

**WORK SESSION MINUTES
FORT MADISON CITY COUNCIL**

Tuesday, June 2, 2020

Mayor Matt Mohrfeld presided with Council members: Rebecca Bowker, Bob Morawitz, Kevin Rink, Rusty Andrews, Mark Lair, Tyler Miller and Chad Cangas present.

The Work Session began at 7:55 P.M. City Planning Director Doug Krogmeier detailed vacant building issues the City has observed and pointed out dilapidated structures have been an issue for years. He proposed a Vacant Building Registration ordinance (VBRO). This program started in Detroit and many cities in the US have addressed vacant properties in the same way.

City staff reviewed each dilapidated structure in Fort Madison and has set in place plans for each property. The City has determined that there are:

	<u>Cost to Demolish</u>
21 properties that need to be demolished:	\$144,950
11 properties that needed demolished and taken to court:	170,000
12 properties where the owners can resolve the issues:	114,300
10 properties with issues:	105,000

He noted this list does not include 721 or 732 Avenue G.

Vacant properties increase nuisances, increase calls for police service, increase structure fires, lower neighborhood property values and lead to dilapidated structures. The proposed ordinance can increase owner monitoring of the property, increase maintenance and code compliance, reduce police and fire calls, encourage rehabilitation, eliminate nuisances and provide better communication via submitted owner information.

Properties that would need to be registered include: all properties vacant for 90 days, foreclosures and properties that have been purchased within 30 days if vacant. There are exemptions, including active remodels, estates in probate, for sale properties, snow birds and properties that have received substantial damage. There are time limitations for these exemptions.

Each property will have to be registered. Owners will need to provide owner information as well listing other parties' interest in the property (such as banks) and a certificate of property insurance. A plan will be required which can include: demo schedule with bond, rehabilitation schedule and vacancy maintenance.

Owners will also need to: keep the doors and windows intact (not boarded up), roof in good condition, soffits complete, siding/walls complete, pipes winterized or drained, pest control and keep the property structurally sound including the foundation. In addition, the yard, accessory structures and sidewalks must be maintained.

The owners will be required to inspection the property monthly and the City will inspect annually. The owner will also consent to emergency inspections and repairs as well as authorize the Police Department to act as an agent of the owner in regarding to possible "Criminal Trespass" matters.

A fee schedule was discussed with Council. The proposed schedule is based upon square footage and residential or commercial use. The fees increase in the third year of the program.

Krogmeier said if Council does not object, staff will proceed with at least two public forum meetings and refine the ordinance before bringing it to Council.

The Work Session/Training ended at 8:23 P.M.