

Neighborhood Concerns Committee Meeting Report
April 29, 2024

The Neighborhood Concerns Committee met on April 29, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

Committee Members Present: Thomas Jones, Derry Glenn, and Jon Neeper.

Other Council Members Present: Todd Gordon, Carla Thompson, and Jamie Dixon.

Councilor Jones opened the meeting to discuss the definition of “Family” in the City Zoning Code. Councilor Neeper explained the issue originally was brought up a few years ago when there was issue with multiple students living in a single family home which disrupts the ecosystem of a neighborhood. He expressed his concern with folks that are renting homes and subletting one room for the amount of the total rent. He believes they need to get an idea of how to handle this as there are a lot of dissatisfied residents who have bought their homes in quiet neighborhoods. Councilor Glenn referenced past discussions about this issue and explained there have never been rules set as far as single family homes. He explained this issue isn’t just a Haitian issue, it is also a college student issue. He expressed the concern of increased vehicles for one house. Councilor Thompson inquired if there is anything in place for Ohio or on the Federal level regarding occupancy levels, house size, parking, etc. because the concern is overcrowding in a house and on the streets. Tony Geiger explained there are communities that have square footage requirements for occupancy levels. He advised they will be looking at all resources that are available when considering draft legislation. Glenn expressed the need to research and not rush through this issue.

Geiger recited the definition of a “Single-Family House/Dwelling” and advised there is not a specific definition for “Family”. Tammy Colon, 633 Canyon Drive, Executive Dir. of Mental Health and Recovery Services Board, encouraged the Committee to bring the individuals to the table who serve the vulnerable residents of our community who have the least opportunity to be able to afford independent dwelling along with those who are in treatment and need a home environment in order to successfully recover. She expressed there are many unintended consequences that can come from defining family. Alicia Rinehart, New Albany, Ohio, is Co-Founder of Lighthouse Behavioral Health Solutions, explained they operate recovery housing in multiple communities across the State of Ohio and have been doing so since 2018. She explained there are communities that have defined what a family is including occupancy, zoning, etc. She advised Lighthouse is certified through the Ohio Recovery Housing. She asked the committee to consider the family that is created through a recovery home, although it may not be blood, it is a family. Katie Carpenter, Senior Dir. of Housing Operations for Lighthouse, explained Ohio Recovery Housing requires the residents to live in a single family home and live much like a family would do and be in a drug and alcohol free environment. She explained there are standards they are required to abide by and residents are expected to live independently in a monitored environment. Ms. Rinehart asked the Committee to include them in the conversation when coming to a decision on this matter.

Councilor Neeper expressed his appreciation to Lighthouse for coming but explained they are talking more about unregulated housing as recovery housing is already regulated. He expressed interest in getting additional information from Lighthouse regarding what their regulations are. Councilor Glenn confirmed when he needs help in his ward, Lighthouse residents are helpful for his ward and with the Neighborhood Association. He expressed his appreciation to Lighthouse. Tammy Colon explained the Universities may be helpful in the housing discussion. Neeper referenced the sit-down that occurred a few years ago with various police departments and Jeff Jarvis at UNOH where Mr. Jarvis did not entertain a solution to the issues that were

discussed. He described many of the various types of issues that have arose in neighborhoods from students.

Amos, W. 6th Street, spoke for the Haitian community. He explained the Haitians that have come to the U.S. under the Parole program, they are here for 2 years. He explained he came to the U.S. for security as his country does not offer any opportunity to create a future. He advised he is here to work and to send his children to school. He inquired about opportunities for education. Councilor Glenn referenced the meeting he held to discuss the Haitian community. Janelda Cowan, 713 S. Atlantic Ave., reminded people to be careful about the barriers we create and she believes some of the information that is being put out there is not correct. She suggested advertising the meetings better and offering the correct information. She reminded people to keep their eyes open for meetings and encouraged them to attend those meetings that are beneficial to the community. Glenn reiterated the City of Lima is not a sanctuary city.

Glenn moved, seconded by Neeper, to adjourn. Motion carried.

Respectfully,

Thomas Jones, Chair
TJ:dma