

THE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

August 27, 2025

2:00 p.m.

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

MEMBERS

PRESENT: Callie Carroll, Chair; Derek Lee; Monica Horton, Heather Hardinger, and Jeff Schrag, ex-officio.

MEMBERS

ABSENT: None.

COUNCIL

PRESENT: Brandon Jenson and Bruce Adib-Yazdi.

STAFF

PRESENT: Maurice S. Jones, Deputy City Manager; Collin Quigley, Deputy City Manager; Melissa Hart, Assistant Director of Public Information and Civic Engagement; Martin Gugel, Director of Building Development Services; Jordan Paul, City Attorney; Duke McDonald, Assistant City Attorney; Julie Greer, Deputy City Clerk; and Kristina D’Andrea, Executive Secretary.

GUESTS:

Isabelle Walker, CPO Blighted Property Work Group; Jeff Kester, Greater Springfield Board of Realtors; Brent Haselhorst, Springfield Apartment and Housing Association; Gordon Elliott, Springfield Apartment and Housing Association; Megan Creson, Springfield Apartment and Housing Association; Daniel Behlmann, Springfield Tenants Unite; Emily Hester, Springfield Tenants Unite; Rob YGavez, Springfield Tenants Unite; Kenton Carpenter, Springfield Tenants Unite; Isaac Protivce, Springfield Tenants Unite; Alice Barber, Springfield Tenants Unite; Vee Sanchez, citizen; Kayla Collins Henson, Springfield Tenants Unite; Colleen Appel, Springfield Tenants Unite; Sarah Barnts, Springfield Tenants Unite; Christopher Welch, Springfield Tenants Unite; Stephen Allgevey, Springfield Tenants Unite; Patrick Cunningham, Springfield Tenants Unite; Melinda Norton, Springfield Tenants Unite; Philip Beopple, Springfield Tenants Unite; Chris Marsh, Springfield Tenants Unite; Jai Byrd, Springfield Tenants Unite; Becky Volz, Neighborhood Advisory Council; Brendan Griesemer, Restore SGF; Gary Wilson, Springfield Apartment and Housing Association; Jamie Wilcox, Springfield Apartment and Housing Association; Michelle Gibsen, Springfield Apartment and Housing Association; Steve Wagner, Springfield Apartment and Housing Association; Brandi Morris, Springfield Apartment and Housing Association; Katie Auchersen, HAS Properties; and Hope Davis, *Springfield News-Leader*.

Councilmember Callie Carroll, Chair, called the meeting to order at approximately 2:00 p.m., and roll call was conducted. Present: Derek Lee, Heather Hardinger, Monica Horton, Jeff Schrag, and Callie Carroll. Absent: None.

Mayor Pro Tem Hardinger moved to approve the minutes of the July 16, 2025, meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Horton and approved by the following vote: Ayes: Lee, Horton, Hardinger, and Carroll. Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain: Schrag.

Maurice S. Jones, Deputy City Manager, introduced Martin Gugel, Director of Building Development Services (BDS), to continue discussion of the proposed draft rental inspection ordinance.

Mr. Gugel provided a brief overview of the draft ordinance for the rental inspection program with new options for consideration. He noted it would begin with an 18-month pilot program in the West Central Neighborhood Service District. He summarized changes to the draft ordinance based on discussion from the July 16, 2025, Committee meeting. He highlighted the removal of the option to request utilities be turned off at the property owner's or manager's place of residence or business, as well as the removal of the requirement for the property owner or manager to reside within Springfield's city limits or urban service area. He introduced new punitive options for failure to register a rental unit, which could include fines of \$500 to \$2,500 through the Municipal Court, a hearing process handled by a third party with the addition of fines, and, in the most extreme cases, a sheriff's sale of the rental property.

Mayor Pro Tem Hardinger asked if this was similar to the abatement process. Mr. Gugel responded affirmatively and explained the difference would be the use of a contracted third-party hearing officer, which would allow enforcement under State Statute. He noted this process would be used for inspection violations of rental units.

Mr. Gugel presented a list of rental inspection items focused on life safety issues. Councilmember Lee questioned the requirement for landlords to be responsible for rodents and insect infestations when such problems could result from tenant neglect. He recommended removing this item to avoid legal issues and placing the burden on BDS to determine fault.

Mayor Pro Tem Hardinger noted an infestation could be subjective, adding tenants would not be at fault for termite infestation, and BDS should not be responsible for mitigating the issue since it did not have administrative authority. She emphasized such guidelines should be outlined in the agreement between landlord and tenant. Mr. Gugel added an infestation would have to be addressed in order for an inspection to pass.

Councilmember Horton expressed full support for the staff's recommendations as feasible measures to ensure compliance and improve property standards, including the original proposal. She asked about Councilmember Jenson's suggestion to waive the inspection fee since it was already funded. Mr. Gugel responded the program was funded through BDS' budget requests

with the intent of charging annual fees. He noted the true cost of the program and the available funds to cover those costs would not be known until the pilot program was completed.

Councilmember Carroll expressed support for the newly-proposed enforcement measures as it would impact chronic and noncompliant landlords, without punishing compliant landlords. Mr. Gugel responded the current enforcement proposal was much simpler and would be more effective than the original proposal.

Councilmember Lee expressed agreement with Councilmember Carroll. He pointed out the probability of rent being increased if the City required an out-of-town property owner to hire a local agent to work with the City.

Mayor Pro Tem Hardinger expressed support for the newly-proposed enforcement measures.

Councilmember Horton clarified 13 percent of the City's property owners lived outside the city limits, both within and outside the urban service area. She inquired about input from City Utilities on disconnecting utilities for noncompliant landlords. Mr. Gugel responded City Utilities had advised the Board of Public Utilities would need to coordinate with City Council, and although possible, it would be a complicated process.

Councilmember Horton asked if emergency contact information could be required to add to the rental license application to ensure a local contact would be available if needed. Mr. Gugel responded additional contact information would be required to ensure someone was contacted regarding issues. Councilmember Carroll expressed agreement with Councilmember Horton regarding the requirement of emergency contact information.

Mayor Pro Tem Hardinger expressed agreement for the requirement of emergency contact information, and she recommended adding the reason for the need for emergency contact information.

Councilmember Lee agreed with Mayor Pro Tem Hardinger and raised concerns about Jenny Lind, citing ongoing elevator issues and a citizen's comment suggesting City inspections might have prevented the problem. He asked if Jenny Lind was a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) property and whether the City would be responsible for HUD inspections. Mr. Gugel confirmed it was a HUD property and explained HUD had its own inspection process, and therefore HUD housing would not be included in the rental inspection program.

Councilmember Lee asked for clarification on the location of Jenny Lind's property manager, and Mr. Gugel responded the property had a local, onsite manager.

Councilmember Lee noted problematic situations would still arise with the rental inspection program even with local agents and routine inspections. He pointed out the nuisance ordinances would help manage these issues.

Mayor Pro Tem Hardinger pointed out the complaint driven process would still be in effect and the responsibility of BDS to investigate. Mr. Gugel responded affirmatively. He noted landlords did not have to grant permission for BDS to enter the property; however, the tenant would have to permit access.

Mayor Pro Tem Hardinger noted the rental inspection program allowed the community to be more proactive to avoid dilapidated properties being boarded up. She discussed other cities with blighted properties and the extreme measures they took to remedy the issues. She expressed support for a rental inspection program.

Mayor Pro Tem Hardinger asked Mr. Gugel to summarize the recommendations the Committee would vote on. Mr. Gugel responded the new draft ordinance removed the option to request utilities be turned off at the property owner's or manager's place of residence or business, as well as the removal of the requirement for the property owner or manager to reside within Springfield's city limits or urban service area. He introduced new punitive options for failure to register a rental unit, which could include fines of \$500 to \$2,500 through the Municipal Court, a hearing process handled by a third party with the addition of fines, and, in the most extreme cases, a sheriff's sale of the rental property.

Councilmember Lee asked the Committee members if they agreed to eliminate the inspection for rodents and insect infestations. Councilmember Carroll asked Mr. Gugel to provide a recommendation. Mr. Gugel responded the pilot program could provide data to address this issue and determine how to move forward with this item.

Councilmember Horton inquired about inspections only occurring during occupancy changes. Mr. Gugel responded the occupancy requirement to be vacant for inspections would not be part of this program, and all 1,500 units in the pilot neighborhood would be inspected in year one. He also noted the inspection process would be set up to be over a five-year period, and landlords would be required to give three dates to schedule inspections.

Councilmember Horton acknowledged this would not be financially self-sustainable, but it was a critical service the government would provide and required by the State of Missouri. She noted there would be an opportunity for improvement. She expressed appreciation to community members who helped facilitate this program.

Mayor Pro Tem Hardinger expressed appreciation to the community and stakeholders who were involved in the rental inspection program process.

Councilmember Carroll moved to send the updated draft ordinance and rental inspection items, as currently written, to City Council for approval. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hardinger and approved by the following vote: Ayes: Lee, Horton, Hardinger, Schrag, and Carroll. Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

Mayor Schrag inquired about how compliant landlords would be rewarded. Mr. Gugel responded an addition to the next phase of the program was being examined, as well as researching other municipalities to determine what they do.

Councilmember Lee moved to adjourn. Mayor Pro Tem seconded the motion, and it was approved by the following vote: Ayes: Lee, Horton, Hardinger, Schrag, and Carroll. Nays: None. Absent: None. None. Abstain: None.

The meeting adjourned at 2:44 p.m.

Prepared by Kristina D'Andrea