

Minutes of the Ordinance Committee meeting
Sheffield Lake, Ohio
January 8, 2015

This regular meeting of the Ordinance Committee was held Thursday, January 8, 2015. Chairman Kovach called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS:

Present: Kovach, McCullough, Erdei, Mayor Bring, Law Director Graves

Absent: Service Director Smith (excused)

MINUTES: December 4, 2014, *Motion by McCullough/Second by Erdei to accept the minutes with any corrections. Yeas All.

PRESENTATIONS: **None.**

CORRESPONDENCE: **None.**

OLD BUSINESS:

Industrial District – Law Director Graves advised I started taking a look at that and started preparing a draft for you on that. I am trying to update our existing Industrial District to make it more comparable to what we have. Ours has not revised since 1967.

Subdivision regulations – **None.**

Housing Study/CRA zone – Law Director Graves advised the Housing study is before Council. I did make one revision upon review of the ORC, I had to change the way I wrote the composition to the Housing Council. That is required to have 2 members appointed by the Mayor, 2 members appointed by Council and 1 member appointed by the Planning Commission and then 2 members by the Council itself. Councilman McCullough asked is that none with an elected position, can we talk to the people who are getting together for the Charter Review to do this too. Law Director Graves stated this body would probably only be meeting once a year to review any existing agreements. Once we have some agreements, if there is no agreements I don't think they will have a meeting. We will get it set up and we start having some businesses that want to expand their buildings.

Solicitation ordinance – **REMOVE.**

NEW BUSINESS: Mayor Bring advised there is something that I want you guys to start thinking about as this committee and I mentioned something to David the other day. We are going to sit down and start talking with the Building Inspector and a few other people about our rental properties that we have in this city. Also the Landlords that run them and how we are going to maybe strengthen ordinances or somehow make the Landlords more accountable for some of their properties that we have in our city. The people that they rent to not only with parking and some of the maintenance issues of taking care of their properties. I think that this committee should start doing a little bit of research into what we on the books and how we can strengthen that. I am just throwing that out there tonight. Councilman McCullough

asked you mean strengthen the one that was passed right before I came on? Mayor Bring stated well that one was a nuisance and that actually worked because we had a problem over on one of the streets over there and it was a repeat thing and those people ended up getting evicted. That stops all the troubles that we had over in that part of the area over there. Councilman McCullough stated I am thinking about that problem that we had over on Warwick that we keep getting emails on, is that not a nuisance or no? Mayor Bring answered we are not going to just pick on certain things, if we look at it overall to improve the city. You know these rental properties aren't going away, if nothing else we are getting more of them. I don't want to get this as anybody can come in here and do anything they want without having regulations and also be accountable for their property. I just want you guys to maybe start thinking about this. I know that we are going to sit down and talk about this amongst ourselves too. It is just something I have been thinking about. I have had a lot of phone calls on people asking about what we can do. So just throwing it out there. Councilman McCullough stated I am going to throw this back at David, is there any way that we can write this. Basically a code of conduct for landlords that they must remain current with their tax liability because I started doing some checking with the problems that we have had. Mayor Bring advised I have got news for you so did I and it is even worse than you think. Councilman McCullough stated well there is lots of them that have not paid their taxes on their rental properties. Mayor Bring advised people that have just bought properties and have not paid their taxes on them and they haven't done anything to the properties. There is one off of Irving Park in particular because that sold I think a year and a half ago that they bought it and they haven't done a thing to the property and haven't paid a dime in taxes on it. Actually my wife has been sitting at a computer going up and down each street, it is amazing. Law Director Graves advised we do require a rental license in this city, if you are going to own a rental property you have to obtain a license to operate and rent that and that requires biannual license for a single family residential. For multi-family it is an annual inspection but for single family homes though it is bi-annual and there is an inspection that goes along with that when they renew your license that the property is to be inspected which potentially could include as one of the criteria for your rental license a current tax update. Councilman McCullough stated there is one thing that the auditors site is is current. Mayor Bring stated I don't want to throw everything on David and make David do all the research here because he does everything all the time, I would like for us to do it. The other thing is for us is not only about the taxes but the bi-annual inspections. We have people that aren't adhering to that. If you are not doing that or if you are avoiding that on purpose there should be a pretty good hefty fine on that or something to make that worthwhile. I think if we really start getting pretty strict about it. I mean I own properties and you try to take care of this stuff. There are a lot of good ones, there has been a lot of houses that have been fixed up because of this but I think this is the time to start looking into this and making the city a little bit better. I just want you guys to start

looking in the book and start thinking about how we can do this. Law Director Graves advised it becomes difficult in the enforcement issue. Jon does a pretty good job keeping his eye out, there is a lot of people that go under the radar and rent these houses out without that license. We can catch them if they have a for rent sign and he also checks the paper and he sees someone advertising a house for rent and he can catch someone for the license. He can only do so much, he is one guy and he is doing everything over there. Councilman McCullough stated there is an easier way though. Everything is computerized, you mean to tell me that we don't know by our water bills when a house has been sitting vacant and now all of a sudden it has got a usage on it. Mayor Bring answered we do catch that but the problem is sometimes you don't get the water share for 3 months. Here is the thing we should probably put it in an ordinance saying that if you buy a house and you start doing this then you need to get your license and if you don't do that there is a penalty and that is the way I think it is going to get corrected. Right now there is really no penalty. Law Director Graves advised there is a penalty in the ordinance but I forget what it is though. Mayor Bring stated I am just throwing things out there because it needs to be more stringent. I think overall it is part of the why our city is not progressing a little bit and I think somehow we need to figure that out. Councilman McCullough stated I am tired of paying taxes, land taxes are getting ridiculous because of the schools. Mayor Bring advised I think in Lorain County alone the back taxes are 53 million dollars. You know you are asking the schools for levies and stuff like that, we were just talking about and it was pretty substantial just for the schools if everybody would be current on their taxes - it makes a big difference and it also makes a big difference on us too. Councilman Erdei asked I don't know the legality in this but couldn't you put a lien, make an ordinance to where you could put a lien on their property for delinquent taxes? Law Director Graves advised the county auditor enforces that. Councilman Erdei stated there are homes that have been going on 4 or 5 years or 6 years on taxes. Mayor Bring advised 10 or 12 years. Law Director Graves advised it is another enforcement issue, the County Auditor and the Treasurer only have so many people and they are cracking down but when you have got so many throughout the county. You have got 50 million dollars in back taxes, they are going after the big ones and by the time they get down to the little single family homes or lots that owe a few thousand. They don't have an army of people and they are doing the best that they can to try to collect it. That is the County that collects those and enforces them, we wouldn't have anything to do with that. Mayor Bring advised I am more for the property maintenance and also people that they are renting to making sure they keep the property up. That is what I am looking for. Councilman McCullough stated 2 things would happen if we required them to keep their taxes up; 1 – they would have to get more rent, so they are going to attract a better tenant. 2 – if they are going to attract a better tenant they are going to have to do a little bit better job at keeping their thing clean. You would think that. Although if I told you what that hole across the street costs your jaw would drop - \$750.00 a month is what people

are paying. Mayor Bring advised like I say I think this is something that has to be worked on for a while and everyone needs to do a little research on this. I know we are going to sit down and try to figure out on our end, I am going to sit down with David, Jon and Pat and figure out how we are going to approach this but it at least needs to be started. There was a brief discussion on issues with home maintenance.

CITIZEN’S COMMENTARY: None.

All ordinances before Council at this time:

Council#061-14 – SECOND READING – a resolution establishing and describing the boundaries of a Community Reinvestment Area, and designating a Housing Officer and the declaring of an emergency (revised).

MEETING ADJOURNED: With no further business before this committee,
*Motion by Erdei/Second by McCullough to adjourn at 7:32 PM. Yeas All.

CLERK OF COMMITTEE AFFIRMATION:

This Meeting of the City Committee of the City of Sheffield Lake, Ohio, was held and conducted under all Rules and Regulations Governing the Sunshine Laws of the State of Ohio as they may apply. All meetings are recorded and available in Council’s Office.

CLERK OF COUNCIL/COMMITTEES
Kay Fantauzzi

I, Kay Fantauzzi, duly appointed Clerk of Committee Of Sheffield Lake DO HEREBY CERTIFY that this Is a true and exact copy of the Minutes of the Ordinance Committee of January 8, 2015.

CHAIRMAN
Chairman Steve Kovach

COUNCIL PRESIDENT
Rick Rosso

and/or

COUNCIL PRO TEM
Alan Smith