easily share information related to units that are not in compliance.

Caleb Bauer stated that receivership is another option to help residents, but it requires a lot of legal work, and so it isn't something that can be utilized widely.



Committee Member Gooden-Rodgers asked what can be done to prevent illegal dumping.

Caleb Bauer stated that SBPD has its Real Time Crime Center cameras that can spot violations of dumping. Caleb Bauer explained that punishment for dumping violations can be challenging to enforce even if caught on camera, because the violater's vehicle would need to be identified and tracked which requires adding a lot of work to SBPD's caseload.

Committee Member Kanczuzewski asked if code enforcement would search trash that is illegally dumped to try and identify the person who dumped the trash.

Elizabeth Maradik stated that typically they do not search trash, but if they do happen to see identification they will pursue that information. One issue with trying to identify the violater through the trash is that the violater may be illegally dumping trash containing another person's mail.

Caleb Bauer added that if a vehicle is spotted illegally dumping, SBPD would still need to verify the identity of the person driving. Caleb Bauer added that tires can be disposed of for free if taken to the appropriate location.

Elizabeth Maradik stated the goal of the Home Repair Program is to maintain affordable and quality housing for residents. The targetted area for this round was determined by identifying census tracts where at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the population is below the poverty line.

Committee Member Niezgodski asked if the funds in the presentation included American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds.

Elizabeth Maradik stated that ARP funds were included. There were two million, five hundred thousand dollars (\$2,500,000) appropriated for home repair, and the targetted area this first (1st) round will be utilizing one million, five hundred thousand dollars (\$1,500,000) and the remaining one million dollars (\$1,000,000) will be used in the next round.

Caleb Bauer stated that the next round does not yet have a launch date, but has a tentative fall application period start date.

Committee Member Gooden-Rodgers asked if the program is based on income?

Caleb Bauer responded yes and explained that the application process requires prospective residents to be enrolled in the Utilities Assistance Program or utilize the Senior Trash Pick-Up Rate, both of which require income verification.

Committee Member Sherry Bolden-Simpson asked if the next round of home repairs would be city-wide.

Caleb Bauer stated that the hope is for the next round to be city-wide, but that has not yet been confirmed.

Committee Member Bolden-Simpson asked when residents should apply for the next round.

Elizabeth Maradik stated that the application process has not been given a definitive start date yet, and reiterated that it has not yet been determined if the next round will be city-wide.



Committee Member Goode-Rodgers asked if the contractors involved with the Home Repair Program are sourced by the City or the homeowner.

Elizabeth Maradik stated that the City sources the contractors.

Committee Chair White asked how much funding was used in the previous round and if there were any outstanding applications from previous rounds.

Elizabeth Maradik stated that all previous applications had been closed before moving onto the current round, stated that previous rounds had about four hundred thousand dollars (\$400,000) to five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) in funding.

Committee Chair White asked what has been working in the program and what could be improved.

Caleb Bauer stated that simplifying the inspection process has allowed for quicker turnover, and focusing on roofs and furnaces has helped to prioritize safety concerns. There is always room for improvement in the procurement process to make sure the City is receiving the most advantageous contract pricing.

Committee Vice Chair Tomas Morgan asked what other Home Repair Programs there are in the City.

Caleb Bauer stated that Habitat for Humanity had a program for roof repairs, Real Services had a program focusing on aging-in-place repairs, and there are financial institutions that provide low interest loans for home repairs.

Committee Vice Chair Tomas Morgan asked if there is a possibility to include electrical upgrades to the Home Repair Program.

Elizabeth Maradik stated that historically there have been electrical upgrades that have occurred through the Home Repair Program, and even in the current round there may be cases where electrical work is necessary for a furnace repair.

Caleb Bauer stated that electrical work can get expensive, so choosing what areas to focus on require a careful consideration of what is possible.

Committee Member Kanczuzewski asked why there is a large disparity between the pre-screening numbers and the number of applications received.

Elizabeth Maradik stated that applications, unlike pre-screenings, require deeds and proof of income which adds another level of difficulty.

Committee Member Gooden-Rodgers requested clarity on the percentage of black and african american applicants.

Elizabeth Maradik stated that thirty-three percent (33%) of applicants were black or african american.

Caleb Bauer stated that race and ethnicity are tracked separately, similar to the Census.



Rachel Tomas Morgan requested Community Investment share informational graphics regarding their graffiti and tire programs.

Committee Member Gooden-Rodgers requested information regarding parking on grass violations.

Elizabeth Maradik stated that people may park in their yard if there is a designated hard parking pad surface. There are stricter protocols for what are determined to be abandoned vehicles.

Committee Chair White asked what can be done if someone sees a parking violation.

Elizabeth Maradik stated that residents can call three-one-one (311) to report violations and can submit photos to the three-one-one (311) online portal.

Caleb Bauer stated that traffick obstruction violations will be forwarded to SBPD.

Committee Member Bolden-Simpson reiterated her support for enlarging the Home Repair Program's target area.

With no further business, Committee Chair White adjourned the Community Investment & Residential Neighborhoods joint committee meeting at 7:17 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen L. White, Residential Neighborhoods
Committee Chair

Respectfully Submitted,

Troy Warner, Community Investment
Committee Chair

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