

**MINUTES OF THE PORTAGE CITY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING  
AUGUST 23, 2022**

Mayor Patricia Randall called the Committee of the Whole Meeting to order at 5:30 PM. Mayor Patricia M. Randall, Mayor Pro Tem Jim Pearson, and Councilmembers Chris Burns, Lori Knapp, Vic Ledbetter, and Terry Urban were present. Councilmember Lisa Brayton was absent from the meeting. Also in attendance were City Manager Patrick McGinnis, Deputy City Manager Adam Herringa, Deputy City Manager Mike Carroll, and Deputy City Clerk Tammy Durian.

Mayor Randall asked City Manager Patrick McGinnis to introduce the purpose of the meeting. City Manager McGinnis relayed that the City of Portage is currently working to elevate attainable housing and working with other entities to address the housing deficiency and shortage.

City Manager McGinnis invited Emily Petz and Lee Adams from the W.E. Upjohn Institute to present the Kalamazoo County Housing Plan. The Upjohn Institute created a housing plan for Kalamazoo County. Ms. Petz provided information about the planning process and plan format, key findings, survey results, as well as goals, objectives, and strategies. Mr. Adams discussed population, construction, and the need for more units.

Mayor Randall introduced Kalamazoo County Housing Director Mary Balkema. Ms. Balkema gave a brief overview of the Countywide housing efforts, noting the amount of funds allocated for multifamily, single family new builds, preservation of existing units, single-family rehab, and supportive services. She also commented on upcoming goals and the target number of units. The County will work closely with local government to obtain actionable items such as the need for more units, continue to fund supportive services, more affordable housing, encourage the construction of diverse type of housing, ensure housing at all price points, increase housing supply for those with physical disabilities, prioritize projects utilizing multiple funding sources, and continue rehab of existing housing stock. Mayor Randall asked if there was additional information the Upjohn Institute survey provided. Ms. Balkema replied to the shortage of affordable housing, as well as the amount of income needed to make fair market rent. She shared the County's initiative to raise wages to help with the affordable housing problem.

After opening the meeting to City Council questions, Councilmember Burns asked if the target number of units needed is to prevent the problem from getting worse or to solve the problem. Mr. Adams answered it is to maintain the current housing situation. Councilmember Urban inquired about accessory dwelling units, rental units, and rental unit registration. Ms. Petz provided information reference accessory dwelling units in other communities, and Mr. Adams shared the City of Kalamazoo's registration system for rental units. Mayor Randall inquired about rehab housing, assistance, and the price to renovate versus building new. Discussion ensued, noting the affordability of renovation due to the cost of construction. Councilmember Burns commented on market-rate housing developments, and Mr. Adams referenced a study indicating favorable results. Mayor Randal asked about large cooperations,

their search for employees, and the need for housing. Discussion including the need for collaboration and attainable income took place.

Deputy City Manager Herringa discussed workforce housing in the City of Portage. He shared that the City Council Neighborhood Subcommittee met to discuss possibilities of property located on Portage Road, noting a deadline to submit for Kalamazoo County Housing Millage and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. Through efforts of the City Council Neighborhood Subcommittee and volunteers, a conceptual plan for a property on Portage Road was introduced. Councilmember Knapp inquired about the plan and asked about income levels. Deputy Manager Herringa replied this will be determined as development proceeds. Mayor Randall noted the efforts from volunteers and staff educating the subcommittee and commented on funding. City Manager McGinnis shared the urgency to move forward and next steps for a citywide Portage Housing Plan. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson asked about next steps and receiving funds from the County for infrastructure. Discussion regarding strategy, time sensitivity, and infrastructure, as well as reaching out to County Commissioners followed.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mayor Randall adjourned the meeting at 06:51 PM.

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Tammy Durian, Deputy City Clerk