

Minutes

Housing Committee
Monday, June 5, 2017
7:00 p.m.
Police Training Room, 4th Floor
Municipal Building, Jamestown, New York

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairwoman Marie Carrubba, Councilwoman Vickye James

MEMBERS ABSENT: Councilman Brent Sheldon

OTHERS PRESENT: Maria Jones, Vince DeJoy, Council President
Greg Rabb

Chairwoman Carrubba called the meeting to order.

The minutes from the June 5, 2017 meeting were approved.

Remarks from Community Members/Committee Members

No one appeared.

New Business

Ms. Carrubba: Are there any comments from the committee before we move into the discussion about MyGov?

Ms. James: Thank you for Eleventh Street. The residents are happy.

Ms. Carrubba: I will comment that I had a complaint from somebody from my ward and I went on the MyGov website and it was very easy to navigate and facilitate.

Mr. DeJoy: It's going to be even easier. You're not going to have to use MyGov.

Ms. Carrubba: What do you mean won't have to use MyGov?

Mr. DeJoy: You'll see tonight when we get into the - you'll use MyGov, but you won't have to go find it on MyGov site. It's going to be on our website. I'm going to do a little demonstration in the open session.

Ms. Carrubba: That's where I got in from. Didn't I?

Mr. DeJoy: No, you didn't get it from our website.

Ms. Carrubba: When you say our website, I went to the City of Jamestown website...

Mr. DeJoy: When?

Ms. Carrubba: Last week. Thursday? I think it was Thursday.

Mr. DeJoy: I don't think I had it live then. I may have inadvertently for short periods as I was testing it.

Ms. Carrubba: Well, I got the form and I ended up faxing it in...

Mr. DeJoy: That's not it.

Ms. Carrubba: You weren't considering it...

Mr. DeJoy: That's not it.

Ms. Carrubba: I filled it in online, printed the form out and then had to...

Mr. DeJoy: We're in the 21st century.

Ms. Carrubba: I wondered why you couldn't just do it online and leave it, but I filled it out. I guess I'll leave it up to you to discuss MyGov, but either way I was able to deal with that and it was much simpler than other ways that I've had to do it. Go ahead, the floor is yours.

Mr. DeJoy: I was planning on doing it in here, but I think it would be far better to do it amongst the entire council to show them what we have available now on the website. The one thing I will say is that I had a communication with Assemblyman Goodell and it should be this week that the legislature will be voting on our vacant and abandoned property abatement incentive. The session closes this week so he said they should be voting on it this week. So, I'm taking his word for it that it's going to make it to the floor for a vote; along with many other, probably, other bills that they're working on.

Ms. Carrubba: It was suggested that maybe we try to get, I believe his last name is Keane, from Buffalo, from South Buffalo, who's been involved in a lot of housing initiatives of what they've been doing up there. I don't know whether it's possible, but to bring him down and have a discussion about what strategies they've used to try to deal with these other issues. It's worth a try. Maybe he will, maybe he won't, but he's running for office again so I didn't know if he'd have a lot of time, but he has someone in Chautauqua County that he is connected to, related somehow. Some other people brought it up and said it'd be very interesting to talk about the trials and tribulations of what they went through, trying to address the same problems that we're having here. It's a larger scale, but you never know, some of the things that they may have found helpful or found didn't work at all, not worth pursuing, but I guess it's

at least worth a try because we certainly are getting a lot of feedback from the Post Journal and I'm hearing it from a lot of constituents who are not happy about the current state. I know there's a lot that needs to be done, there's not a lot of money to do it with, but people are frustrated and I get it. They're frustrated with the same problem houses that DOD cites them, but can't get them to take action as far as the homeowners finally taking responsibility or the absentee owners of the properties. I don't know what else to try, but it's obviously a recurring theme from a lot of people that they're exasperated and it's coming from people who are invested in the neighborhoods. Just like they were on Spring Street, that they're extremely exasperated and it seems as you try to do things to help, we're thwarted by funding not being available and the current owners just not doing anything about it. If anybody has any ideas or any thoughts or suggestions, I'm open as always to see if there's anything we can do.

Ms. James: I'm just wondering - a question; have you ever had a housing forum?

Ms. Carrubba: Yes, I did. I did last August and I wanted to do it again to invite all the players. Then at some point, Patrick Morris from CODE thought they should do it. I don't know. I haven't lost sight of it, but I've still thought about it, but we brought somebody from the Fair Housing group out of Buffalo. It was for landlords and tenants and whomever wanted to attend. We probably had about thirty people and some were tenants talking about - a lot of it was education, trying to let landlords know what you could and couldn't do legally. A lot of questions about animals, questions about irresponsible tenants. Some came from the tenants about some of the things that landlords do that aren't legal. So, there was a give and take and it was very clear that they were there to educate and let people know. It may be frustrating, but there are laws and you have to follow the laws. So, that was done and like I say I wanted to try something different this time; would be to bring everybody, all the housing organizations; CODE, CHRIC, COI, Habitat. Everybody and let's see what we can do. Can we do anything together? Maybe to tackle some of the problems. I haven't done it yet. I've been really busy at work because last year I really did it through the auspices of my own agency. That we paid for and did the whole thing. But Patrick had indicated they wanted to get involved and do something. I haven't heard whether he's initiating anything to that end. I need to - I haven't heard from him in a while. I know that they're overwhelmed. They've had some staff, I think, leave. We're all very, very busy right now. But, it's a great suggestion and it's still on my list of things that I need to get going. Thank you for asking.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

James N. Olson
Director of Financial Services/City Clerk