

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, STRATEGIC PLANNING
AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING
MONDAY, MAY 12, 2025
7:00PM**

An Economic Development, Strategic Planning and Technology Committee meeting was held on Monday, May 12, 2025, at Livonia City Hall in the City Council Chambers on the 2nd floor.

Committee Members Present: Carrie Budzinski, Chair
Scott Morgan, Vice Chair
Lynda L. Scheel, Member

Committee Members Absent: None

City Officials Present: Martha Ptashnik, Council Vice President
Rob Gjonaj Donovic, Councilmember
Laura M. Toy, Councilmember
Carter Fisher, City Attorney
Mark Taormina, Planning and Economic Dev. Director
Jerome Hanna, Inspection Director
Robb Drezwicki, Director of Government Affairs
Jacob Uhazie, Assistant Planning Director

Additional attendees: See the attached list.

1. The subject matter blighted and vacant businesses on Plymouth Road. (CR 90-25).
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The Committee meeting commenced at 7:01 PM.

The topic was introduced by Committee Chair Budzinski as a high priority for residents and a unique area in Livonia due to the special assessment on businesses and its inclusion as a targeted development area in Livonia Vision 21.

Councilwoman Toy and Councilman Donovic gave remarks on the subject.

Inspection Director Jerome Hanna discussed the city's vacancy ordinance and shared that there are 6 registered (paying a monthly fee) and 6 unregistered vacant buildings along the Plymouth Road corridor. He explained how his department oversees and enforces blight/vacancy. They are moving more cases to court following the 2023 City Council meeting and putting an emphasis on enforcement for tall grass and weeds - vacant property owners are billed if the City cuts the grass for them. A couple cases are currently in court, including Dobby's Tuxedo. Director Hanna indicated his goal is to get all the vacant buildings registered so they can be tracked.

It was noted that a challenge is that if property owners maintain the property and/or keep up with taxes/fines they cannot be compelled to sell.

City Attorney, Carter Fisher, explained vacancy fees and how the system works for the fee schedule.

Councilwoman Scheel put forward a to have the administration offer a report and recommendation to update the fee schedule to be more aggressive and provide for a compounded annual rate. Within the Home Rule Cities Act, an ordinance can be passed that would allow the city to prevent a property owner from moving forward in a development project at one site if another is considered vacant/blighted. This will also be explored.

Concerns were raised by Councilmember Morgan regarding the House of Denmark property being vacant for nearly 20 years. Business owners of the Town Peddler also expressed concern over the long vacant House of Denmark and encouraged Council to implement stricter penalties. Explanations were given about what the city can do regarding fees and how they cannot force them to sell.

The role of the Plymouth Road Development Authority was explained by Planning Director Mark Taormina. The special assessment is for businesses along Plymouth Road and in the Industrial area. Currently it brings in revenue of approximately \$700k-800k each year. The funds are used for irrigation, streetlights electricity, hardscape maintenance and proposed improvements at Shelden Park. There was also discussion about improved marketing resources for the PRDA.

Committee Chair Budzinski suggested creating marketing materials and updating the PRDA webpage to promote businesses along Plymouth Road.

Director Taormina also went over tax abatement programs including Brownfield Redevelopment Authority and Commercial Rehabilitation Exemptions that are available to investors and when they contact the city, the Planning Department walks through their project proposals to review for opportunities.

Committee Chair Budzinski asked about Bike/Walkability along Plymouth Road but Director Taormina noted that it is a complicated issue due to the fact Plymouth Road is a state highway and Wayne County oversees drainage, and the State of Michigan controls the right of way. Assistant Planning Director Jacob Uhazie noted that the city continues to pursue areas for improvement with bike/walkability and the bike rack at the remodeled Wendy's was cited as an example.

This topic remains in committee.

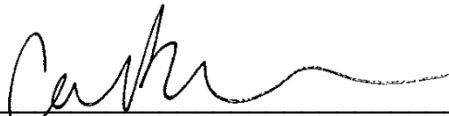
The Committee recommends:

- For the Administration to provide an updated fee schedule.
- For the Administration to look at a compounded, annual penalty for blighted/vacant properties.

The Committee meeting adjourned at 8:23 PM.

Note: This item will remain in Committee.

This item is to be placed on the **Regular Meeting Agenda of May 19, 2025**



Carrie Budzinski, Chair