

Lawrence Association of Neighborhoods Draft Minutes
Lawrence Fire Station #5, Jayhawk Room
November 15, 2023, 6:30 p.m.

Participants: Phil Collison, Representative, East Lawrence Neighborhood Association; Gene Dorsey Resident, Schwegler Neighborhood Association; Sheri Ellenbecker, Representative, Sunset Hill Neighborhood Association; Peggy Englehart, Resident, Pinkney Neighborhood; Phil Englehart, Resident, Pinkney Neighborhood; Holli Joyce, LAN Chair & President, Schwegler Neighborhood Association; Susan Keim, Representative, Old West Lawrence Neighborhood Association; Courtney Shipley, Resident, Dad Perry Park Neighborhood; Dustin Stumblingbear, Resident, Pinkney Neighborhood; Kyle Thompson, LAN Treasurer, Representative, Oread Residents Association; Cory Wallace Director, Lawrence Communications and Community Relations; Gary Webber, LAN Secretary, President, Sunset Hill Neighborhood Association; Treni Westcott, Code Compliance Supervisor, Lawrence Planning & Development Services

Presentation: Treni Westcott, Lawrence Code Compliance Supervisor: Treni has been with the city for 19 years in code enforcement. The rental registration program covers all rental properties and has been operating since 2014. They inspect vacant properties first. They must have signed consent prior to inspection. They try to educate landlords about the benefits of registering. They have 2 full-time inspectors. Long-term rentals are dwellings that rent for over 30 days. The license for a long-term is \$15, inspection is \$50. A short-term rental license is \$17, \$50 inspection fee. 10% of rentals are inspected annually.

Joyce stated there were problem STRs in Schwegler. One property advertises for ten guests. Westcott replied that ten guests is possible because a “family” is allowed by the ordinance. She also stated that they inspect and investigate on a complaint basis. If they find an STR out of compliance with occupancy, it is difficult to enforce. Joyce also stated the property owner does not live in the STR for the required time. Westcott stated that the burden of proof regarding residency is on the department and can be difficult and time-consuming to prove. Westcott stated they try their best, but proving a violation is difficult. Dorsey asked if rental properties were commercial. Answer no, rentals are not commercial property, they are residential.

Thompson asked if a rental license has resulted in fewer complaints. The answer was yes. Ellenbecker stated that the reviews contain a confession of occupancy out of compliance. Collison asked that if someone states they live in an STR, how is this enforced. Westcott stated they sign swearing to the truth of their statements. They also use tax statements and other legal documents.

Joyce asked if anything would replace See-Click-Fix. She believes there is no accountability. Schwegler submitted a list of 20 properties that appeared to be out of compliance. Westcott stated that they have had a staff of 2 full-time inspectors since 1991, and deal with complaints as they come to the top of the list. Much of their staff’s time since February has been used in learning new software. Wallace stated that the city was going back to See-Click-Fix in February 2024.

Ellenbecker reviewed the application for an STR. The application does not require any proof that the residency requirement is being met. Collison stated that his neighborhood has filed many complaints, with little results. He asked if now is the time for looking at improving the process for STRs. Shipley stated that if LAN really cares about this, they need to put forward a suggestion to the City Commission. After discussion, the following potential suggestions were identified:

- More staff
- Affidavit of owner residency of STR
- Improve process for resolving abandoned and blighted properties
- Project administrator to administer database
- Better wording in ordinance related to occupancy limits. Occupancy non-compliance is very difficult to prove.
- Better way to verify and enforce residency requirements in STRs.

Englehart stated that Code Enforcement improvement needed to be a priority. He also asked about abandoned vehicles and abandoned mobile homes in a mobile home park in Pinkney. Westcott stated that the owners of the park have been told to remove 11 abandoned/blighted mobile homes, but they are not complying. One has been removed.

Webber asked how the department knows when an owner-occupied home becomes a rental property. Westcott replied that when a complaint is filed, the status of the property would be discovered, and the owner encouraged to register the property.

Collison asked if they have metrics on number of rentals, number of complaints, number of violations, and other factors. Westcott replied that data was available. Englehart stated there are currently 8500 rental licenses in the city.

Westcott stated that landlords and tenants resist inspections. The next option is a search warrant, but that is an avenue of last resort. Shipley asked what would help them do their job better. Westcott stated that an abandoned and blighted property database would be helpful. Englehart asked about 333 Michigan street. Westcott stated that vehicles have been towed, they have been to the property, and the property is on the list of problems to be addressed. Englehart stated that the LDC update was considering moving from 4 to 5 non-related occupants limit in rentals.

Webber asked how light trespass was handled. Westcott replied that following a complaint, they would investigate. If the light was determined to be trespassing on adjacent residences, Code Enforcement would encourage the light's owner to mitigate the trespass. Shipley stated that the recently renovated dormitory at 19th and Naismith changed the configuration of lights in their parking lot when residents across 19th complained.

Changes to, adoption of October 18 minutes: passed by acclamation.

Treasurer's Report (Thompson): \$3,962.28 balance, 6 of thirteen members/officers present, quorum not confirmed.

Old/Ongoing Business

- **Gateway Project Stadium expansion:** Thompson stated that the agreement process has started. They met last Wednesday, and KU representative reviewed plans for construction. The next meeting about demolition and parking is scheduled for next Tuesday at 5:30.
- **Tabled Items:**
 - **Term of Membership Bylaw change, Webber:** Webber will give 2 -week notice in December and propose a bylaw change.
 - **Website upgrade, Webber:** We will use the existing site.
 - **Facebook Update, Spence:** tabled

New Business

- **Oct. 18 meeting presenter:** Lawrence Humane Society
- **Ideas for upcoming meeting topics/speakers:** Wallace will present in December regarding See-Click-Fix and the homeless program.

Neighborhood Reports:

- Heatherwood Heights – No report.
- Brook Creek – No report.
- Old West Lawrence – they are revising their bylaws to be ready for the annual meeting in February. They are working on the Gateway project. The stormwater project has been delayed.
- Pinkney – Stumblingbear stated the Trunk or Treat was cancelled due to weather. Wallace stated that the Pallett Village structures are scheduled to be constructed starting Nov. 28 through Dec. 2.
- Sunset Hill – Ellenbecker state that more kids are walking/biking to school. Also lots of flu in the schools. Webber stated that SHNA recently built a bench for the new bus shelter on 9th near the Merc.
- ELIA – Elections, officers remained the same. They also adopted a family.

- Schwegler – Joyce reported 21st and Iowa signal has been installed, and she is excited about moving forward to improve code enforcement.
- Oread Residents – Gateway, 9th St., Jayhawk stormwater project.
- Barker – no report.
- Springwood Heights – no report.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, December 20, 2023

6:30 PM, Station 5

1911 Stewart Avenue

Lawrence, KS, 66045

- Presentation from Cory Wallace on Click-To=Fix and homeless program, Jayhawk Room (entrance around back) Fire station, 1911 Stewart Ave., 6:30pm
- Form Subcommittee to begin lobbying for enhanced code enforcement.
- January 2024 meet location? Station 5, 1911 Stewart Avenue

Adjourn: meeting adjourned by acclamation at 7:55 PM.

Submitted by Gary Webber, Secretary, on November 16, 2023.