

THE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

January 13, 2026

12:00 p.m.

Councilman Denny Wayne Conference Room (Bush Building, 4th floor)
840 Boonville Avenue

MEMBERS

PRESENT: Callie Carroll, Chair; Derek Lee; Monica Horton; and Heather Hardinger.

MEMBERS

ABSENT: None.

COUNCIL

PRESENT: None.

STAFF

PRESENT: Maurice S. Jones, Deputy City Manager; Collin Quigley, Deputy City Manager; Jordan Paul, City Attorney; Amanda Ohlensehlen, Director of Economic Vitality and Workforce Development; Cora Scott, Director of Public Information and Civic Engagement; Melissa Hart, Assistant Director of Public Information and Civic Engagement; Kristen Milam, Senior Communications Coordinator; Director of Quality of Place Initiatives; Steve Childers, Director of Planning and Development; Errin Kemper, Director of Environmental Services; Ronald Petering, Assistant Director of Environmental Services; Anita Cotter, City Clerk; and Tonia Stopka, City Clerk Administrative Specialist.

GUESTS: Brandon Jenson, Councilmember; Jack McGee, *Springfield Daily Citizen*; Hope Davis, *Springfield News-Leader*; Krista Shurtz, City Utilities; Ben Jones, City Utilities; Kevin Barnes, Greene County; Vee Sanchez, Empower Missouri; Rex Ybañez, Springfield Tenants Unite; Alex Garcia, Springfield Tenants Unite; Seth Lee, Springfield Tenants Unite; Megan Claytor, Springfield Tenants Unite; Daniel Behlmann, Springfield Tenants Unite; Sarah Baruts, Springfield Tenants Unite; Gavin Devic, Springfield Tenants Unite; Jai Byrel, Springfield Tenants Unite; Isabelle Walker, citizen; and Bishop Mubarak, citizen.

Opening Remarks and Approval of Minutes

Councilmember Carroll, Chair, called the meeting to order at approximately 12:03 p.m., and roll call was conducted. Present: Heather Hardinger, Monica Horton, Derek Lee, and Callie Carroll. Absent: None.

Councilmember Carrol indicated consideration of the November 19, 2025, meeting minutes would be moved to the next meeting.

Staff Presentation and Discussion: Updated Policies which Address Utility Growth

Councilmember Carrol introduced Maurice S. Jones, Deputy City Manager, who invited Errin Kemper, Director of Environmental Services, to lead a continued discussion on updating policies that address utility growth areas surrounding the City of Springfield.

Mr. Kemper referenced the Growth and Annexation Plan, a Forward SGF initiative which promotes planned, sustainable, and responsible growth, as a catalyst for the development of an Urban Service Area Growth and Infrastructure Strategy. He described the Urban Service Area as a shared frontier of regional growth, economic vitality, and infrastructure management for the City, County, City Utilities, and other infrastructure providers. He emphasized the stakeholders needed to have a shared understanding of purpose and mutual goals to be successful. Areas of focus included infrastructure management, economic vitality, growth geology, policy integration, and an annexation strategy.

Mr. Kemper explained an Urban Service Area strategy would also require a coordinated internal redevelopment strategy and introduced Steve Childers, Director of Planning and Development, to present on the topic.

Mr. Childers emphasized a balance was needed between internal and external growth. He echoed the prioritization of shared goals between stakeholders, a focus on infrastructure management, and the integration of policies. He shared other objectives of the redevelopment strategy were to focus reinvestment on opportunity corridors, commercial centers, employment areas, and neighborhood nodes. The plan would aim to return vacant and underutilized City-owned property to productive use, accelerate downtown redevelopment, and implement a strategic housing action plan. Mr. Childers indicated the redevelopment strategy would be a driver of long-term impacts, increase density and value per acre and encourage infill development.

Mr. Kemper concluded the path forward would begin with a joint memo to City Council, Greene County Commission, and the City Utilities Board proposing a structured, year-long regional planning process with stakeholders for further policy development.

In response to questions from the Committee on order of work and housing proposal timelines, staff indicated the pillars of the Urban Service Area Growth and Infrastructure Strategy would be designed in parallel.

In response to member questions on the redevelopment of areas in need of contamination abatement, staff specified the growth strategy would include a system to identify and evaluate sites in need of improvement.

In response to Committee questions about investment opportunities, such as stormwater systems of subdivisions, staff responded any return on investment (ROI) prospects would be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Committee members voiced support for staff to issue the joint memo, proceed with the proposed planning process, and report quarterly updates to the Committee.

Staff Presentation and Discussion: Tenants’ Rights to Counsel

Mr. Jones introduced Jordan Paul, City Attorney, to lead a discussion with Committee members on a draft framework for a proposed ordinance on a tenants’ right to counsel program. Mr. Paul invited discussion from Committee members.

Councilmember Jenson indicated the intent of the bill was to provide representation to tenants who faced unjust eviction proceedings and to help them navigate the complex legal process. He specified the draft ordinance referenced other tenants’ right to counsel programs in the state and included court case data from 2024 on the rate of eviction filings in Greene county. Councilmember Jenson shared that he had engaged in many months’ worth of research and public outreach since drafting the original bill and intended to present an updated version at a future Community Involvement Committee meeting.

Committee members agreed the topic of tenants’ right to counsel was an important matter and some cited it as a human rights issue. They requested staff return to formally present on peer city ordinance comparisons, baseline landlord and tenant law, current eviction data for Springfield, and functions of the proposed ordinance, as well as any additional recommendations based on community feedback.

Adjournment

With no further business to conduct, Councilmember Lee moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Horton and approved by the following vote: Ayes: Hardinger, Horton, Lee, and Carroll. Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:01 p.m.

Prepared by Tonia Stopka