



Legislation Text

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RESOLUTION NO. 210318, AS AMENDED

Supporting and encouraging the City's efforts to the Land Bank of Kansas City to identify, create, and implement processes and procedures that effectuate the streamlined transfer of property owned by the City's Land Bank to non-profit organizations and incremental developers to provide affordable housing for Kansas Citizens.

WHEREAS, the nation's housing crisis has reached emergency levels, in that, in 2019, a fulltime worker earning minimum wage could not afford a two-bedroom apartment in any U.S. county, more than half of all Americans spent over 30 percent of their income on housing, only one in five households qualifying for federal housing assistance received it, leaving more people to rent from private landlords when many people-especially low-income people and communities of color-live one emergency away from an eviction or homelessness; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the housing crisis by exponentially increasing job loss and financial struggle, particularly in communities of color and for those living at or near the poverty threshold established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and

WHEREAS, forty-six (46) percent of Kansas City residents rent their homes, a historically high rate, with half of the City's renters being "cost burdened," spending over 30 percent of their income on rent, and tenants earning minimum wage would have to work over 92 hours a week to afford an average two-bedroom apartment; and

WHEREAS, the intersecting and sometimes competing costs of housing and health costs place an undue burden on our city's poorest and most vulnerable tenants; and

WHEREAS, tenants who experience eviction exhibit higher rates of depression, anxiety, psychological distress, and physical health problems than others; and

WHEREAS, on average, in 2019, landlords filed 42 formal evictions per business day in Jackson County, Missouri, and those evictions were filed for nonpayment of rent, a reflection of continued strains in the rental market; and

WHEREAS, because the rate of COVID-19 infection is declining, restrictions on evictions will cease, resulting in greater housing strain for tenants earning minimum wage or for those without a job; and

WHEREAS, the Land Bank of Kansas City, Missouri, a public body corporate and politic ("Land Bank"), separate from the City, but financially supported by the City, currently has over 111 unoccupied properties available to rehabilitate and transform into affordable housing; and

WHEREAS, the Land Bank was created pursuant to Ordinance No. 120779 to serve multiple public purposes, including providing opportunities for the revitalization of deteriorating residential neighborhoods under Municipal Code Section 74-71(a)(i), and to provide safe, decent and affordable housing for existing and future residents under Municipal Code Section 74-71(a) (ii), each consistent with the Missouri statutes that allowed the City to create the Land Bank; and

WHEREAS, the current process of purchasing property owned by the Land Bank is time-consuming and overly burdensome, delaying the conversion of vacant land or existing structures into affordable homes; and

WHEREAS, the City Council believes every person has the right to a safe, accessible, affordable home, and the Council affirms its active commitment to providing increased affordable housing to Kansas City residents, as well as workforce development opportunities for those involved in renovating and constructing new affordable units; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF KANSAS CITY:

Section 1. That the Mayor and Council express their support for identifying, creating, and implementing processes and procedures to streamline the transfer of property owned by the Land Bank to non-profit organizations and incremental developers in order to increase the availability of affordable housing to homeless and unhoused Kansas Citians, and direct the City Manager to assist the Land Bank in the issuance of requests for proposals (RFPs) within 30 days to achieve that end.

Section 2. That the City Manager is directed to provide a recommendation to the City Council within 60 days on a method to transfer Land Bank properties out of the Land Bank, following an initiative Kansas City government announced last month to refurbish 111 Land Bank properties. This legislation is intended (1) to ensure occupants of the homes are at 30 percent or below the area median income for at least 20 years from the date the property is transferred from the Land Bank; (2) establish a method to ensure an individual or family source of income is not used as a basis for discrimination; (3) to ensure collaboration with all neighborhood groups to avoid concentration of poverty in areas of the City; and (4) to include but not be limited to, community land trust models among the recommendations.

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