

Speaker 1 ([00:51:29](#)):

Okay, I'm going to gavel us back in. We just came back from an executive session and we don't have anything to report from that session, so we're going to go ahead and move on to the rest of our agenda and the first item is for Sherry to read us the rules of the meeting.

Speaker 2 ([00:51:44](#)):

Thank you Mayor, and good evening everyone. Please silence your cell phones to minimize distractions. During the meeting when the mayor calls for public comment, please approach the podium to indicate you wish to speak. Virtual participants should use the raise hand function to indicate they wish to speak. When prompted, please select join as panelist. There will be a brief delay as your role changes. Once your name is called, please unmute and turn on your camera. To provide your comments, please state your name and zip code. Before speaking, the city reserves the right to turn videos off or mute participants. All comments will be limited to three minutes. The primary format for accessing or participating in this meeting is in person at City Hall. Virtual access to view or participate in the meeting cannot be guaranteed. The chat function will not be monitored. If you have any trouble, the meeting can be viewed on the city's YouTube channel and able Channel 25. Thank you Mayor.

Speaker 1 ([00:52:48](#)):

Alright, thank you very much Sherry. The next item on the agenda is to approve the agenda. The city commission reserves the right to amend, supplement, or reorder the agenda during the meeting, is there a motion to approve the agenda as it stands?

Speaker 3 ([00:53:01](#)):

Move to approve the agenda.

Speaker 1 ([00:53:03](#)):

Second. Okay. The motion to approve the agenda by Finkel Dye, seconded by sellers. All in favor say Aye.

Speaker 4 ([00:53:08](#)):

Aye. Aye.

Speaker 1 ([00:53:10](#)):

Motion passes. Five zero. Okay. Next we're going to move on to proclamations and I see we have three tonight and the first one we have is for Women's History Month and I see Sarah Lynn Reese Hardy, with the Spencer Museum of Artists is here to receive this. And if she would like to come up and speak before the proclamation, I'd appreciate it.

Speaker 5 ([00:53:35](#)):

Thank you. It's great to see you all. I am Thank you Mayor Dever and City Commissioners for this proclamation and for recognizing the powerful impact of women through history and in our own community. My name is Sarah Lynn Reese Hardy, and on behalf of the Spencer Museum at the University of Kansas, I am honored to be part of this celebration and to stand here with you in this place and in this moment, women's History Month recognizes and celebrates the achievements women have made over the course of American history in every field, including artistic and creative contributions that reshape our view of the world. At the museum, we share the power of art, its ability to connect people, offer new perspectives, and inspire change. Art, education and creativity are at the core of our mission to

support Ku Lawrence and the many communities we serve. Right now, the Spencer Museum is proud to present bold women, an expansive exhibition that highlights the visionary work of 55 women from a variety of backgrounds who have open perspectives and influence cultural change through their art. Their boldness is seen not only in their work, but in their innovative use of materials and concepts, but their steadfast advocacy to their own communities. These artists are bold, making their mark through rigorous questioning mastery and artistic courage as an art museum dedicated to learning, we recognize this boldness as a creative action that opens opportunities for communal dialogue and curiosity.

(00:55:54):

I want to specifically acknowledge two artists who are featured in the exhibition, Hong Chung, Zang and Marla a Jackson. We are fortunate to have these two bold women artists as a part of our Lawrence community, and their work has also been shown across the country and internationally. Hong has just walked in timing. Perfect timing. Hog is here with us tonight I am also joined by my colleague Jennifer Talbot and curator Susan Earl. Susan has shaped and presented and organized this exhibition in collaboration with local and national advisors along with KU students. We together invite you to experience the vitality of art and the innovation of women artists firsthand in the Bold Women Exhibition. We hope to see you in our galleries and our study centers. We hope to see you boldly looking. The Spencer Museum is one place among many in Lawrence, the region and the world where art and creative work by women can be discovered. On this auspicious occasion, I bow to all the women artists working with energy and commitment while they imagine a creative future for all. Thank you all so much.

Speaker 1 (00:57:44):

Thank you Sarah Lynn. Those are some kind words and we appreciate the insight into the art. I'm going to go ahead and read your proclamation for us tonight.

Speaker 5 (00:57:51):

Do I stay here?

Speaker 1 (00:57:53):

If you'd like, we're going to have to receive it when we're done so you might as well.

(00:57:57):

Whereas an observance of Women's History Month, the city of Lawrence recognizes all women for their significant contribution to the shaping of our nation's identity and strengthening of our country through recorded and unrecorded historic contributions. And whereas during Women's History Month, which is recognized by many countries, we celebrate women securing their own rights of suffrage and equal opportunity as well as the efforts women put into the past and current social movements. And whereas the city of Lawrence is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion and fundamental characteristics of a healthy, vibrant, and thriving city, the presence of and strength of women continues to enhance the quality of life in the city of Lawrence and throughout the nation. And whereas all women, every race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and religion are to be honored and celebrated in the home, workplace and community. Now therefore, I Mike De Mayor, the city of Lawrence, Kansas, do hereby Proclaim the month of March, 2025 as Women's History Month. And we encourage all in our community to take this opportunity to reflect on the past and present achievements of all women as demonstrated by our efforts in reaching for equity. Let us all work hard to ensure such equity for all. Thank you very much.

Speaker 6 (00:59:16):

Thank you. Thank you so much.

Speaker 1 ([00:59:19](#)):

Thank you. Okay, the next proclamation on the agenda is to proclaim March, 2025 as Music Business Month. And I know that Nick Harwell is here to have some words with us and to receive the proclamation.

Speaker 7 ([00:59:39](#)):

Yes, thank you. Yes. My name is Nick Carswell. I'm the director of the Lawrence Music Alliance. Ani here is our communications director and we both work in the music industry here in Lawrence. So Lawrence Music Alliance is a nonprofit organization that uses the framework of music ecosystem development to engage the music community to advocate on behalf of musicians and creatives and to act as a vital intermediary between the creative economy and the wider community. So I'm very happy to be in front of you in recognition of this effort to support a vibrant and equitable music ecosystem. We know that music has an intrinsic, intrinsic value in creativity and self-expression and community, but we also know that it is an important economic driver in our creative economy. Lawrence is a music city and people come here for live music entertainment for nightlife and tourism. According to the 2024 Lawrence Music census, the music ecosystem in Lawrence generates \$13 million in economic activity supporting more than six and a half thousand live music events annually.

([01:00:39](#)):

We also export music across our region with more than 9,600 performances by Lawrence artists outside of Lawrence across our region. Lawrence Creatives also spend \$2.7 million annually on music expenses including marketing, recording, merchandising, accounting and legal and music equipment and supplies. However, compared to similar studies, the average gig pay in Lawrence is low at \$101 and 63% of our respondents to the census are worried about stagnant pay rates. Only one in four musicians or music businesses have ever received financial support of any kind, and 82% identified a need for audience development tools and greater connectivity within the industry. So through the support of the city of Lawrence as well as the Community Solutions grant from Network Kansas, the Lawrence Music Alliance with our partners has been creating programming and networking opportunities to begin to address some of the needs of our music community. I also want to point out that just like the music ecosystem that touches many parts of our community, our strategy of music ecosystem development requires buy-in from multiple sectors of the community.

([01:01:44](#)):

So with the city's support from the public sector as well as the Kansas Arts Commission, we've been able to leverage private grant funds in kind support from nonprofit organizations and partnerships with local businesses to develop programming and create employment opportunities for our music community. So through this collaborative community work, Lawrence continues to be a regional leader in music ecosystem development and this is due in no small part to the city's leadership in supporting and prioritizing this effort. So thank you. We are about halfway through music business month. We have a lot of programs that we've had on grants, webinars and gender equity and music and networking opportunities. We also have open office hours on our music business help desk Wednesday lunchtimes at Lawrence Public Library. We're partnering with Douglas County Core who are in the room here somewhere for a music entrepreneurship round table. We'll also have a music producer meetup, a workshop on diverse revenue streams, and then a webinar on taxes for musicians and creatives that's on March 31st. All of the details can be found at Lawrence Music Alliance and all programs are free to attend. So thank you for your time and for your continued support of the music and creative community in Lawrence. Thank you.

Speaker 1 ([01:02:53](#)):

Thank you Nick. We appreciate all you do for our community and I appreciate you highlighting all that you've done in the past and hopefully we can continue to do so in the future and right now, hopefully this proclamation will help raise awareness whereas as part of its unmistakable identity, Lawrence is highly regarded for its arts culture and its identity as a music city. And whereas the music ecosystem in Lawrence generates \$13 million in economic activity supporting more than 6,500 live music events annually with a vibrant ecosystem of artists, musicians, venues, and music industry workers. And whereas the Lawrence Music Alliance serves the city's creative economy through the advocacy, professional development and networking events for the music community. And whereas the music alliances programs, workshops and events in March, 2025 give special focus to supporting the business, entrepreneurship and networking needs of musicians, music venues and creatives in the city of Lawrence. And whereas the music community will have an opportunity to learn new skills and pursue opportunities and grants, business taxes, music production, gender equality, and networking for the music community. Now therefore, I'm Michael Dever, mayor of the city of Lawrence, Kansas, do hereby proclaim March, 2025 as music business month in celebration of our unmistakable creative community and encourage our local and regional music industry members to participate in the programs of the Lawrence Music Alliance. So thank you very much.

(01:04:32):

Okay, and our last proclamation tonight is relative to the Douglas County Extension Master Food Volunteers Program. Is anyone here to speak to that tonight?

Speaker 8 (01:04:42):

Yes.

Speaker 1 (01:04:42):

Great. Please come on. Please let us know who you are too.

Speaker 8 (01:04:46):

Mayor Deaver, my name is Joan Span and I'm current president of the extension for Douglas County Master Food Volunteers and I have one of our members here and also the chair of the Kitchen Sale Committee and we are honored to be here. We're also honored to be here to assist the community with collaborating with many nonprofits to assist with food education, whether it be food prep or food preservation. We also help with citizens filling out SNAP enrollment applications so they are able to get assistance and many different parts of the organization assist with food insecurity and I'm proud and honored to be a part of that. We will also be holding classes in the fall at the extension office for new volunteers that would like to communicate with the citizens, how to prepare their food and also how to stretch their dollars. We are very proud to be a part of that. The sale, which is April the fifth, is one that brings in money so that we can extend that money out to the community, to other organizations that help people that are in situations, whether there be single people or families. We're very proud to do that and honored. The other thing that we're very proud of doing is not only donating, but also collaborating with education with both adults, youth and children. Thank you very much commissioners and mayor for this opportunity.

Speaker 1 (01:06:30):

We really appreciate what you're doing for the community and these are the kinds of things that can really help those most in need and helping the dollars go further and for helping the community understand what resources are available to them. So thank you very much and hopefully your fundraising will be successful. I'll go ahead and read your proclamation.

Speaker 9 ([01:06:49](#)):

Thank you.

Speaker 1 ([01:06:50](#)):

Whereas each year, the Douglas County Extension Master Food Volunteers collect gently used kitchen utensils, tableware cookware, and small appliances from community members and hold a kitchen sale open to all community members. Free vouchers for purchasing kitchen items are provided to all participants in the SNAP Ed programming. The sale will be held Saturday, April 5th, 2025 from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the Douglas County fairgrounds. And whereas participants in the SNAP-Ed programs are taught ways to cook healthy foods, however, they often don't have the tools needed to prepare the foods, the kitchen sales and opportunity for all those to get the tools needed for their kitchen. And whereas last year, the kitchen sale provided free kitchen items to 34 families and raised enough money to make monetary donations to the Ballor Center and Heartland Community Center. And whereas this event is part of the work done by volunteers of the Douglas County Extension Master Food Volunteers whose mission is to collaborate with community partners to combat food insecurity, increase access to healthy foods, disseminate nutrition education, assist SNAP ed nutrition educators in community outreach and provide nutrition-based youth programming now therefore, I'm Michael Dere mayor, the city of Lawrence, Kansas.

([01:08:04](#)):

Do hereby designate April 5th, 2025 as Douglas County Extension Master Food Voluntary Kitchen Sale Day and urge all citizens to take donations to the kitchen, kitchen items to the Douglas County Extension Office and to attend this event. Thank you very much. Thank you. Okay, the next item on the agenda is the consent agenda and the items on the consent agenda are considered under one motion and approved by one motion. Members of the governing body may remove items for separate discussion if desired, members of the public may remove items identified as quasi-judicial for separate discussions if desired, members of the public will be limited to three minutes for comments. Is there any member of the body would like an item removed from consent agenda? Okay. I didn't see any quasi, maybe one quasi-judicial or No,

Speaker 3 ([01:09:10](#)):

There's none.

Speaker 1 ([01:09:11](#)):

Okay, good. Okay, so seeing none, is there a motion to approve

Speaker 3 ([01:09:14](#)):

Move to approve the consent agenda.

Speaker 10 ([01:09:17](#)):

Second.

Speaker 1 ([01:09:18](#)):

Okay. Motion to approve the consent agenda by Finkel Dye, seconded by sellers. All in favor say aye.

Speaker 4 ([01:09:23](#)):

Aye. Aye.

Speaker 1 ([01:09:24](#)):

Those opposed? Motion passes. Five zero. Okay. The next item on the agenda is consider a tax amendment A MDT 25 dash zero one to chapter 20, the Land Development Code of the city of Lawrence, Kansas to streamline language and regulations to improve clarity and correct inconsistencies and errors. And the mission is to adopt on first reading ordinance number 1 0 1 2 0. We're also going to consider a tax amendment to section 2 0 2 0 4 on occupancy standards to reduce the maximum occupancy limit to four in the R one and R two districts to three unrelated adults and maintain the maximum occupancy limit to five unrelated adults in all other zoning districts that permit residential uses.

Speaker 6 ([01:10:20](#)):

I added her.

Speaker 11 ([01:10:26](#)):

Good evening, mayor and commissioners. My name's Becky Pepper. I'm the planning manager. Elizabeth Garvin with Clear and Consultants is here to help us with this presentation in item tonight. Staff is available for other questions too though. Great.

Speaker 1 ([01:10:40](#)):

Thank you. Becky. Call Elizabeth.

Speaker 2 ([01:10:48](#)):

We can't hear you Elizabeth, Kurt. Corey can hear her on Zoom but we can't hear her here.

Speaker 1 ([01:11:27](#)):

Same thing happened last time

Speaker 2 ([01:11:29](#)):

A couple weeks ago,

Speaker 6 ([01:11:30](#)):

But you're right.

Speaker 1 ([01:11:31](#)):

Yeah.

Speaker 12 ([01:11:50](#)):

Hey Elizabeth. Hi. Can you hear me?

Speaker 1 ([01:11:53](#)):

Thank you Kurt. There we

Speaker 12 ([01:11:56](#)):

Go. Yes we can. Thank you. Okay, Mr. Mayor and commissioners, before I start this evening's presentation, when we originally submitted this information for your packet, we had it set up as two separate presentations, one on the text amendments and one on the occupancy issue. I would like to ask if

you would like to do this as one single presentation this evening, taking up the occupancy discussion at the end, or if you'd like to keep it in two presentations,

Speaker 1 ([01:12:27](#)):

I'm fine to keep it together. You want?

Speaker 3 ([01:12:29](#)):

Yeah, that's fine. Why would be great?

Speaker 12 ([01:12:32](#)):

Alright, I'll share screen and this is fairly short.

Speaker 6 ([01:12:44](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 12 ([01:12:46](#)):

No, I lost you guys.

([01:12:49](#)):

Okay, so this is a set of post-adoption edits. We discussed this during code adoption. We have done some cleanup to the code, reviewed it multiple times and made some changes to make it easier to understand or to bring some sections into consistency with the overall code. I have a short presentation on some of the higher level edits this evening. Just to let you know everything that's in these sections, I believe everyone got a copy with track changes in it that has all of the smaller comma changes and cleanup that we did in the code. So we changed the density explainer to be more explanatory. We understood that this was a place where people who don't frequently deal with zoning or development weren't able to make sense of the regulations the way that it was explained. And so we took another go at this to help everyone understand how it calculate density.

([01:13:59](#)):

So just to explain what's in here now, it says new development must meet the minimum density when it's calculated at one acre. Infill and redevelopment must meet the minimum density calculated at one acre where there's sufficient buildable area. You don't have to use the smaller zoning district size to meet that density. That was a point of confusion. You are allowed to use the smaller lot size that exists in some districts if you opt to do more development, it's not mandatory and there are still limits in the use table on the uses that can be done on some smaller lots. So some of this may come back to you as like a memory of what we talked about earlier, but I'm going to skip forward to the next slide and show you what I'm talking about. In addition to the words that are in the regulations, we put a table in, so this is table 20 dash three dash two, and it essentially does the math to show someone what your minimum size would need to be to meet minimum density in an R two or R three district, what your minimum lot size could be to meet maximum density again in R two and R three and then what development at a smaller lot size is optional under the code.

([01:15:25](#)):

So this is intended just to help people read down the table and say, okay, I'm zoned R two, I have a 20,000 square foot lot, how many units do I need to do and how many units can I do? So that change is for helping people get through the regulations. We're going to take this information and also move it into the user's guide that we've been working with staff to put together for the code so that people can do these general calculations about density for their lot or for the development that they're considering doing.

(01:16:06):

In terms of individual edits throughout the regulations, if you read the code, one section that you would see a series of edits in is 2309. That's the T five Urban Center Transect. So the T five district is in the current smart code that's been retired. This district has been retired, but because the smart code didn't work with all of the regulations in the land development code, what you'll find in this section are instructions for the few property owners that will still have T five zoning about how they transition into the new regulations in the principal use table. We clarified where courtyard development is allowed. We took a regulation about trash receptacle areas that was in the congregate living section and moved it to a general applicability section to show that it is more generally applicable. We think that got left out in the drafting and it should have applied more broadly than congregate living in the accessory use table.

(01:17:14):

We added in the allowances for ATMs and drive-through windows that hadn't in the set of development standards. As we were rereading it, we realized that it could be complex and someone who wasn't super familiar with the code may have a hard time figuring out which of these are applicable to what type of development. So if I am redeveloping and I have to do do I the motivity standard And in particular, and this was a clarification about what needs to happen in the hydrology and there's another word in there study. And so it wasn't neither an addition nor a subtraction. It was just letting applicants know that the study needs to include this different types of information that were already in the section in the stormwater management section separate from Floodline. We had some cleanup edits from MSO just to reflect current process. And again in there we did some applicability clarification so it's easier for applicants to figure out when they need to comply with the storm water management requirements.

(01:18:35):

Moving closer to the end in article 16 administration and procedures, we edited the guarantees and performance agreement section to reflect current city practice. We changed the name of the grading permit to the land disturbance permit just to reflect that it is actually broader than grading. There are other activities that qualify as land disturbance that are not necessarily grading and we also clarified some of the exemptions. So things that people can do on their property that don't trigger the need for a land disturbance permit. And then finally in the site plan procedure section, we carry forward the current one and two unit exemption, but the applicability to courtyard development. So if everyone remembers court air development might have five or six units that are single family, so that are one unit or two unit that is intended to go through site plan review. But if you are doing a duplex on a single parcel, that does not go through site plan review. So adding in that new procedure, that new development type and getting clear about who has to get review for that.

(01:19:48):

Finally, we reincorporated the stormwater management definitions. They went missing between the consolidated draft and the final draft and we added a definition for permanently affordable housing. We talked about it elsewhere in regulations and thought it might be easier to find in the definition section. Then we have a few edits that planning commission sent forward that are reflected in the draft that was in city commission agenda. So we cleaned up a table that has cluster development lot size examples. It had the wrong minimum lot size for R one. You may remember that got changed along the way from 10,000 to 5,000. And so we just cleaned up that table to reflect that change. And then in the minimum commercial use offsite parking requirements, so commercial uses in residential districts are required to have offsite parking. There were some uses in that table that are not actually allowed in residential districts and we cleaned the table up to remove those uses to prevent any confusion going forward.

(01:20:54):

So that's a summary of the higher level changes that we talked about that if you are reading through the regulations probably have more track changes in them and we just wanted to provide that overview to

show what we were doing with these changes. I'm going to skip up into the occupancy discussion. So in the draft code, in the adopted code, the definition of occupancy is provided as you see on this slide. So means residing or sleeping at a dwelling unit. The majority of a person's time unless otherwise expressly stated in the land development code. All household living uses as identified in the principal use table shall be limited to one household per dwelling unit. A household is defined as any of the following, occupying a dwelling unit, a single person, a number of people related to each other by blood marriage or other committed partnership adoption, fostering or guardianship or up to five adults of any relationship at the city Commission's request.

(01:22:02):

The planning commission, we considered the definition number three, which is up to five adults of any relationship had a discussion about it and made a recommendation to change this section to change definition number three and that changes based on the zoning district type. So they recommended for R one and R two, those are the city's lowest density residential districts for item number three to read up to three adults of any relationship and for the R three, R four and R five zoning districts for item number three to read up to five adults of any relationship. So we haven't added that change to the document. It's still an item that has come back to city Commission for discussion and I believe that is the end of this presentation. Nope, I'm sorry. We have the final slide and we can come back to it. This is your guidelines for voting this evening for taking action. So I will back up and follow your guidance as to how you want to have this discussion and I'm here to answer questions as you may have them.

Speaker 1 (01:23:29):

Thank you very much, Elizabeth to staff. Anything else to add while in the room left in this Becky? Anything else? Okay. All right. Do commissioners have any questions for Elizabeth or staff at this point in time? Okay, public comment in this matter.

Speaker 13 (01:24:00):

Hello, can you hear me? Yep. All right. My name's Joy Foster, 6 6 0 4 4. I want to talk about why the proposed change of reversing the increase in occupancy limits is harmful for our community. I'm a homeowner and a landlord in Lawrence. My husband and I recently purchased an old church in North Lawrence are in the process of remodeling it to be affordable shared housing, primarily geared towards the L-G-B-T-Q community. There are five bedrooms that will be rented in shared living space, including kitchen, living area and a large community space. We made this purchase decision largely based on the approved changes to the occupancy limits last fall. Obviously reversing the approved increases in occupancy would impact us directly, but more importantly, it will impact the marginalized community that we are trying to directly support. In fact, it will impact most of the marginalized communities in Lawrence as most marginalized people tend to be on the low end of the socioeconomic spectrum and these proposed changes to reduce the occupancy limits, primarily benefit upper middle class homeowners.

(01:24:54):

If we can only rent three rooms, the rent would have to be well over a thousand dollars a room just to pay the mortgage and utilities and that's not affordable housing in my mind. There's no reason the why five people related or not shouldn't be able to share this 4,000 square foot space by repealing the approved increase in occupancy. We are only protecting couples and families that can afford 3000, 4,000 square foot homes in Old West Lawrence University place and other neighborhoods. We are protecting them from crowded parking, the presence of students and other neighbors of lower socioeconomic standing. Quite frankly, we would be protecting the elite and privileged at the expense of individuals and families that can't afford a high mortgage or rent payments. I'm aware that there are a lot of voices that have reached out many from my neighborhoods and they're urging you to repeal this increased density or to occupancy and they're loud voices.

(01:25:41):

I know because I've been on their mail lists, but I urge you to also listen to all the voices that aren't here tonight, haven't had time to write letters or many of which who have no idea that a one word change to this code could impact their lives dramatically. I'm trying to speak for members of our community who can't afford to spend an evening here to speak for themselves. I own one of those giant 100-year-old six bedroom houses in university place. We moved out of there when my daughter moved out because it was too big for us and we rent it to a family of four so that they could have housing. We rent it well below market value and we can't even pay our mortgage with it, but were subsidizing the fact that Lawrence doesn't have affordable housing for people.

(01:26:25):

For what it's worth, when I lived in university place, I expected bad parking students around hoots and haulers and Saturday nights because I chose to move somewhere within a block of campus. I believe that many others, despite having a home within block, buying a home within blocks of a college feel entitled to a student free upper middle class neighborhood with ample parking. It isn't that I think these people don't care about the affordable housing problem in Lawrence, but I think that they imagine it can be addressed another way by someone else. Well, I'm here to say that I am that someone else that is trying to help. I am trying to provide affordable housing to our community. Let me help. Please vote no to lowering the occupancy limits. Thank you.

Speaker 1 (01:27:02):

Thank you Joy.

Speaker 14 (01:27:12):

Hello commissioners. Taylor Hall. I live in Brook Creek Today I come to express my dissatisfaction with the proposal to lower the occupancy limits and the development code. The previous three Max Occupancy limit was used to discriminate against. It was used to discriminate against me and my family. Sorry, I lived with my partner and two of her family members. We were unmarried. So the code, the older code with three people designated that we were three unrelated adults in the home because I was not related to the other three people. Therefore, my family and I were denied rental housing four years from landlords interpreting the code to be restrictive. We were even discriminated against when buying homes because many of the neighborhood associations adopted the same occupancy limits as the city and stated that I could buy the home, but they would find me every day while my family status stayed the same.

(01:28:36):

We considered getting married so that'd be easier to find housing. We ultimately decided that that was a dumb reason to get married. The Occupancy limit violated the Kansas Act against discrimination, which prohibits discrimination in housing based on various characteristics including marital status. Any policy additionally will violate the Fair Housing Act of 1968 and the equal clause amendment of the Constitution, the FHA prohibits arbitrary, overly restrictive or discriminatory occupancy policies based on protected classes such as familial status, sex and sexual orientation. The occupancy limit policy is arbitrary and overly restrictive because it does not consider actual conditions such as housing size, number of bedrooms or sewer capacity. None of these things are considered in the policy as written. For instance, three people could live in a studio apartment, but four people cannot live in a five bedroom house and R one or R two. This policy is discriminatory against lgbtq plus people as I have experienced in the past time.

Speaker 15 (01:30:21):

Hello, my name's Nick Simpson. I also wanted to speak against lowering the occupancy limit as well, or not raising it. Mostly because we live in a modern America. We have families of all different types now, and so I find it kind of strange that we would have kind of a distinction between the single family houses and we also between the apartment ones. Because for example, you could have, me and my roommate we're both, we both have partners. So if we wanted to move into a single family house with our partners, we would not be allowed to if the occupancy limit wasn't raised. But if we stayed in our apartment complex, we could still do that. So it kind of discourages moving up economically as well as it's kind of strange that you have to be related as well to do that because as people have mentioned before, marriage is a very complicated legal thing to do and it's not always accessible to everyone, especially if you're reliant on disability benefits or other things like that.

(01:31:35):

So that's mostly what I wanted to talk about with that because another thing was would the single family restriction to three, which is I believe what you said it already was, would that limit two unmarried parents and their kids? Because marriage is complicated. Not everyone wants to get legally married these days. Not everyone can. So I think it would be most accessible to move the limit up to five, especially since it's not related to the bedroom size or anything like that or the bedroom count. So yes, I agree with the others here that we should raise the occupancy limit, not lower it back down to the standard. Thank you. Thanks Nick.

Speaker 16 (01:32:29):

All very good points. All very good points. I want to bring up the last point that this gentleman just made. Think about it. You have a man who is dating a woman who has three kids. One of 'em might be 18, still living at home when the 17-year-old gets out of high school, they just automatically got to break it up because mom and dad never got married. But it's okay. Hey, it's okay though because when police and anybody shows up, they'll just assume it's okay because they're a traditional family unit. That's right. That's what'll happen. Those people that are violating it won't be noticed because it'll just be assumed. The other thing that I want to bring up that I'm surprised that nobody in here brought up you guys, I want to know which one of you, if there's more than one of you that asked them to do this, because they said at the request of the commission.

(01:33:30):

So I think in full disclosure, whoever asked needs to say it in this room because you fools have been up there for months now, years now fighting with affordable housing, being involved with the homeless aspects. I can talk about affordable housing and how unattainable it is for some people, but you guys are going to single handedly ask them to bring something to you that's going to harm prospects for affordable housing here. Tony Knick, pay you guys off. I mean, who paid the bill here? Guys, where's the money at? You got some loud well-to-do neighbors that live in some massive houses that don't want certain people in their neighborhoods and you're going to kowtow to 'em by the end of the night. Guys, everybody in this room by the end of the night, whoever asked staff to bring this needs to admit it. Can I get a clap for at least that?

Speaker 17 (01:34:48):

Hello? Hi, my name is Cassandra Barrett. I live in East Lo at 14th and Connecticut 6 6 0 4 4. I was raised in Old West Lawrence and my parents still own their home there where I had the joy and privilege of regularly having more than five, six, sometimes seven unrelated folks living in that house from exchange students to family, friends and people that we considered family but that would not meet the legal definition thereof, including my brother who was never legally adopted but is a very meaningful person in my life. I rent currently, I'm in my thirties and definitely feels painful to know that moving forward in my life, expanding family, that kind of situation is not going to be as accessible to me just given our

economy. My professional income goes a lot less far than it did when my parents were my age and home ownership is pretty far out of reach for me at this point in my life.

(01:35:55):

So I think that some of the implications from lowering these occupancy limits are that renters are inherently irresponsible with their space, undesirable or rowdy or just often a euphemism for students, which I think hope that we know is not true. Renters in this town are many, many people. People who work, people who have been lifelong, IANS, people who are new to town and excited to be here and they're also disproportionately disabled, lower income. And in our tenant experience survey, we know that there are a lot of people who are queer who rent as well. Professionally, I work with people who have disabilities and have had experiences speaking with them about how their housing has been directly destabilized by policies like this. People who have to end marriages of many years in order to be able to access Medicaid services and that has destabilized their housing because of policies like this. People with a LS and Parkinson's who in addition to those people that they're now divorced from will often have live-in caregivers, which is an unrelated adult and sometimes they have more than one of those folks. So I think there are many different groups who are going to be impacted by this negatively. Much more than homeowners dealing with potential noise issues. I think it's been brought up here a couple times, but just with our national political climate for queer folks, there's a lot of danger for their relationships to not be legally recognized in the upcoming future. So I would support keeping those occupancy limits as high as we can or getting rid of them altogether. Thanks for your time.

Speaker 6 (01:37:43):

Thank.

Speaker 18 (01:37:55):

Hi, my name's Maren Bradley. I'm the president of the Old West Lawrence Association. I am here obviously to ask you to support the overwhelming recommendation from the planning commission to keep the limit at three unrelated persons for R one and R two for now. Old West Lawrence is a very complex neighborhood from east to west in a lot of different ways. We're the home of Louise's West and Rick's, but we're also the home of the Little Red Schoolhouse and Century School and various commercial uses. I personally have heard from more than one family in our neighborhood that owns a home that the reason they're able to afford to own a home anywhere in town is because of the rent money they receive from the ADUs that are already on their properties. So we're not here tonight to ask for any changes to the new A DU code or the new parking code or anything like that.

(01:38:46):

We're only asking for one change to occupancy for now to help us slow the studentification of our downtown neighborhoods. That's already happening to the people who are hollering. I can't believe you don't expect students to live in your neighborhood. I can assure you we all live very much next to students, some of them amazing, some of them not so great. If party houses weren't already a problem, we wouldn't be here tonight. So the number of students in our neighborhood is growing as rental housing is being monetized more and more as an asset class by non-local investors. So tonight we are just looking for a hint of gray in what's been painted as a very black and white issue. It's not easy for me to stand up here in front of some people who I respect very much that are doing amazing and important work and talk about the one disagreement we have instead of focusing on all the details of the LDC that we do agree on and all of our common goals.

(01:39:47):

But the truth is it's getting harder and harder to attract families to our neighborhood regardless of their income status. And I know that we're not alone in that property values of Old West Lawrence homes are almost 30% less than they are in West Lawrence, but our East of Iowa schools and preschools are

struggling or closing altogether as we struggle to attract the families that West Lawrence does. Tipping the balance toward more non affordable student housing is not going to help that we are here tonight with common goals to increase density and affordable housing. We are only saying that of the most likely outcome, which is increased short, short-term wealthy student presence in our university adjacent neighborhoods, that the code is not done enough to ensure that that likely outcome does not happen. To ensure that everything else doesn't get drowned out to ensure that we're increasing density responsibly. So please tonight accept the recommendations from the planning commission. Thank you.

Speaker 6 ([01:40:42](#)):

Thank you.

Speaker 19 ([01:40:48](#)):

Is this louder now? Okay, they still can't hear.

Speaker 13 ([01:40:52](#)):

I can hear you right here.

Speaker 19 ([01:40:54](#)):

Okay. Hello, I'm Haley Bruns, secretary of Old West Lawrence Association and a 34 year resident renter with the past 24 years spent in Old West Lawrence. Renters are essential. We contribute to the community, support the local economy, and help sustain growth. To achieve the city's desired density, we must ensure that rentable spaces are not just plentiful, but also accessible to long-term residents, not solely students. An open eye notices the immense growth of apartments for students. These are rentable options for students, but rentable options for myself. The students can come out of campus' housing or out of college apartments around town and occupy rental homes and neighborhoods. Some turned into small apartments, but I can't go live in the dorms or the college apartments. We have a one-way street going. The greater occupancy allowed in university adjacent neighborhoods, the cheaper housing becomes for these students and the more desire they have to live off campus and away from the complexes.

([01:41:57](#)):

The current occupancy code of three is an unenforced code in need of attention. Raising the limit without a clear plan for enforcement could create more issues rather than solving existing ones. Have city officials provided any clarity on how they intend to enforce the current or proposed limits? Just a quick Google search on occupancy limits in universities. Turned up Amherst, Massachusetts restricted occupancy in 2022 in neighborhoods near Amherst Colleges to four unrelated people. Ames, Iowa. In 2018, restricted occupancy in neighborhoods near Iowa State to three, four or five people depending on the size of the structure. Urbain champagne restricted occupancy in 2019 in neighborhoods near the University of Illinois to four unrelated people. Boulder, Colorado. Increased occupancy in 2023 to five unrelated persons, but created a small list of university adjacent neighborhoods that this did not apply to. This is not an outdated notion. This is a modern solution to the problem that many university towns are seeing.

([01:43:05](#)):

Many of these university towns even started a student rental property enrollment program where student rentals are required to be registered in the city and pay additional fees. Unfortunately, despite neighborhood groups requesting at multiple times, the new LDC makes no distinction between university adjacent neighborhoods and neighborhoods further away from campus. Would an acceptable compromise right now be to make no change? Change to current zoning, meaning make R one and R two three unrelated individuals for the moment. Make R three four and five four unrelated individuals for the

moment and give us some time to work together to figure out an overlay district situation. Thank you.  
Thank

Speaker 20 (01:43:48):

You, Hailey. Hi, my name is Kin Kate Dennett. I'm the executive director of people's owned and operated collective housing. We're a network of housing cooperatives in the Orad neighborhood. I wanted to start off by kind of responding to something I heard right before I came up that it was difficult to be here to do this end run around already decided upon zoning changes. I'm glad that it's difficult. It should be difficult to try to undo the work. Two years. Has it been, y'all have been more on this than I have, but I think it's been about two years of experts, advocates, community members, everyone's opinions being heard on this for at the last minute, a quick switcheroo. It was described as an overwhelming decision by the planning committee meeting. I watched the planning committee meeting. There was I think a good turnout for a planning committee meeting. I think about five homeowners came and spoke to the commission about this problem that they have and the chair of the commission voted against. It was not a unanimous decision to bring this back to you, so I wanted to make that clear at first. And despite my swagger, I do get a little bit nervous at these things so I have a prepared statement.

(01:45:20):

So as I mentioned, I am the executive director of pooch. I also wanted to respond to a comment that someone made claiming that occupancy limits don't impact the viability of cooperative living in our community. It does. They're wrong. It just absolutely impacts our ability to continue these community-based solutions to the affordable housing crisis. And it's very plain to see. I don't have a lot of time left, but I would be happy to follow up with anybody who would like a more detailed analysis. The updated zoning plan took over two years to complete with input from people across all fields of expertise.

(01:46:03):

And then five homeowners showed up at the planning commission to get it back in one night. The other thing that I noticed about that meeting was the entire focus was on students moving into this neighborhood completely losing the plot that most renters in Lawrence aren't students. It's a substantial part of the population, but the only time non-student renters came up was when someone said, no adults want to live like that. So that was kind of the timber. I don't think that a full conversation has been had. I don't think that there was enough input with the planning commission for the commission to make a decision that expands the scope of the question that was originally asked. So I asked this commission to please go with what was already decided through years and years of discussion. Thank you.

Speaker 21 (01:47:01):

Hey. Hi. Hello. My name is Micah Ann Cox. I'm back in Lawrence. Everyone. If you were wondering, I live at 6 6 0 4 4 is my zip code. I'm here to call out this last minute rollback on the occupancy limits for what it is an arbitrary, unfair, and out of touch decision that will only deepen Lawrence's housing crisis. For two years, this community has worked towards real solutions to make housing more accessible. We've debated, we've compromised, and we've agreed that increasing occupancy limits is a necessary step. Now, in the final moments, you're backtracking giving some neighborhoods up to five people per household while keeping others stuck at three. That is not policymaking, that is bending to fear and privilege at the expense of affordability and fairness. Let's talk about the process. Because the change wasn't clearly listed on the agenda, you made a major decision that affects thousands of people without giving them a fair chance to be heard.

(01:47:52):

That's not transparency, that's not democracy. That's shutting people out of decisions about their own homes and livelihoods. Let's be clear also about lots of comments that have been made about keeping outdated occupancy limits, preserving neighborhoods because it won't, it will push out the people who

make the very city thrive. Renters, students, workers, and young professionals are the backbone of Lawrence. If you keep pricing them out, Lawrence will stop being vibrant, diverse, and welcoming the place you want it to be. The commission has a choice. Stand by the work we've done together and make real progress or given to fear and exclusion. I urge you to do the right thing. Raise the occupancy limits, listen to your community and make Lawrence a place where everyone can afford to live. Thank you.

Thanks

Speaker 6 ([01:48:36](#)):

Micah.

Speaker 22 ([01:48:44](#)):

Hello. Eric. Hide. Yeah, I just want to say I don't think it's a really big deal. Just I don't really agree with everything that's being said. I don't want to take too much time right now, but I mean, if we raise the occupancy limit, we're kind of inviting a living in a jungle sort of lifestyle. And I mean, everybody has dignity to do what they want in their life and I support that. But let's just go along with the planning commission. I mean, let's just try it out, see what works out.

Speaker 6 ([01:49:26](#)):

Thanks, Eric.

Speaker 23 ([01:49:34](#)):

Howdy. My name is Tula 6 6 0 4 4. I didn't actually know this was happening today until a couple hours ago, so I didn't really come prepared, but I think I know enough about it to have an opinion on it. I don't really care about property taxes or anything that people are caring about. I don't really care about students even though I think they should get housing. I care about the people that live here and I'm one of them and a lot of my friends, me included, none of us can afford housing. We can't, rent's pretty high and none of the jobs around here pay Most jobs pay 13 an hour or maybe 15. That's not really enough to afford most places around here unless you find a couple buddies to bunk up with.

([01:50:44](#)):

And honestly, I don't really think of any of your business how many people live together. I don't think you should be deciding what a family is or I care about the people here, but this decision shows me you don't a whole lot because many of my friends are having to move and I might have to move too. And I don't really even want to move to Kansas City or anywhere else because lived here my whole life and this is kind of all I've known and I can't even afford to live here. So if I can't afford to live or work here or even go to school here, then why should I stick around and keep participating in whatever it is you're doing here? That's kind of all I have to say. I had to think it out, but whatever. Thank you.

Speaker 6 ([01:51:44](#)):

Thank

Speaker 23 ([01:51:45](#)):

You.

Speaker 24 ([01:51:55](#)):

Hi, I'm Clavin Snow. I've lived in Lawrence over 25 years and I think that reducing the limit from five to three is a bad plan. I mean, I can't really say anything that hasn't been said tonight. I echo the sentiments of those that also oppose this and I hope it doesn't count against me that I agree with Michael or Ravi, that

whoever is voting for this should identify themselves. I mean, it's been stated that the overwhelming support of the city commission is in this room and I want to know who that is. Like I said, I've lived in Lawrence over 25 years and I've lived in a variety of situations and I've lived with over five unrelated people and it's been great. And my house personally was not a party house. I don't have a lot of swagger her, but now I live with my family, I live with my kids and I just don't want to see the progression that I lived disappear from Lawrence. And that's really all I've got to say. But please, I'll just say please don't reduce, don't reduce the limit of unrelated people that can live together from five to three. Thank you.

Speaker 25 (01:53:53):

I am Chris Flowers. I've got my Golden Girl shirt on today, so hopefully it brings good luck. Okay. First of all, if occupancy the three person occupancy limit, if it was good for housing costs, why are we having housing cost problems right now? I mean, if you look up on the internet, they're saying that the occupancy limit, that's part of the problem that's happening today. So I would be looking to increase that. And also when it comes to housing costs, I saw the neighborhood associations were saying that it will help cost or whatever, but the housing advocates, and when I typed it in on my phone, I've typed in does occupancy limits increase or does it raise or decrease housing costs? And they say the occupancy limits when you have those three people limits that it increases housing costs. So I would just say you increase it based on the housing cost. No, that's a good question. I wonder if you vote to go to the three person limit, I want to know if you think it will actually help or hurt the housing costs. So I asked that question. I want to challenge, I guess Larson is what do you think it does for the environment?

(01:55:25):

Would this increase in the five person limit? Would that increase population density? And is increased population density good or bad for the environment? And would having more students who want to live by campus who can walk and bike there, would that be good for the environment? And Commissioner Sellers, you've heard from other people about the unfair nature of the unrelated aspect of this ordinance. Do you think it is fair or unfair for non-traditional families? This ordinance where we keep it at three unrelated people, and also I've read that some places their ordinances when it comes to occupancy limits, they don't include related or unrelated. It's the same for everyone. So I would say wouldn't that be the most equitable thing if you're actually going to be equitable about occupancy limits, it'd be about the safety. You can't have this many people in this because it's unsafe, regardless of if you're related or not. I just want to throw that out there because I absolutely believe because the Golden Girls did an episode about it, this policy, this three unrelated policy, it is unfair and it's inequitable to non-traditional families. Thank you. Thank you.

Speaker 26 (01:56:58):

Hello, David Basson? Yeah, I totally agree with what everybody's saying about the occupancy. I mean, to tell you the truth, I don't even know why we have an occupancy deal. There's some houses in Lawrence where it's okay to have eight to 10 people like Oxford House and places like that. So I don't know if you want to keep up your discriminated policies. I mean, we can go down, we can stay at five or whatever. I just think it's totally discriminatory for you to tell me or anybody else how many people I can have in my house. I mean, I only have three people in my house, but I mean, if I wanted to have more in my house, who are you to say I can only have this many people related, unrelated. I just think it goes along with a lot of your other things that you approve and don't approve. It's wrong. And especially these people were saying at the last minute, you're going to move it down. I mean, three people stake my house. I mean, whatever it is, 5,000 square feet, Brad's house, whoever's house, you can only have three unrelated people in there. Five unrelated people. Doesn't make any sense at all. And I totally think you should vote that down. So thank you for your time. Thank you, David.

Speaker 1 (01:58:32):

Any other public comment please?

Speaker 27 ([01:58:37](#)):

Anson Stancliffe.

Speaker 1 ([01:58:38](#)):

Sorry.

Speaker 27 ([01:58:40](#)):

I think more of a question is before these codes were enacted, I know that landlords were cutting up these old houses and putting as many people into 'em as they could, and that actually was driving up the housing prices because you just have students that are only here for four years. And so I think the concern is it's not necessarily the amount of people living in it, but whether the city can enforce a code that's maybe not so simple and maybe that this code is just too simple, but that would be more to keep out outside landlords from driving up these prices by only renting to students that are here for a little bit rather than families, whether that be five or three or untraditional or not. I think that's more the issue than who's living together or how many are living together. It's just the problem that Florence has had for a long time, especially in those communities of landlords kind of driving prices up by just not maintaining the houses because they're just trying to make as much profit as they can off of who's living there. So I think maybe there needs to be a solution that looks more at allowing people to live there and be a part of the community. Thank you.

Speaker 9 ([02:00:05](#)):

Hi commissioners. You can hear me. This is Maria Ferrelo. I just want to say I appreciate the opportunity to make public comment, not just as a community member, but as an active proponent of affordable housing through my local work as a member of the Affordable Housing Advisory Board, a board member for the local co-ops and for the local housing authority, as well as my national work on affordable housing with communities just like Lawrence. And I'm urging you today to oppose the recommendation by the planning commission to revert the original decision of increasing unrelated occupancy limits to five and moving back down to three and deeming in these areas that we're deeming low density occup, occupancy limits based on relation or what we call restrictive zoning practices, do not accomplish the claims made by its supporters. There's no evidence it will solve so-called nuisance issues as planning.

([02:01:00](#)):

Commissioner Ashworth stated in the February meeting, she said, occupant state limits are not a silver bullet for behavioral issues or maintenance problems. This is further supported by experts in the field. National publication Shelter Force states its article around student housing. Occupancy limits for students are often contained within broader laws that restrict occupancy for non-related households and thus are in danger of violating fair housing Acts prohibition on discrimination based on familiar status. Another potential weakness of this approach is that in areas with competitive housing markets, reducing occupancy tightens a scarce housing market by requiring large number of single family homes to provide shelter for the same number of students. Additionally, having low occupancy limits for unrelated persons do not magically our affordable housing crisis. This does not stop investors from buying up housing stock or alleviate the market to benefit families or low-income people. There's no evidence of that.

([02:01:58](#)):

While there is a growing concern of out-of-state entities buying housing stock and pricing communities out of neighborhoods, there are better ways to address this issue. Instead of focusing on restrictive zoning, we could focus on tenant rights and education, invest as many resources as we can into affordable housing

projects. I would love to see these folks at Ahab meetings increase code enforcement for rental properties, create greater inspection requirements in line with the housing authorities inspections, cap on rental, licensing, zoning and neighborhood overlay. Districts mandate KU create a campus growth plan. Why are they not in this conversation? We can also do legislation to tax or prohibit outside investors from buying up the housing stock. The Kansas Housing Advocacy Network has this in their 2025 policy plan. We have so many options to pair with this recommendation to increase the occupancy to five unrelated individuals, and that is what this intention was. The 2019 Study for Housing made this recommendation. Please keep the original recommendation so we can at least try it. Thank you. Thank you.

Speaker 28 ([02:03:19](#)):

Good evening. My name is Candace Davis and I've lived in the Orated neighborhood for 27 years, and unlike someone said that this has gone on your discussions for two years, I would say in our neighborhood we've been working for 20 years to provide some stability to the area that is largely rental. It was however, almost exclusively a single dwelling unit neighborhood. And I'm fine with the idea of being a mixed neighborhood and having renters, but what I find key is that we're looking at issues of affordable housing, unrelated individuals, but bigger than that neighborhoods that people want to live in welcoming neighborhoods. So you have to have some degree of stability in that. And I would be questioning the idea that affordable housing is going to come from single dwelling units. My experience in 27 years with landlords is that you ask them how much their individuals are paying for rent and you will find it comes closer to \$700 a month or 500, but it's not even including utilities.

([02:04:41](#)):

So let me think. Oh, here's the other thing. So yes, my experience is largely students in the neighborhood and I want you all to imagine five unrelated teenagers living next door to you. And that's kind of what we've had to deal with. And I'm not saying that's the case in all situations with numbers, but I agree that when you start adding, oh, and the other thing is houses. There are very few houses that have as many as six bedrooms unless they've been reconfigured to have six bedrooms. Most of the houses that I would consider affordable, some in oriented are modest bungalows and have maybe two and three bedrooms at the most all. Okay, so I want to read the reasons that I think there's consequences of unrelated folks and increasing this number of unrelated in orette. I prefer to leave it at four and the other neighborhoods three seems fine with me too and there are other ways. We have congregate living too, which allows for bigger density that allows for more than four unrelated, so that's in our neighborhood. It should be throughout the city. We also have worked to have a rental inspection program that wouldn't exist now if it wasn't for the work of the ed neighborhood and the Lawrence Association of Neighborhoods, and that's a big thing for people who are poor and unfortunate. They shouldn't have to live in unsafe housing. So I would say raising this limit would, oh, just can't I read this? This? Thank you Candace.

Speaker 1 ([02:06:25](#)):

Thank you. Appreciate it.

Speaker 28 ([02:06:27](#)):

Thank

Speaker 1 ([02:06:27](#)):

You very much.

Speaker 28 ([02:06:28](#)):

It's going to cost a lot of money. It's not going to save you all money.

Speaker 1 ([02:06:32](#)):

Yeah. Who's next? Thank you.

Speaker 29 ([02:06:40](#)):

Good evening commissioners. My name's Gabby Sprague. My words are my own tonight at least. Thank you for your attention to this matter. I want to note that I've been involved in several groups who had suggestions about the land development code that were not implemented and these suggestions were made with the intent of increasing affordable housing stock. While I'm grateful for many of the changes that the Land Development Code Committee has made, I feel like I'm showing up here to argue about a scrap down version that certainly will not go far enough to address our local housing crisis and a place for everyone. Plan one action item for the Affordable Housing group and the Affordable Housing Advisory Board was to provide recommendations to the Land Development Code Committee and very few of those actually made it into the plan. It is my belief that we should do away with occupancy requirements except for those that we need to maintain for safety such as two occupants per bedroom per certain square footage.

([02:07:36](#)):

But since that's not what on the table tonight, I want to share with you three reasons why I think you should maintain keeping five people in single family and multifamily homes across all residential districts. The first reason is that the risk of reducing affordable housing is stock. It's simple math. You have 10 homes and you have five people in each of those homes. If you decrease it down to three, that's at minimum four homes now that 10 people are then occupying. That's decreasing the amount of affordable housing stock that we have available for other people to rent. I'm really not sure where people are getting that. Reducing occupancy will increase affordable housing stock because really the opposite is true. I also think about the large wait list that we have with many of our community agencies that do housing work and I feel like reducing it to three would make those wait lists even longer.

([02:08:27](#)):

Secondly, this change further restricts development of future cooperatives or other congregate living. I live in a cooperative, I have nine roommates. I've lived here going on five years and I've been in Lawrence for 13. It's really just, it becomes much more affordable the more roommates you have, and it just makes cooperative living that much less viable if we were to reduce it down to three. My last point is that it feels like people are determining who should and shouldn't live here based on the perceived savoriness of their neighbors, and that's just classic, not in my backyard ideology. We have time and time again had good solid policy recommendations and also affordable housing developments come to the city commission and the same group of folks come and poo pooh it at the last minute and then we don't get it done. We need affordable housing right now and this is just one of those things that we need to pass. Again, I want to thank you for your attention to this. I want to reiterate that this code really hasn't gone far enough and I feel like we're kind of begging for scraps at this point. I'm asking that you please continue with the original changes of five household members. Thank you. Thank

Speaker 30 ([02:09:46](#)):

D and commissioners. Thank you. I think maybe just three points. So one thing just to clarify some of the scope of the proposed rule. I spoke with staff a couple of times about this and have confirmed it that if one unrelated person is in your household and that triggers the or adult rather than triggers it for the entire household. So many of these hypotheticals discussed earlier, they absolutely would apply particularly under this occupancy limit of three. So you're not married to someone, you have kids, things like that. Secondly, I think that I wrote in my letter about how just fundamentally having arbitrary occupancy limits puts people in precarious positions because there are people in Lawrence right now who are living in what would be considered illegal housing. I know you can say that. Well, maybe the hundreds to thousands of

people in four person bedrooms might live in our three or our four districts, but we have testimony from people tonight and testimony from people who have written in that's not that it happens and that is a harm in and of itself.

(02:11:02):

The people who do not have legal housing because they're beyond the occupancy limits, they don't build rental history, they don't build credit history and it makes them more vulnerable to abuse or blackmail. So the idea that, well, we just won't enforce it or something that some people say is just, it really ignores the harm that having arbitrary restrictive occupancy limits like three people has. I think if you're not basing it on health and safety, there's really no reason to have any number for occupancy limits anyway. And lastly, I'll just say that we really need the flexibility right now to house people. Tariffs are going to increase the price of inputs to build housing on steel and wood. The labor force that builds housing is being persecuted. So there is a chance that even though there are good but modest improvements in the land development code, there might not be much housing built in the next, I don't know, two years, but if you remove the arbitrary restrictions that gives people flexibility to respond to current conditions. So that's all I have. Thank you.

Speaker 6 (02:12:26):

Thank you.

Speaker 31 (02:12:35):

Hi, my name is Matthew Martinez. I live in 6 6 0 4 4, very much the student neighborhood and I'm young as an active member in this community, consistently working with and speaking with members all throughout the town. I work for KU libraries, I have student workers. I know quite a lot of students. I've worked in service to work downtown and I'm a resident and board member of the People Zone and operated collective housing. Anyone that knows me knows I chat a lot. If you talk to anyone in this town and you ask them what is the big problem in this town? It's affordable housing and the lack thereof, it's that there's no housing, no one can live, no one can live alone. It's laughable to say, I want to try to live alone. And it's like, God forbid, no one, no regular townie is complaining about these party houses or these unsavory people.

(02:13:30):

The people I'm hearing from maybe by some coincidence or just indicating what it is, are white women who live in the student neighborhoods live right near within walking distance from the university. I'm sorry, but making it harder to live somewhere is not going to help you. I'm sorry if it helps you sleep better at night that only four, three people can live there, but as the person that just stated, it just opens up for exploitation. You're going to have more than four people living in that neighborhood. It's just going to be more dangerous for them. It is not in my backyard is and it is antithetical to what this town on the outside likes to see, which is mostly smiling white women looking in your face saying that you're saved but you're not. So I don't have the numbers or the codes or whatever, but I can tell you as someone that was a student and is now not a student and lives in that neighborhood and I don't like the rowdy frat boys, I do think that they should get to live somewhere after college. Should they stay in this community because they're going to spend money here. Don't you want that? Don't you want people to be able to stay here?

(02:14:42):

I guess all this is to say is it seems you need to look inward and you need to see, am I only helping myself and the people that live within walking distance from me or am I thinking about the fact that this is a whole town, this is a whole city where people live. I'm sorry that you're annoyed by young people and that you've gotten older, but people need to live. Thank you.

Speaker 32 (02:15:18):

Good evening. I'm Michael Allman, the president of the Brook Creek Neighborhood Association. Since our neighborhood association inception in 1981, one of our main goals and principles has been to further owner occupancy. It's one of the best ways to stabilize the housing stock, maintain that housing stock in good condition and maintain the neighborhood in good condition. I'd like to you to consider a thought experiment here. Let's say there's a landlord who is renting a house to three individuals, \$500 each, \$1,500 total a month. If that landlord is able to put five people in that house, I really doubt that they're going to lower the rent to \$300 per person to maintain that \$1,500 total. No, they're just going to charge \$500 for the two additional people make more profit. Absentee landlords buy these properties as a profit center. They're not doing it out of the goodness of their heart. I'm sorry. So that's why we are very much in favor of owner occupancy. And Lawrence right now, as you know, is on the losing end of owner occupancy. We have more rental properties now than owner occupancy properties. So our position is we request that you set the maximum unrelated adults at three in R one and R two and four in R three, four and five. Thank you.

Speaker 33 (02:17:17):

Thank

Speaker 6 (02:17:18):

You Michael.

Speaker 33 (02:17:24):

Hi, I'm Vince Munoz. I live at 2449 West 24th Terrace. I'm here to, as most people are, to ask you to not consider the changes that the planning commission is bringing to you and to keep the Land development code changes that were adopted later last year. I mean, there's a lot of things that have already been said that I agree with, including things about the potential unintended consequences for families where people are unmarried in which the spouses are not married and there's more than three people in the household in that instance in the changes that the planning commission wants. But I actually also think that the intended consequences of this are equally bad. I think the Planning Commission has a somewhat patronizing attitude towards renters, this distrust of us, this assumption that we're somehow worse than homeowners. I just think that the Planning Commission needs to view us as citizens who also deserve to be served and not just the homeowners.

(02:18:15):

And I just think that as a matter of principle of a liberal democracy, a local government should treat all of its citizens equally. It should not just be delineating haves and have nots and saying, people who are not able to afford home ownership should be allowed to live in certain parts of town and everyone and the homeowners can live anywhere they want. So I think all the points that have been made by people about housing affordability, this increasing affordability, the unintended consequences of this proposal are all important things to consider by even just take offense to the fact that this was brought before this commission. And I hope that the planning commission going forward considers renters as citizens who also deserve to be served. Thank you. Thank

Speaker 34 (02:19:09):

Good evening. My name is Tom Harper. This is a really complicated issue, one of these things where there's two sides, but there's everything in between and it makes me respect the position that the five of you are in. These are complicated issues and the water is gray, but we act like it's black and white and it's just not. So I really appreciate what everybody has shared today, tonight on both sides, and I have zero interest in discriminating against anybody that's at my core. And I also feel like old man Harper because a

lot of us banded together and we worked hard to create this three unrelated occupancy years ago, and it was coupled with rental registration and an inspection for rentals and the world was going to cave in with those three issues. And I feel really proud that we were involved in making that happen and the city commission voted to approve that and it was kind of a package deal.

(02:20:23):

It took years to take place. So I feel like that really raised the bar for quality of life for tenants and our community in general. And it's a good thing and I think most people who own a home today really won't care about this issue. About five until somebody buys a house, it becomes a rental and then all of a sudden they have five cars, 10 cars at times because we all have friends and family and partners and it changes the dynamic in the neighborhood. So when that happens, you're going to be getting phone calls going, what happened? Well, I have five people living next door to me and it's just going to be a change and it's going to be hard. The other thing that's important is that I help people buy and sell homes and it's a super tight market right now. So for people to buy a house, there's multiple offers, cash wins, and if we turn this into the single family zone neighborhoods into opportunities for rentals, investors will buy those houses, rent them out, and it's going to make it more difficult for people who want to buy their first home because they're going to be competing with investors who are buying it to make income.

(02:21:53):

It just makes sense. So that's a real issue that I foresee happening. So I'd like to see R one and R two remain at three and use your discretion regarding the other zoning and thank you

Speaker 35 (02:22:14):

You. Hey y'all. Mandy and Field, these statements are a sample from the February 26th planning commission discussion regarding their six to one decision to maintain the current occupancy standards. One, we can't easily go back after older homes have been converted to multi-unit rentals. Two, we don't see the city talking about increased enforcement for nuisance calls. We don't have the staff to investigate or enforce code violations. We don't have a strong enough inspection policy and protections for renters. We haven't seen increased enforcement. We don't have a specific permitted parking plan in the works. Three, I was previously in support of five, but after reviewing the feedback from residents, I am in favor of reducing it four, until we have some studies where we can definitively say, here's what's going on. We can't increase the occupancy limit and by studies they just mean data. They don't mean hiring a consultant for study.

(02:23:22):

Again, remember that the planning commission unlike this body has a statutory obligation to ensure that the code is correct. This is an obligation to state standards in addition to serving our community. Five, I believe developers will come in and buy up houses. This does not help Lawrence overall. Can you unring that bell after we've turned single family homes into student housing? Six. If we don't have studies, why increase it? Keep it at three, put it as a top priority for the one year document revision, get the data and increase it then seven. If most neighborhoods don't agree to an increase, we shouldn't do it. Eight. If the city is having issues at three, five will be insane. Put a pause on this. Get a study. Look at it In a year nine, we have implemented dramatic changes with density and a D to help us move in that direction, meaning affordable housing occupancy is also one of the big changes and I don't know if the juice is worth the squeeze.

(02:24:25):

Adding occupancy might not serve that goal. These other dramatic changes are enough. We can hold it at three 10. RM different from the R RM like Orad. RM districts are currently at four. I'd like to hold it there. Make an accommodation for those zones to stay at four because with their motion it would put them at five 11. I disagree. We should lower the zones currently at four down to three there is no

enforcement for four in orad. Five to six people are living in those houses until we have a study in parking solutions. It should be three. And finally, 12. I want my voice to be heard by the city commissioners. People are saying what we have right now is not working. Three is a reasonable number and I would like it to be three in all districts time. Thanks.

Speaker 36 (02:25:26):

Good evening. My name's Jared Johannan, lifelong Lawrence resident. Y'all just heard a dozen statements quoted from the planning commission's decision to maintain the current occupancy standards. They were clear on R one and R two remaining at three. That was a sixth one vote in favor of keeping the current standard of three. However Orad was overlooked in that final vote. The conversation and sentiment was supportive of orad, but it was clear that the planning commissioners did not know that orad was currently set at four and they were voting to increase it to five in their second occupancy motion. This is conveyed in some of the comments leading to that second vote. Some of this you just heard a little bit of RM districts including orad, which would be converted to four in the new code are currently at four. I would like to hold it there and make an accommodation for these zones to stay at four.

(02:26:14):

Then another commissioner said, I disagree. We should lower the zones currently at four down to three, there is no enforcement for four in orad, five to six people living in those houses until we have a study in parking solutions. It should be three. And again, I want my voice to be heard by city commissioners. People are saying what we have now is not working. Three is a reasonable number and I'd like to keep it at three in all districts. Please consider keeping R three four and five at the current occupancy level of four or reduce it to three as stated in this conversation and recommended by the planning commission with this amendment. If orad isn't included in the final decision including R one and R two, you must allow for a specific orad occupancy rule via their overlay district. In addition to supporting the planning commission's vote to keep R one and two at the current level of three.

(02:27:10):

Orad is Lawrence is example of what can happen when property investors are allowed to run amuck and it was also one of the motivations for this existing occupancy ordinance. I also want to remind everyone in the context of some of the feedback that we got tonight. The code uses the term household not family, and defines household as any number of people related by blood marriage or other committed partnership. Great attention was given to this to ensure that the code is inclusive of all types that would occupy a single family home. Thank you for your attention to this us.

Speaker 37 (02:27:59):

Hello, my name is Tia Rayburn. I am a queer autistic townie. I know everyone's going around buzzwords. I might as well just put myself out there so I have some issues with this because are we going to the point where we are just supporting the university running amuck and not taking care of their own housing problems? How I feel, I feel like it's coming in and it's just going to be not about the annoying students, but the fact that KU will not take care of their own problems. I also don't particularly like the idea of we're going to use buzz words like queer and disabled to rehouse people. I personally have been living in poverty most of my life and I have been in some of the illegal co-ops around town and they're pretty slummy, so it just encourages that honestly. And also I don't really feel like feeding into the agar kind of thing of like, I'm going to be a surf. I'm going to rent until I die. There is no inherent future for homeownership and we should all bow down to that and let the developers run a monk. And so I feel because that's what's going to happen, this you guys have this ideology that it's all going to be about the townies and it's not. It's going to be about the developers and bowing down to KU and letting them do whatever they want. That's all I,

Speaker 38 (02:29:41):

Hello, I am Ariana. I just wanted to give my 2 cents on this and say that I believe that this will do nothing but harm at worst or will not help anything at best. I am currently living with two other people. We are at that strict occupancy limit and it is still really hard to keep up with bills and if there are people who are violating these ordinances in certain neighborhoods and are living with five or six people, it is probably because they otherwise cannot live with how expensive housing here is. I also see this related and unrelated idea being just frankly a violation of privacy. We shouldn't be worrying about whether people are in certain relationships or not in their own household and in terms of this harm to affordable housing, being a worry about landlords buying houses and turning them into five occupancy residencies or renting them out. Your issue is landlords, not the people paying these landlords and they are going to buy houses and turn them into rentals regardless of what the occupancy limit is. I don't see why being so restrictive is going to help anyone here other than people who have aesthetic and personal issues with certain people living together. I think this restriction is just completely unnecessary. And thank you.

Speaker 39 (02:31:46):

Hi commissioners. I'm going to kind of change my speech in real time, so apologies for the jerky nature of it. I'm Kyle Johnson. I live at seventh and Maine with my wife and two kids. I'm the vice president of the Old West Lawrence Association and entrepreneur and founder of Douglas County Core, A nonprofit focused on building our entrepreneurial ecosystem. As you know, core is an economic development partner of the city. We can boost our economy in two ways. Number one, we can boost entrepreneurship because nearly all net new jobs are created by companies less than five years old and small businesses employ half of all US workers. Number two, we can recruit expanding businesses to town. 99% of the changes to the land development Code will be good for our economy because they will make housing more affordable and available for both renters and homeowners. However, the change to occupancy limits will have the opposite effect.

(02:32:36):

Now here's where I'm going to say there's a caveat here. I've had the chance to talk to Joy Foster and I think there's probably an accommodation where the two parties in this debate are probably on the same side here. We're just kind of being pitted against each other because we don't have enough housing. So I'll get to this compromise here in a minute, but let me finish with the time that I do have. So we can't recruit businesses to Lawrence or retain entrepreneurs if housing is not affordable or available. I know you know this, so let me give you an example of how this will play out. At least with my house. My family lives in a three bedroom, two and a half bath house. The basement could also be used as a bedroom. Four to five people can easily live there. Our mortgage is about two grand per month.

(02:33:22):

If we move and the occupancy limit has gone up to either four or five and investor will buy this house and probably turn it into a rental for about 2,600 to 2,800 a month. So the price will go from two grand to 2,600. At least that's bad. That's the opposite of improving our affordability situation. Likely it's in a neighborhood next to the university. This is going to become student housing. We're basically doing KU a favor here and we're depleting our single dwelling unit inventory to help out ku not good for the community or for housing affordability. Also from an economic point of view, let's say Panasonic is relocating a family to the area and this family is interested in Lawrence, would they prefer to live in the house or in an apartment that maybe was lived in by the students? They'd probably prefer the house, but that house won't be available and this will have happened a hundred times over. So we will have less affordable housing and less available single dwelling units. We need to maintain our stock of single dwelling units or that family is less likely to move here. They won't buy goods and services here. They won't attend our schools. They won't start a business. They'll do that in Kansas City. So this is not in my backyard issue. This will impact all neighborhoods. Fewer houses means higher prices everywhere. In

Lawrence, I'm in favor of a compromise that works out some kind of neighborhood based kind of university adjacent. Appreciate it accommodation. Thanks.

Speaker 21 (02:34:56):

Thank you.

Speaker 40 (02:35:09):

Hello commissioners, this is Courtney Shipley. I apologize for my voice. I hope you can hear me, especially commissioner. I'm here representing the Lawrence Association and neighborhoods and I know many of you watch the planning commission, so you've already seen what I have to say about that. There's two things that have never really been brought up even in the great conversation that planning commission had, and again, I want to express my gratitude to the Planning commission and commissioners for revisiting this issue because it is a very important community conversation. Two data points that you could ask for that would be available. One normally would be available is the long-term rental and short-term rental map, which has been down for quite a while I think maybe even a year, and that would be data that would show what kind of units are moving from single family to student housing, which is a way of saying, but it's actually a way of saying moving things that are \$400 a bedroom to \$2,000 a bedroom according to market research that some of us have done, which is unaffordable for anyone that I've ever met and that would tell you a lot about how this would affect neighborhoods and the livability and the comfort of neighborhoods and also accessibility and not just affordability, which has its own particular definition, I'm fully aware, but also workforce housing.

(02:36:37):

So when things are moved off of line in the initial housing, first housing stock, then you really do create an affordability problem across the board. So you could ask for that information. It's not available now, but you could ask staff for that. I can't, but you can't. The other I think data point that would be interesting for all of you is census data that shows which, and I think many of the activists here would also be interested in which apartment complexes are holding empty units that simply refuse to lower their rent that will sit on empty units for years perhaps on end. And that can be shown not just by our long-term rental data, but particularly I think census data because they are required to report what is an empty unit, and I think even in the interim years, the five years, there may be some of that information available.

(02:37:35):

I think that would help you all make some better decisions. Mike Amex, one of my favorite mayors and commissioners of all time, said once you don't have to vote on this today, you can think harder and get some more information. You've done so much good work with the land development code that this isn't something that's specifically going to change everything across the board. For example, the same way that you're allowing duplexes by right in every zoning. You all could have a duplex next to your home in the next year, so that's going to make a huge difference, probably a bigger difference than this will. So please consider those data points.

Speaker 1 (02:38:25):

Anybody else in the room? Okay, anybody else on line?

Speaker 2 (02:38:33):

We do have a few.

Speaker 1 (02:38:34):

Okay. Moving

Speaker 2 ([02:38:35](#)):

Folks over

Speaker 1 ([02:38:35](#)):

Please.

Speaker 2 ([02:38:56](#)):

Misty, Bosch Hastings.

Speaker 41 ([02:39:04](#)):

Good evening commissioners. Just wanted to come and share my perspective as a person and not as a city staff member. I understand the concerns about potential impacts such as the increase in number of vehicles at a residence. However, I wanted to ask that we carefully weigh this against the very real risk of increasing homelessness, particularly for families. As someone who grew up in a doubled up household oftentimes and has opened my own home to friends with families in crisis, I know firsthand how essential these arrangements are. Many families rely on the ability to be able to stay with friends when facing financial hardships, evictions or other emergencies. If the occupancy limit is lowered, I feel like we are at risk of pushing more families with children into homelessness. While parking is a valid consideration, it should not outweigh the urgent need to keep people housed.

([02:40:16](#)):

In many cases, individuals doubling up do not bring multiple vehicles like was referenced earlier. As many of these individuals have limited resources, they rely on public transportation mostly or temporarily stay with a household while working to stabilize their situation. Addressing parking concerns can be done in ways that do not create additional barriers to housing stability, such as enforcing existing parking regulations rather than restricting how many people can live together. The community is already facing a lack of affordable housing and limited shelter space. Reducing occupancy limits would only strain these systems further, and I ask the commission to consider the long-term impact on families and individuals who depend on shared housing as a safety net and to increase the limit to five to help prevent unnecessary hardship. And just one more thing consideration is when we talk about the number of homeless individuals in our state or country, these doubled up numbers are not counted in our point in time counts. So there's even more individuals who live in this doubled up situation. Thank you.

Speaker 1 ([02:41:35](#)):

Thank you. Misty

Speaker 2 ([02:41:48](#)):

Percy Wegman,

Speaker 42 ([02:41:54](#)):

Thank you for having me. I live in Northwest Lawrence in zip code 6 6 0 4 9. I ask you to please stand strong and keep the occupancy limit at five. A lot of people have given powerful testimony tonight about how this policy affects their lives and given real life examples of modern families and living endangerments that are perfectly wholesome even if they would've been out of place a hundred years ago. I would like to put some numbers in historical context around this. When university place was developed in the twenties and thirties, the average US household size was around four persons. In an older neighborhood like Old West Lawrence, it was closer to five. Today the median household size of owner occupied homes in university places, census area is 1.86. Even though those homes average nearly three

bedrooms in size, that means that the same amount of land, schools, water lines, sewers and streets that originally might've supported 500 people today houses only 233.

(02:42:47):

And of those 90% have no related children living with them. Nearly half moved in more than 20 years ago. Given such demographics, is it any surprise that we have to shut down close in schools like Pinkney Elementary? When people talk about preserving such neighborhoods, they're not talking about preserving them in their original state. They're talking about preserving them for the benefit of relatively small households occupying homes that once upon a time house, large families, but no longer do. Instead of preserving this degraded status quo, we should be talking about restoring these neighborhoods to their original purpose and capacity by adapting to the realities of modern families. We've also heard testimony about the downsides of bad neighbors, be it party houses or the new S. In fact, for a while I lived two doors down from a nuisance house with loud activity in the night and dogs constantly getting out of their yard.

(02:43:35):

The residents were not students. Instead of trying to address this problem by restricting people's housing options, let's instead talk about how to better use our existing ordinances like this Orly house nuisance ordinance and find other ways to help Ians who may suffer from bad neighbors no matter where they live or who they are. Lastly, on a personal note, I hear some people painting a picture of students as some kind of tangent locusts. A lot of my friends are people who came to Lawrence's students and now live here as working adults, raising children, and engaging in the community as far as I'm concerned, every human being including students as a potential asset to this community. If some members of our community fail to live up to their potential, we should ask how to help lift them up, not tie ourselves in knots about how to kick them out. Thank you.

Speaker 6 (02:44:18):

Thank you.

Speaker 2 (02:44:27):

Steven Watts.

Speaker 43 (02:44:34):

Hi. Thank you. Yeah, the lights are jacked up, but what can I do? I was going to comment on just how abysmal the Zoom experience is, but after numerous email exchanges with Ms. Wallace, it has improved. You've got a boob over there in the background who likes to jack around with the video. For those of us out here trying to participate, I have reasons for not being there in person medically associated. That being aside, let's keep three as the number, particularly in areas where a guy like me lives, which is about a hundred meters behind the chancellor's residence, and I am surrounded by more than four organized living groups, some living in houses which have well more than four people in each of the places. The numbers in and of themselves aren't the problem. It is the deportment of the people who live in those facilities. That is the problem. There is no compunction to throw trash anywhere. There is no compunction to park in the middle of the street. There is no compunction yes to chest bump. A 73-year-old man, that's me.

(02:46:13):

Just because a group of thugs can do it, the police aren't interested in enforcing it. Code compliance can't enforce it very well. And so we can only imagine what happens when the numbers go to four or five. I understand your sincere effort to try to enhance housing availability for people in town, and I'm fully supportive of it, but I'm not fully supportive of supporting housing initiatives for students to attend the

University of Kansas. That's something that a multimillionaire chancellor who is experiencing some problems now as Donny Trump lays down the law to all of us, which I don't know, I saw it coming. You guys didn't. Incredible. I think it did. I think the smart ones did, but three is a manageable number because of what happens otherwise. They're unrelated people. They don't know each other. They do what they want. They put the trash where they want. They have the parties where they want. They do this, that and the other. Thank you,

Speaker 2 ([02:47:46](#)):

Danielle. Davy, we're not able to hear you. Danielle,

Speaker 44 ([02:48:11](#)):

Can you hear me now?

Speaker 4 ([02:48:13](#)):

Yes. Yes.

Speaker 44 ([02:48:14](#)):

Okay. I'm seeing nods. I apologize for my audio issues and the lighting. I wasn't planning on commenting tonight, but after listening to the testimony, I did want to add just some brief comments. I am speaking to you tonight as just a resident of Lawrence and not on behalf of any organization or client. I do live in a university adjacent neighborhood and I'm as annoyed with students as any other middle-aged person in Lawrence. But they are part of what comes with the community and part of what makes our community great. And so all of the comments about trying to limit housing because students are annoying, it seems to sort of miss the point. We have a housing crisis and we have been seeking ways to reduce or fix that housing crisis for years. When this conversation came up at the LDC steering committee, this was one of the ways, one of the tools that we could use to make more housing stock, make more affordable housing, and we landed on increasing to five. As part of that conversation, I raised that I think occupancy should be related to the property, not the people living in it. To say that an unmarried couple with two young adult children can safely and appropriately live together in a housing unit is okay, but for people of a similar constitution who don't have a blood or legal relationship, can't is the very definition of arbitrary. And I don't think the city should be in the business of defining a family for a lot of reasons, but a lot of which have been addressed tonight.

([02:50:03](#)):

I would encourage the city to, or the commission to reject the recommendation of the planning commission leave the current occupancy at five and I appreciate your time on this.

Speaker 1 ([02:50:17](#)):

Okay, thank you Danielle.

Speaker 2 ([02:50:36](#)):

Hillary Carter.

Speaker 45 ([02:50:41](#)):

Good evening commissioners. Thank you for listening to testimony tonight. As you all know, there's big a affordable housing and there's little a affordable housing. When I graduated, I graduated from college in 2007 at the height of the recession and for the next 11 years, proceeded to work in low wage jobs and always had roommates. It wasn't until I was working in officially in affordable housing that I realized I

made less than 50% of area median income and could have potentially qualified for some sort of rental assistance or low income housing tax credit properties. But I only knew that my budget would allow so much. So I had roommates. We weren't disorderly. It was just like that's who we lived with. None of us were related, and it was basically all of my adult life until about, gosh, seven years ago. So the other thing that I wanted to note is that, I'm sorry on childcare tonight is that HUD's budget is being ravaged right now by Secretary Turner and the federal administration housing choice vouchers, rental assistance programs are going to decline. And then the state legislature please has just ended the state's housing tax credit program as well, which will reduce the number of tax credit properties that come online. All of this to say that the city has the opportunity to keep housing affordable to residents like my former 30 something year old self. Thank you for taking the time tonight. I appreciate all the work that you do.

Speaker 1 ([02:52:34](#)):

Thanks, Hillary.

Speaker 2 ([02:52:40](#)):

That's all the calls.

Speaker 1 ([02:52:42](#)):

Great, thank you very much. Okay, so before we move on to ponder these issues, I think we're going to take a 15 minute break and is that good?

Speaker 4 ([02:52:53](#)):

10, 10, 10, 10.

Speaker 1 ([02:52:55](#)):

10 is good. Okay. Ten's good. I like 15. I didn't want to under commit, so Alright, so we'll be back here at eight o'clock then.

Speaker 46 ([02:53:00](#)):

Yeah,

Speaker 1 ([03:04:09](#)):

I think we're going to head back in the meeting here. Okay, so we've heard the public comment. Commissioners, would you have any opinions or would you like any further discussion with staff or any kind of further comments?

Speaker 47 ([03:04:28](#)):

I can start and say a few things and then see where it goes to answer one of the questions. I was the one who brought this back up as chair of the committee brought up in the January C commission meeting, and it's actually one of the issues I think Joy kind of has, which is we plan to do a major to consider policy changes to this code at the end of this year, probably in October with planning commission November, December, and the city commission considered it in January, February. Well, if this issue is something we want to bring up, and we decided at that point a big if to go back to three, we're in the middle of a August or August lease situation, well, you're not likely going to change occupancy on January 1st from five to three because leases are signed, people are living there with 90% of your leases.

([03:05:29](#)):

So the idea was if we're going to talk about this, we need to talk about it now as opposed to waiting until mid-year. Now I will say that I think no matter what we decide tonight, I am guessing somebody on either side of this will bring this back to us in October for consideration. The Ian side will bring it back to us and it's something we could consider in October with a different effective date, let's say an August 1st, 2026 effective date. So I mean, I think that's why it was brought up to be discussed along with the other cleanup amendments, which by the way, I'll just say real quick so we won't talk about. Thank you for the cleanup amendments, they were important, they were helpful. I don't think anyone objects to them, but they were good. And I want to thank Elizabeth in particular on a couple of the ones that she's doing to make it more readable, more understandable. We've had lots of comments about how the development code is, even though we've tried to simplify it, which is one of the goals has been hard to read, and I think some of the changes Elizabeth made were helpful in that end.

(03:06:42):

So I say that as background and then I guess I will say and see where it goes. Obviously I chair the development code committee, the development code committee supported the five across and we voted for the five on the implementation, which goes into effect here on April 1st. Obviously this issue has a lot of people talking on both passionate people on both sides of the issue. So I do think it's an important issue for us to discuss and make a decision on and move forward. So the planning commission did what they did, so we need full votes if we wanted to do something different than what they did, and I don't know where we'll end up on that. And so anyway, I can say more, but I guess I'll start with that procedural note first.

Speaker 1 (03:07:44):

Okay, so procedurally, I think we are pretty clear what we need to do if we want to move forward with the revised recommendations, any changes are going to require.

Speaker 47 (03:07:56):

I did have one question for Randy. I guess to make sure I understand this, Randy, if we took no action tonight, if we just didn't take any action, we have a code that's going to affect April 1st, correct?

Speaker 48 (03:08:13):

The existing what was passed previously that would go into affect April one would still be in effect and it would be five across the board.

Speaker 6 (03:08:22):

Yeah.

Speaker 1 (03:08:26):

Okay. Anybody else have anything to add on this or questions related to the specifics on this?

Speaker 49 (03:08:38):

I did in terms of and Vice Mayor Finkel die, you might be better to answer this one as a part of it when it comes back in October, were there any studies attached to it in terms of progress reports? I guess I know that there was benchmarks when it would come back up for review. I know October is one and I thought there was one after that. No,

Speaker 47 (03:09:02):

This was the first one in the second one in October.

Speaker 49 ([03:09:04](#)):

I

Speaker 47 ([03:09:05](#)):

Mean, I think, and Jeff can jump in to Becky, I think the idea was to see how applications came in and see how people were using the code and then I think also to see how it was working out in the community and for example, will people building ADUs or did they find something in the code that prevented them from using ADUs that we wanted to change or did all of a sudden we have a D triplexes built somewhere because there was something, and maybe that's not a bad thing, but maybe there was something that surprised us that hey, we didn't know there was a loophole there that we wanted to now talk about and say you can build triplexes in these areas. I think Jeff, you might jump in, but I think that was the idea,

Speaker 50 ([03:09:50](#)):

Correct? That was the idea. We wanted to have some time to work with it, have some real cases that would go through and understand the dynamics of it. Really when you put that stress test to it is with applications to seeing how different people put it to different lots. And so we were planning on doing is just keeping a running list through April one through October and then coming back with what we'd heard as possible changes or suggestions of that one and then bringing it to you for a consideration of an initiation to kind of finish that shakedown amendment to make sure that we've got all the bits and pieces in there correctly where we want 'em to be.

Speaker 49 ([03:10:21](#)):

Gotcha. Okay.

Speaker 4 ([03:10:25](#)):

I did want to make sure I understood something correctly. I heard several comments tonight about having children and then adults that might not be related or might not be a spouse. My understanding of the definition and the code is that the number of people that can live together is only based on the adults in the household and not that children is. Is that correct? Am I correct on that understanding,

Speaker 48 ([03:10:50](#)):

Randy Commissioner? Yes. That children are not counted under the Fair Housing Act that we don't count children as among a number. So it's just adults.

Speaker 47 ([03:10:59](#)):

Okay,

Speaker 4 ([03:10:59](#)):

Thank you.

Speaker 47 ([03:11:01](#)):

And I guess I do think it's, and it was pointed out a little bit, the steering committee and the code that's adopted did add compared to what existed a year ago, whatever existed now under the code, we did add the committed relationship and added foster kids and guardians that for the last however many years since Tom Hoppo brought this along, I don't know that we didn't have committed relationship the last 15, 20 years. We did not have committed relationship. We did not have foster, we did not have guardians. I think in there, I think we added those three phrases again to try to even at the five to make sure the five tried to

account for the change in family style. So we did add that and that'll go into effect April 1st, absent anything else we do tonight. And that'd be true if there's five, if there's five, if it's three or if it's four, whatever it is, that definition has changed and I think everyone supports that.

Speaker 1 ([03:12:03](#)):

Who gets to define what a committed relationship is,

Speaker 47 ([03:12:06](#)):

The enforcer. Thank you. Exactly.

Speaker 13 ([03:12:10](#)):

Are roommates committed to each other?

Speaker 47 ([03:12:12](#)):

Yes. So it is the enforcer. Yeah. Yep.

Speaker 10 ([03:12:19](#)):

I'll go through these bullet points real quick since it seems like we're still deciding on what we're going to do or maybe some of us are deciding what we're going to do tonight. So I will start with all of my lovely bullet points, but I'll start with this. I've said it before and I'll say it again as we live today, housing policies are not made to benefit people. I'm not saying we don't benefit people in their current inception. Now they are all about developers. This land development code and I set it in November, is our first step to putting people first in policy. And that might be hard to swallow because we're so programmed in how we see housing. Even in this discussion tonight. We've heard about single dwelling housing, single dwelling housing, single dwelling housing, and the inverse of that is apartments. We have literally programmed ourselves to think like developers at their cost structure that I make money either building a house, single family detached house, or through massive density of an apartment.

([03:13:23](#)):

We can't even imagine what the middle is. And that's what this conversation around occupancy limits is about. Imagining the middle and the possibilities because yes, what it took for my parents 10, 15, 30 years ago to buy a house, I can't do that. I'm one of the lone renters up here on the commission, and the struggle is real. And if I was to have a house and let's say I had the means and the ability to buy a house here in Lawrence, I would be trying to find four more people that live with me to pay it because I'd be paying it forward by giving them an opportunity and access to upward mobility as far as their prosperity and economic security. So we need to change and turn our brains on to that. We start doing people-centered housing policies, and this is one of those, okay, I know some folks talked about we could do things around restricting rent prices and things like that.

([03:14:19](#)):

No, we can't. Legislature restricted that. They put a kibosh on that. They took away our local control on that. I've heard people say, we need to make developers build affordable housing. We can't do that. Legislature restricted that, and it actually came from somebody here. So we had the ops here in our own backyard snitching on us to the legislature and preempted us on rent control as well as the ability to encourage inclusionary zoning, inclusionary housing. So little things to think about. I'm not afraid to live next to a duplex because Lord knows I would like to live in a duplex. I live in an apartment and it sucks. I want growth, but it shouldn't have to come at a cost arbitrarily decided by someone who is not doing any more to my apartment than they did the five years ago before the pandemic when I moved in.

([03:15:12](#)):

We still need to address affordable housing policies in the Land development code. We are there. We are going to hear, we're going to do some studies from April to October. Staff is going to come back to us. We already know it. We've heard from community stakeholders who are doing this work and a place for everyone. We need to do more. This is the start, but we need to do more. No clear proof that occupancy limits benefit anyone. They don't. You had the state of Colorado repeal their occupancy limits. So many different states who are on the right side of this are saying, eh, we shouldn't do this. But here we are. And even in real time, AI even had us up as a hot take. So we could make AP news here with this wealth and economic equity. I've heard folks email and tell us that this is an inequity to them.

(03:16:02):

This is an inequity to those of us who will never have the ability to own a home. That gap has almost quadrupled right now with things as it relates to hud, as it relates to tariffs, just as it relates to the climate right now. And because we have all of these uncertainties, there's no guarantee. So what can we do with maintaining what we have now and increasing to give us an opportunity and a fighting chance, review other housing options. Man, we are not being creative in this and there are so many creative options. The few co-ops we have in town, we should have more. We can look at rent to own. We can look at, there were policies introduced for the last 10 years about giving individuals the ability with housing choice vouchers to do a rent to own program so that they can have home ownership.

(03:16:54):

Because not all people who get housing choice vouchers are delicate individuals who are cracked out, coked up, homeless drunks that don't know how to take care of themselves. There are good people that just can't get by because of capitalism. So let's call it what it is that's in the room taking up a whole lot of space. But we give it grace, but we don't seem to give humans who are trying to just live and be that same grace. So look at that. Shared equity ownership. These are all housing strategies that we can utilize in this community. That's pretty much on brand with what Lawrence talks about that we're not doing. So the possibilities are endless as far as our ability to close the gap on not only housing affordability and housing accessibility, but also housing choice and how we introduce that choice into our community opportunities to bring KU into the picture.

(03:17:48):

It is happening. I talked about it in November. They're not at the table. They should be at the table. There are things that the university needs to look at now. There's merit that their enrollment will drop off. That doesn't necessarily, we should go, whew, that's great for us because there's still going to be individuals in this community like myself who are not students anymore. I'm still paying for it, but I'm not a student anymore who will probably still be renting. So what would be available for us? What does KU need to do as it relates to their policy around freshmen on campus and living on campus? What are they doing to build new stock that is also affordable? Because Department of Ed, we don't know what's going to happen with that. We don't know what's going to happen with financial aid. So are we now othering students who can afford to come to KU because they can't afford to live in a \$1,200 unit? I mean, there are units on kus campus that cost more than my rent, and then they still got to pay for food. So I get it when people say, oh, that's not taking into account utilities. I'm one person. If I counted to my utilities, I am cost burdened and I have a pretty good job. So there's a lot of folks who need to be at the table who they are getting there and the city is wanting, and this commission is wanting to hold them accountable.

(03:19:13):

We need to drive a comprehensive healthy Homes initiative, which we have. And we've started those conversations. It came up in the planning commission about enforcement. Enforcement is just piece, and we do have it, but we do need to do more. There's a possible relationship that we can have there with the university. There's a healthy home initiative that we can sign onto that we've started the process a year ago that didn't drop the ball. We just capacity, we have our neighbors to the east of us in Kansas City passed a Healthy Homes initiative, was a comprehensive housing initiative that had to do with a registry.

It had to do with rental inspections, it had to do with common app, it had to do with enforcement. It also had to do with bringing in the health department full comprehensive. They didn't get all the things they wanted.

(03:20:00):

So New Orleans took what Kansas City did and they ran with it. I want that New Orleans model that is a model that says safe, welcoming, inclusive, equitable, accessible. It does all the things. It checks all the boxes. It gets us moving in the direction and it brings the university involved. So it's bigger than enforcement, but yes, enforcement is a concern and we do need to address that while we're addressing all these other things. So we have to stop using students as scapegoats. We really do. It's starting to become a dog whistle and it hurts my heart. So my nephew stays with me because he couldn't afford to live on his own to go to school, but he's staying with me saving money. So you know what? He's going to school debt free and if I have to put up with a teenager living with me, sharing space that Lord knows I don't want to share with him, I will do it because I don't want him to be in the same situation as his aunt. So I know it's crunchy, I know it's not ideal, but we got to do it. This was the work that we put into it and I get, it's not everybody's cup of tea, but let's just try to do it and figure it out on the backend instead of trying to preempt us from doing something that really could turn out to be what this community needs. So I'm for straight five, I've set my peace. I'll roll it out to the rest of you.

Speaker 49 (03:21:25):

Thank

Speaker 10 (03:21:25):

You.

Speaker 49 (03:21:28):

Optimally, I would love four. I think that'd be a nice even mix. We're already going from four to five on everything else,

(03:21:40):

But yeah, I'm kind of deliberating and if I am leaning a little bit to staying at three, but trying to figure out, I thought Courtney brought up some great points about long-term and short-term rental and figuring out those rental maps to see exactly how many people are moving from that to that in relation to our housing stock enforcement. I've definitely heard that and I think that's important on both ends. Sides of the conversation were really pointed about that and overlays or some sort of modification for housing that is near or adjacent to the university. Now granted, like Commissioner Seller said, and I think the university definitely needs to be a part of this conversation and I think that there are some ways and methods to go ahead and make sure that we can work together on that. But yeah, those are things popping and head of mind.

(03:22:39):

And also on the other end I find myself, I think, I can't remember who, but somebody brought up that a way to figure out how to keep our housing stock relevant and not necessarily have it go into Reynolds from parties outside of town. I know that there have been other places that have done things like that, but that it's always been something in the back of my mind as well. We do have limited housing stock and we haven't been building any anytime soon. I know that we are all working to change that we have things in line to go ahead and build more and hopefully those will come through fruition. But I'm just kind of spitballing thinking of things on my mind. Sure,

Speaker 1 (03:23:34):

I appreciate that. So sounds like we got a 5, 4, 4, maybe stay with the

Speaker 49 ([03:23:41](#)):

Secondary

Speaker 1 ([03:23:42](#)):

Commission recommendation or you would consider four but not five for right now. Okay. So Commissioner Larson, you want to add anything to this or No,

Speaker 4 ([03:23:55](#)):

I think there's so many good points made by the folks who came up and spoke tonight. There's just so many sides to this that it makes it difficult. I've previously been a supporter of the limited number of people in the household, but over the past several years we've just had so many issues with housing, affordable housing and whether or not, I know there's some debate as to whether if you had allow more people if it's going to be more affordable. It's hard to say, but I believe that, I think we need to ease up on the number of people that can be in a household and I'd be happy with the compromise at four. I don't think I want to go down to three though. I think that's just too restrictive.

Speaker 1 ([03:24:44](#)):

You would consider five?

Speaker 4 ([03:24:45](#)):

Yeah, I'd consider five.

Speaker 1 ([03:24:46](#)):

Okay.

([03:24:49](#)):

Alright. So from an administrative standpoint, I think any change we make to this would require at least four. So if we're going to talk about changes, I think that needs to be considered. I believe that I do not like to have restrictions on these types of land uses majority of the land use and planning regulations that were put in place. So we're done. So for a variety of reasons and I understand why we have this current occupancy limit here in Lawrence pretty well. But I'm really concerned about mandating how people can live in their homes and more importantly, I'm concerned about the basis for people's concern more than I am about the actual change. And for me, I feel like we as a commission need to get out of the way when it comes to how we can provide affordable units in our community. And by restricting the number of people that can live in a home that can easily house more people, it goes in exact opposite of what we're trying to achieve with affordable housing in this community.

([03:26:01](#)):

So for me, I was excited to see the density change. I'm excited to see five because I do believe this is something that is in the way for our community to grow and to become affordable. I believe that the majority of the impact of these changes are going to be yet to be seen and we can't predict the future. But I'm also concerned about legislating and mandate meaning how people use their property. And I think that's what zoning restrictions are all about. And this is another one of those requirements that consider the government's rule over your right to use land more than your own personal rights. So for me that's a problem and I understand why lot of people want to keep the housing stock in place. I agree that the rental properties have changed hands over and over again and they've moved from residential owner occupied to

either in Lawrence occupied rental owners, meaning people who've bought up lots of property throughout the town and they live here.

(03:27:02):

They're not living out of town. They live in Lawrence. In fact, most of the people I talk to own rental properties in Lawrence. So this is not a problem with without others and out of towners, this is us as a community who've chosen to buy up this housing stock, turn it into rental property and then rent it back to the students. So we've created our own problem by encouraging people to own and operate multiple rental units in this town, but the majority of those people live in Lawrence. So we're really affecting all of us. So for me, I would like to see less restrictive requirements and on the amount of people that can live together who are unrelated. And I understand that there might be some unintended consequences to that, but we have the ability to change our rules if necessary and I'd be willing to admit that I was wrong and change them if there are unintended consequences.

(03:27:50):

And if I'm around, I'd be happy to do that. But in this instance, I'm more concerned about not acting and about not changing it to the higher number than I am about easing into this. And to try and to restrict one zone over the other. That's the secondary question I want to bring up is when we have R one and two with a three person limit and we have another R three with a five person limit, there's going to be these borderlines that were arbitrarily drawn in the sand by R group and others over time these land use, these zoning designations are created. And so we're just going to create winners and losers now. So one block away you'll have to have five people in a house and these other people are restricted to three. So for me, we're going to naturally create a community that may be separated by zoning districts and I don't understand that. So for me, I am a proponent of trying to keep it at five. Like the original recommendation was after months of study and hours of input. And I'm also willing to live with some unintended consequences from this and be willing to change back to a lower number if there's some negative repercussions. So that's kind of how I feel.

Speaker 47 (03:29:00):

I'm trying to count forward to obviously from being on the steering committee, I ultimately support five. I think that's where we should be going. I think that has the impact of what we're trying to do with the code. I do think most of the comments and some people talk about compromise, some people talk about many of the comments are about negative externalities. Again, not really who's living there, but how though could be a group of people who live there. That's bad. And I think a couple people brought it up. I mean we have the same problem in the code about duplexes. Some people think if a duplex is next door to me, that means they're going to be loud and not going to take care of their place and they're going to be terrible neighbors. Other people think if a duplex is next to me, that's going to be fine.

(03:29:53):

I'm happy with that. I think in the same way we have, if those 3 0 5 people, there's a chance it's going to be five loud obnoxious people and that's going to be bad for me. And occasionally that might happen, but it's obviously not going to happen. So I would say mean there are all things we are working on to try to handle that negative externalities. I do think working and we'll see more of this working with KU to help us address those issues. I think in this next budget we might see additional code enforcement officers. I think in 2026 we'll see residential parking areas. So I think it is possible that we'll see those changes. So I could see holding to give time to get those worked out, but I think the other compromise is go to five to four and see what happens. Or if we had, I think that's another option. So I do think we need to get from here to there. I do think we need to be ready for those negative externalities and I think we have to be committed to working on those. And I think we all,

Speaker 1 (03:31:13):

So

Speaker 47 ([03:31:15](#)):

Whose county votes? I'm not. You have four, five, whether you are willing to do what? Five and four or five and five either

Speaker 4 ([03:31:25](#)):

I'd like to see it go to four, but I also don't want call

Speaker 10 ([03:31:29](#)):

The process

Speaker 4 ([03:31:29](#)):

Whether

Speaker 47 ([03:31:30](#)):

You, I

Speaker 10 ([03:31:30](#)):

Think that depends on, well I think how we change it depends on the vote. I'm five across, so that would be contrary. So we would need four people to go five across. Right,

Speaker 49 ([03:31:40](#)):

Right. I would be four and five. So four are in one are two, and then five keep five.

Speaker 1 ([03:31:51](#)):

Understood. Yeah. So that would be a change. So that would be one. Okay.

Speaker 6 ([03:31:59](#)):

Five and five. Go four to five.

Speaker 1 ([03:32:14](#)):

I'm doing some math here. Okay. So the idea of moving to four would be we would encompass the already existing district, which incorporates four unrelated adults. Then we would also have an increase immediately adjacent to the R one and R two. And then we'd still have the differentiation between R two and R three where you would've one extra person allowed per unit. So

Speaker 47 ([03:32:41](#)):

You'd basically be going from three to four and changing it to four to five? Yes.

Speaker 1 ([03:32:45](#)):

Would

Speaker 47 ([03:32:45](#)):

Be that change increasing

Speaker 1 ([03:32:46](#)):

It R one on each would

Speaker 47 ([03:32:47](#)):

Be that change? Or we could do the five to five,

Speaker 1 ([03:32:53](#)):

Continue,

Speaker 47 ([03:32:53](#)):

Continue as currently in place. So we have two though. Definitely five and

Speaker 1 ([03:33:07](#)):

Five. I mean I would go for five. I would be willing, we need to change, we don't want this to drop down to three, but if we do nothing it's going to revert to five anyway. So I guess that's our only, if we can't come to an agreement on four to whatever that change from three would be no matter what, we need four people unless we vote for this, correct?

Speaker 47 ([03:33:30](#)):

Yes. Yes.

Speaker 1 ([03:33:32](#)):

So we're going to have to get four votes. So we got four votes for four, or excuse me, three votes for four, which wouldn't be enough to pass. We have two votes for five. So we would need someone to compromise to four or someone would need to compromise to five. So is there anybody willing to go? I guess we'd need two in order to completely switch it. So

Speaker 49 ([03:33:57](#)):

I'm holding that four.

Speaker 1 ([03:33:58](#)):

Okay,

Speaker 49 ([03:33:59](#)):

Four and five.

Speaker 1 ([03:34:00](#)):

I think that's fair.

Speaker 49 ([03:34:01](#)):

Yeah.

Speaker 10 ([03:34:04](#)):

So holding that four and five puts us at a modification, not necessarily contrary.

Speaker 48 ([03:34:10](#)):

Correct. That would be a modification, but that would be contrary to what the recommendation of the planning commission was. So it would still need four votes,

Speaker 1 ([03:34:22](#)):

Anything but as is requires four.

Speaker 6 ([03:34:25](#)):

Right.

Speaker 1 ([03:34:28](#)):

Whatever we choose.

Speaker 47 ([03:34:34](#)):

So if there was a five full, sounds like there's two votes against a five full.

Speaker 1 ([03:34:44](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 47 ([03:34:46](#)):

That's

Speaker 10 ([03:34:47](#)):

One interpretation. You said

Speaker 47 ([03:34:48](#)):

You could do five. So the Okay,

Speaker 10 ([03:34:55](#)):

I'm sorry. You're okay.

Speaker 47 ([03:34:57](#)):

Okay. We love parliamentary procedure. So I guess would you go for sticking in five and five?

Speaker 4 ([03:35:17](#)):

Sure would like to get a four or five shot

Speaker 1 ([03:35:20](#)):

And you feel safer, more comfortable with I respect that. I'm just trying to understand. I understand you weren't in favor initially or you may have been. I don't know for sure. I can't tell

Speaker 4 ([03:35:30](#)):

Of when

Speaker 1 ([03:35:32](#)):

The three to four chains. Yeah. At all.

Speaker 4 ([03:35:34](#)):

Yeah, I want three for sure. I don't want three. Yeah, I wouldn't really like to see four to four five. We can get that.

Speaker 1 ([03:35:46](#)):

Okay. So

Speaker 10 ([03:35:48](#)):

You're amenable to a four to five, correct. You're amenable to doing four and R one, R two and five and an R three and four to five and therefore after

Speaker 47 ([03:35:58](#)):

And knowing that we're probably going to hear both sides of this in a few months. Yeah,

Speaker 1 ([03:36:03](#)):

I

Speaker 10 ([03:36:03](#)):

Say call for the vote.

Speaker 1 ([03:36:06](#)):

Okay. Well I guess the first thing is I don't know if there's not a motion, is there a motion to approve the thing

Speaker 4 ([03:36:12](#)):

First part

Speaker 1 ([03:36:13](#)):

That would be no. So we need to formulate another motion for the second option.

Speaker 10 ([03:36:20](#)):

I'll do that. I move that we approve the text amendment. A MDT dash 25 dash one to chapter 20 of the land development code of the city of Lawrence, Kansas to streamline language and regulations to improve clarity and correct inconsistencies and errors and adopt on first reading ordinance number 1 0 1 2 0. That's an easy vote. I'll

Speaker 47 ([03:36:39](#)):

Second that.

Speaker 10 ([03:36:40](#)):

Of course. That's why I did. Oh shit.

Speaker 1 ([03:36:43](#)):

Moved by seller, seconded by Vice Mayor Finkel dial. All in favor say aye.

Speaker 47 ([03:36:46](#)):

Aye.

Speaker 1 ([03:36:47](#)):

Aye. Okay, so that's one. Appreciate getting that up. Thank you Commissioner Sellers

Speaker 47 ([03:36:51](#)):

Cleared that.

Speaker 10 ([03:36:56](#)):

Now I look to my right, I mean at least for the ones that voted for it needs to do the motion. I'm not going to do dirt work for folks. Understood.

Speaker 47 ([03:37:14](#)):

Well I'll

Speaker 1 ([03:37:15](#)):

See if there's a motion for four.

Speaker 47 ([03:37:16](#)):

Okay. And do we need to make sure it's clear that's up? What's the language maximum of

Speaker 48 ([03:37:24](#)):

Full? Our recommendation would be a maximum of, as opposed to up to, there's some ambiguities as to whether up to is inclusive or exclusive. And it's probably something that probably should have been caught previously. But anyway, we would recommend going forward that it'd be a maximum of five or a maximum of four or whatever the number is decided as opposed to up to.

Speaker 47 ([03:37:49](#)):

Okay. Well I'll move to approve a text amendment to section 20 dash 2 0 4 occupancy standards of the land development code to reduce the maximum occupancy limit in all one and all two district two, a maximum of four unrelated adults and a maximum of five adults of any relationship in all other zoning districts that permit residential uses and adopt on first reading ordinance number 1 0 1 2 1 as stated

Speaker 1 ([03:38:22](#)):

Second. Okay. Motion by legal dye. Seconded by Littlejohn. All in favor say aye.

Speaker 4 ([03:38:29](#)):

Aye. Aye. Aye. Nay.

Speaker 1 ([03:38:34](#)):

Motion passes. Four to one I guess.

Speaker 10 ([03:38:36](#)):

I guess Uncle Henry doesn't like guesses. It passes four

Speaker 47 ([03:38:40](#)):

To one. Okay. Passes four to one. Okay,

Speaker 10 ([03:38:47](#)):

Thank you. Thank you.

Speaker 1 ([03:39:03](#)):

Just give me one more minute,

Speaker 47 ([03:39:13](#)):

Luis. You thought these were all here for you? Let's not all the people here for you. I guess this

Speaker 51 ([03:39:18](#)):

Is much should be much easier. We're just going home to put on their

Speaker 1 ([03:39:22](#)):

Pajamas. The next item is to consider accepting the parks, recreation and culture 2025 master plan and the action is to accept the master plan, Luis.

Speaker 51 ([03:39:32](#)):

Okay, well good evening, mayor, vice Mayor and commissioners tonight. We're here. Excuse me, we're here. Bringing you the parks, recreation and Culture 2025 comprehensive master plan, which has been in the works since 2023. It was intentionally slowed down last summer as I was transitioning into my role in order to make sure that we were aligned with our department's goals, strategic plan, and the broader vision for the community. So over the past several months, we've been working closely with our master plan consultants to refine it into a practical and strategic roadmap for the next five to 10 years. So tonight we're going to ask the commission to formally accept the master plan so we can use it as a framework to guide our efforts in the future. Accepting it doesn't obligate the city either financially or in policy, but it does allow us to use it as a tool that we can refer to as we're making decisions into the future, as to what projects we need to take on, how we evaluate programs, and also looking at fees that may be recommended in here. So the major things that we're asking in this master plan and we'll hear from our consultants in a minute, is that we're exploring sustainable revenue options to support the department longterm assessing and prioritizing our programs to ensure that we're meeting the community's needs effectively planning for facility and park improvements that align with our long-term vision and integration of arts and culture into our department. So both at this point in January and February, the Recreation Advisory Board and the Cultural Affairs Commission have reviewed and approved the plan approved, recommending it to the Commission for acceptance.

([03:41:31](#)):

I'm going to turn it over to our consultants, Hank Moyers and PJ Novik from Confluence. They're going to give a high level of overview of how we got here, the planning process, some key takeaways and recommendations, and then we will open it up for questions or comments after that. So Jay, thank you, Luis.

Speaker 52 (03:42:00):

Okay, good evening, commissioner. I'm pj. No for the confluence. With me tonight is Hank Myers with our firm, the presentation you have in your package tonight. You have actually seen three quarters of that. We just included the whole thing. So if it's all right with you, I'll slip to the last six pages, which I really think get down to the details of what the plan recommends. Just have scroll down. All right, so we talked about the outcomes, we talked about the timeline, we talked about our process, we talked about the community engagement and where did, I dunno where it went.

Speaker 6 (03:42:56):

I dunno where.

Speaker 4 (03:43:01):

I'm not sure what that is. That looks like the code. That's the code, yeah, it's the code

Speaker 47 (03:43:12):

On the wrong. Yeah, you've got the development code.

Speaker 10 (03:43:20):

Oh, what's the full agenda that's on there? Yeah, I

Speaker 51 (03:43:22):

Don't think we're going to find it is a totally different presentation.

Speaker 3 (03:43:29):

Yeah, lemme just,

Speaker 6 (03:43:41):

Okay. I

Speaker 51 (03:43:48):

Somebody else is driving, I think.

Speaker 34 (03:43:50):

Yeah, I'm trying to stop sharing the screen.

Speaker 51 (03:43:52):

Oh, okay.

Speaker 34 (03:43:52):

Find what you're looking for.

Speaker 51 (03:43:53):

Okay. Got it.

Speaker 34 (03:43:54):

See what you can do.

Speaker 51 ([03:44:02](#)):

Okay, let's try that again. All right, thank you.

Speaker 6 ([03:44:12](#)):

Hold on. Okay. Solid, right? Correct.

Speaker 52 ([03:44:24](#)):

Okay, here we go. Alright, going through the process. We talked about community engagement, not going to go too fast so we don't screw this up again and set everything off ETC results. Then we had key recommendations on the facility. So with that, I'm going to let Hank take the first three and then I'll finish up with the last three. And again, this is kind of the culmination of all the recommendations in the plan. Thank

Speaker 53 ([03:44:54](#)):

You bj. So one of the key recommendations as far as the facilities go are just that as we looked at things of comparable size to the city of Lawrence, one of some of the things that we saw that you excelled in currently are that your paved trails, you have 8.6 miles per thousand residents of paved trails, which is 20 times the national average of 0.4 miles. That's a huge number and a huge success for the city. And it just shows how well connected this city really is. Parkland, you have 30.89 acres per thousand in residents. That's more than double the average throughout the Midwest of 12 acres per thousand. Again, another huge success. Indoor recreation spaces 3.21 square feet per thousand residents, which is exceeding the average of two square feet per thousand residents, which is typically an NRPA standard. So that's a national standard that we typically look at and go by.

([03:45:56](#)):

And then sports fields, you're currently meeting all of the best practices as far as strategic actions with facilities. Some of the things that we want to make sure that we're cognizant of is that updates and expansions in the walking trail. We know that there's a loop trail that still needs to be finished. That was one of the priorities in what we heard from the residents, not only through the survey but also in public engagement meetings. So we want to be very cognizant of that. Updates to existing park facilities, you have a ton of park facilities, but a lot of them are in need of some attention playgrounds. Other elements looking at just a, a accessibility, all of those elements are things that have been identified as part of this master plan. And we've identified where some of the key components are that need attention most and strategized how to address those.

([03:46:52](#)):

We also looked at modernizing some of the indoor recreation and aquatics facilities. We've noted that that was an important element not only from the public as well, but also just to support the programs that you already have going on within the city. I mentioned upgrades of playgrounds to improve safety and accessibility. Typically we'd like to see at least half of your playgrounds fully accessible as part of this. And so as you get to that 25 year life cycle of what is typically seen on a playground and replacement on those, the replacements need to be fully accessible, at least up to 50% of those within your community. And then preservation and expansion of passive natural areas. Again, another high priority of what we heard from the community and residents, keeping those green spaces open and preserving the native character of those green spaces and really working to identify expansion opportunities as growth occurs.

([03:47:50](#)):

So you can see here on the right, the level of service mapping and what we did. The yellow areas are highly served areas. Orange areas are well-served but still could use some additional attention. And the red areas are currently underserved. So as you see expansion happen in some of those different areas of town, it would be important for you to look at opportunities to acquire additional parkland to serve those new residents. And then as far as financial recommendations, we want to make sure that the key strategic actions here are to create parks, recreation and arts pricing policy that balance operational costs with the community expectations to develop a dedicated business development position to seek out new sponsorships and partnerships to help fund park programming and really to leverage the transient guest tax from sporting events and special events hosted by the department to really help support the operations and facilities and maintenance.

(03:48:54):

All of those are going to be key components in helping to keep this department running well and meeting the citizen's needs longterm. Some others that we noted as well as establishing a bid business improvement district for downtown Lawrence to include the park system, establish a park foundation to help generate private dollars to support capital improvement projects, establish self-sustaining and revolving budgets for revenue generating facilities and programs to ensure the long-term viability and really consider development of an impact development fee for parks when new development is created in the city. One of the things that this department's really looking at is opportunities to offset some of the other areas and make sure that they're funded adequately to really serve the residents and meet all the needs that have been identified by not only residents, but also the different departments. As you add in the arts and culture side of things, there's going to need to be additional funding for some of these other sources and some of these different strategic actions help to address some of those goals for the city longterm. So with that, I'll let PJ talk about some of the other recommendations.

Speaker 52 (03:50:09):

Next we'll go, we'll talk about the arts and culture, which is really, as you are aware, a very important component of the plan. The key strategic actions that the plan outlines is, number one, collaborate with the indigenous communities to highlight their contributions to the Lawrence's cultural heritage. Next item was formalizing the public art program by advancing a three-time affirmed resolution initially passed in 1986 to an ordinance and implementing the accompanying public art program. So just making that official work with cultural organizations like the Lawrence Arts Center Theater, Lawrence and the Watkins Museum of History to co-create programs that celebrate the city's diversity. Next is develop a flagship cultural celebration that draws visitors and reflects Lawrence's unique character. And the last one, execute a market study for the building of an outdoor event space amphitheater to understand the community demand and the programming types that would make this a successful element in Lawrence.

(03:51:10):

And then the final conclusions think that these are things that needed to reinforce this Lawrence unmistakable identity in securing his position as a regional leader in parks and recreation and culture by providing accessible recreational opportunities, programs and open spaces. The department is a key contributor to the public health, promoting active lifestyles, enhancing mental and physical wellbeing, and strengthening the overall health of the community. Next preserve and enhance its parks and recreation system, expand access to arts and culture, foster economic growth and community wellbeing, and ensure financial stability and equity within the system. And key strategic actions. Invest at least 5% of the total asset value of the park system, excluding land to maintain and preserve existing city owned assets, balance revenue earned capacity with existing tax dollars to manage facilities and programs adequately update the outdoor aquatic center and build a new one in the West Lawrence to achieve one aquatic center per 50,000 residents incorporate more dedicated funding sources to not deplete the system, operate revenue producing facilities with approved business plans where all revenues earned help to support those

facilities involved and established a true cost recovery goal for each facility. And finally, update pricing and partnership policies within the department. I'd be happy to answer any questions you have.

Speaker 1 ([03:52:40](#)):

Thank you. Any questions?

Speaker 47 ([03:52:43](#)):

I have a couple questions to make sure I understand. A couple of these. One of the ones you just said operate revenue producing facilities. Are you saying each rec center should, for example, be a revenue producing facility and have a true cost recovery plan for each of those facilities? One for the pool, one for each of the rec centers, that sort of thing?

Speaker 52 ([03:53:10](#)):

Well typically like a recreation center, typically when we do these plans, if you have a recreational center that has a cost recovery in the seventies, you're doing pretty good. If you get up into the 80, you're doing really well. Very rarely do we see a community center that is 100% cost recovery pools are a little different. Pools as you probably are well aware are they're a loss leader for the city, but they're a needed facility within the city. They're just not going to be able to recover the cost of that just through the pool season without really high rates with that. So I think it's taking a look at each one, we can't put across an entire system with one particular, but the idea of taking a look at those programs and not being afraid to say, we've done it this way for how many years, but if we change something, perhaps we can make it a better facility and better cost recovery and be able to then have some of those funds going to another program within the department.

Speaker 47 ([03:54:08](#)):

So I think I heard you say 70 might be kind of a universal goal out there that many groups, where are we at in some of our facilities? Did you look at that? I mean, I would guess some of them are very minimal cost recovery.

Speaker 51 ([03:54:23](#)):

Yeah, we are in the process of looking at those numbers. I can say that because of the way that we have previously assessed, cost recovery is not consistent with how we do our accounting within the city. Right now, every charge is accounted to our programs. So HR, analyst, payroll, legal, anything like that is charged and we haven't really accounted for that. So if we were to give you a number of what we have been operating under cost recovery, they're going to be extremely high because we haven't really analyzed each cost center, each program, which we will be in the process of that very shortly against real cost of putting this together when we mow, this is outside of facility, but if we mow or we rent a baseball field, we have to consider, even though that's in recreational in sports, we have to consider the cost of mowing that.

([03:55:28](#)):

Right? And we are going to be analyzing that with finance to see how we best capture that so that we can be looking at real cost recovery models. And when we ask commission to approve a budget and saying, okay, we are striving for 70, that will be an actual 70%. So we'll be doing that. Certainly we're started now, started a while ago looking at these things. So to answer, and one of the complications is that right now, for instance, we do shared programming, one person and one programmer can be in the community building and in East Lawrence, and it's not divided in a way that we can make meaningful decisions on cost recovery. So these are things that we'll be working on. I don't know that we'll have 'em all solved by

January 1st, 2026 as we go through the budget process, but that is something absolutely that we're looking at again, that we can give you realistic cost recovery numbers and we can make policies around that.

Speaker 47 (03:56:33):

And I guess kind of a related, maybe I'm costing into budget a little bit here, but maybe to our consultants across the country, how common is it that you have, for example, entry fees, so higher cost recovery than you saw here? Are we in the bottom quartile of cost recovery? Are we the

Speaker 52 (03:56:56):

Middle from the work we've done? I'd say you're pretty average. I'll use an example of, we did the city of mission plan a few years ago and they were at a cost recovery of just over 80% and they want it to get higher. And we're like, well, you're going to have to change. You're going to have to take some equipment out or turn a meeting room into another equipment room that you can rent out. And that was kind of unpalatable. So that's kind of that level where we typically see.

Speaker 47 (03:57:28):

Okay. The other question I didn't quite understand is consider establishing a business improvement district, which I think I get that Paul, but then include the Paul system, like the entire park system or the parks downtown or

Speaker 52 (03:57:42):

That was really talking about, especially in the downtown area, and that's kind of where the idea of the amphitheater and especially place there because downtown is such a unique portion of the city and trying to, there was a lot of the businesses and a lot of the associations down there really felt that parks and rec was really important. But not physical parks, just the festivals and those types of things to try to have some funds that you can bring in to get those different events going.

Speaker 47 (03:58:10):

Okay, that makes sense. I guess my last question again, kind of generally, you have this suggestion of a business development position. How common is that in the other organizations you see across the country is that

Speaker 52 (03:58:24):

It's becoming more and more common? I think just with the economy the way it is been that you realize that you're having some person that's totally focused on that to try to help the department with that.

Speaker 47 (03:58:36):

Thank you.

Speaker 4 (03:58:40):

Any

Speaker 52 (03:58:40):

Other

Speaker 4 (03:58:41):

Questions? Yeah, I wanted to ask, sorry, go ahead. Ask about the recommendation for a Park foundation. What sort of thought has gone into that? I know that was talked during the last plan that we did in 2017?

Speaker 52 (03:58:58):

Well, I think it's a new funding mechanism that's becoming more and more important. For instance, Johnson County Parks and Recreation has a full-time person that's their responsibility running that foundation. So it's another way to bring in funds to the department, but it's not taking time for your staff with that. But it's just trying to get some corporate sponsors things to help with those type things.

Speaker 51 (03:59:25):

Okay. Can I also add to that? Yeah. So we recently met with the Douglas County Community Foundation and they do have an account already set up. They can do a lot of that for us, not necessarily act as our foundation, but there's already a mechanism for us to go out to the community, work with a group of citizens who are, don't have to recreate, they don't have to create a 501C3 friends of the Lawrence Parks or anything. There's already a structure that we can capitalize on as we move toward a different business model than we've been under. We are depending on certainly user fees, but subsidy from sales taxes and property taxes. We have to move away from that because it's very volatile. So we need these external ways that others communities do. And from Mesa, Arizona, we had a friend of the Parks Foundation, their primary focus was to raise scholarship dollars, not necessarily to support the functions of the parks, but there are many of those examples across the country that we'd look at studying and trying to replicate.

Speaker 22 (04:00:32):

Thank you.

Speaker 10 (04:00:36):

I noticed on the slides we talked about upgrading our playgrounds to improve safety accessibility. Was there any discussion around the use of natural playscapes and maybe the one, some of our playgrounds that maybe need some update that we take them off from an equipment use, but use natural playscapes as a way of creating accessibility and as well as learning at a different cost structure?

Speaker 53 (04:01:03):

Natural playgrounds nature play is a very popular option and typically when we do something like this is you come in and start to replace these, you want to start to look at too creating different opportunities within different playgrounds spread throughout the community so that you don't have one family that goes to the same playground each and every time. If there's another one close by you give them another opportunity. It's another play event that's different than the last one so that it doesn't become mundane so that you get people that start to go around with all these different playgrounds and get a different experience adventure. So that's typically what we like. So yes, having nature play in one playground and having rope play in another and post a platform in another. Yes, all of those we would want to see kind of scattered throughout, creating different opportunities throughout the community.

Speaker 10 (04:02:03):

And then one that may get me some hot water was I could give me some hot water, but I'd be curious to know your thoughts around it because it is a bit of a sticking point, leveraging TGT tax for sporting events to help support operations of facility maintenance. We've kind of gone through a little bit of that tug of war in previous years around TGT dollars and apportionments to parks and recs and culture. So are you suggesting that we need to leverage more in that direction and less to our CBBs and other entities that receive those dollars or what were you thinking in that?

Speaker 53 ([04:02:46](#)):

We're looking at a combination of a lot of things. It takes a lot more than just one funding mechanism anymore. And so what we're trying to do is create opportunities for the department to leverage a bunch of different opportunities to keep things running the way that they want to see things running and to keep the improvements happening and to keep the different activities and festivals and all of those elements going. And this is just one mechanism that we've identified and there's a whole lot more in the master plan that had been written up, other mechanisms to look at helping to fund and provide sources for the department to work with. The handful of recommendations that we've stated tonight are just a small fraction of what's in the overall master plan. If you look into the overall master plan, the implementation matrix alone, I think has somewhere upward of 320 different recommendations to look at over the next five to 10 years.

([04:03:45](#)):

So there's a lot of different opportunities for the department to go through here and prioritize and look at different funding mechanisms, look at different improvements, and look at different programs that they want to really focus on during that time period. And typically as these master plans come up, they will have another one here in five, 10 years and a lot of these recommendations will carry over into the next master plan. So it's important to see that this is just recommendations, it's guidance and suggestions for the future, and anything that doesn't happen during this master plan can carry over into the next one as well.

Speaker 1 ([04:04:33](#)):

Any other questions?

Speaker 10 ([04:04:46](#)):

Not right now.

Speaker 1 ([04:04:48](#)):

I just have one about the fees and how other communities have stepped up and tried to add to the fund base that they have generated by sales tax collection. What is the normal percentage that most communities our size or maybe larger would get from external sources like fundraising or some benefactors or some sort of third party group that would help sustain the parks? Is there a percentage that we seek or is ideal for this or obviously the more we can get from other people the better, but obviously it needs to be sustainable. Also.

Speaker 52 ([04:05:28](#)):

I am not aware if there's an average because it so many continues are different whether you're a parks department or whether you're a Parks commission and how that works. Louise, I don't know if you have any experience or Mesa on that. Well,

Speaker 51 ([04:05:46](#)):

So I guess the question on the fees balance.

Speaker 1 ([04:05:49](#)):

Yeah, the balance of fees and other people's money versus taxes and balance set. Yeah,

Speaker 51 ([04:05:54](#)):

I don't know. But I do know that one of the things that we suffer from here is lack of, for instance, corporate sponsors, right? We're competing. The city doesn't want to be competing against the nonprofits who are looking for the same thing. So it does vary from city to city. What we need to find over even within the next few months as we talk about the 2026 budget, is how do we balance what we can bring in through fees, taxes, and subsidies from the city with what it costs us to do things. So we have to close the gap as a department so that we're not underdelivering what we're promising, but we need to look at the realities. We need to look at the market. We are looking at our competitive set of region within the region and what is realistic. We know there's a elasticity in certain programs.

(04:06:49):

We plan on categorizing programs as critical, essential or luxury where you're paying for the value that it gives you as an individual. So there's a combination of things that we need to look at in order to make it a sustainable department. Right now we're not, we are upside down even to keep up what we did in 2024. We're already behind the eight ball. So that's what we're doing. I mean, we are going to be exploring fees, which will come I'm sure at some point before the commission as a way to offset 'em. But at the same time, we're looking at ways to maintain our facilities as accessible as possible to those who cannot afford it and create robust scholarship programs that can be promoted to the community without any sense being lessened because they can't afford it. So we need to package those things together, but knowing that we cannot continue the way we are.

(04:07:52):

So these combinations of options for us to look at as we go down the next five or so years as we start to see more needs for expansion as there are in the master plan, we need to look at some of these other options at the same time reducing our costs, potentially our footprint across the city. So these are all things that the master plan will help us in prioritizing. We'll bring any big changes, of course we'll bring into the commission so that we can make joint decisions on any of the moves that we decide to make or that we feel we need to make in order to make this continue to be a park system that meets the needs of the community.

Speaker 1 (04:08:35):

Thank you. Any other questions? All right. I think we don't really need to take an action but to receive this, so I appreciate it.

Speaker 47 (04:08:49):

To accept it.

Speaker 1 (04:08:50):

Yes. To accept it. That's right.

Speaker 47 (04:08:51):

Comment though.

Speaker 1 (04:08:52):

Yes, of course. I just want to give them a chance to step down. Okay. I think that's all there is for

Speaker 49 (04:08:58):

Right now.

Speaker 1 ([04:08:59](#)):

I think

Speaker 49 ([04:08:59](#)):

Commissioner

Speaker 1 ([04:09:00](#)):

S I'm sorry. Do you have another,

Speaker 10 ([04:09:02](#)):

This is typical. So we're doing questions and then public comment and comment. So I got a comment. I'll wait

Speaker 1 ([04:09:08](#)):

After. Thank you. Okay. Is there public comment on this item?

Speaker 22 ([04:09:19](#)):

All right. Yeah. My name is Eric Hyde. I know Mr. Ruiz is new to town and I, anyway, I don't want to make him look bad. I can tell he cares a lot about what his job, I'll just say this way, what I learned in 2022 and 23 when I was picking up Na Smith Valley Park for an entire year for free by myself because it's the only way I could figure out how to wake people up and enjoy the beauty of life that we have. I cleaned it up from top to bottom, trash, all that stuff. Anyway, one thing I learned is that you don't need any money to take care of parks. All you need is some manpower. You just need to cut some trees from standing. Well, of course this is very generalized. Of course there are things you need to do, but you don't really need money.

([04:10:16](#)):

Well, you do need money, but I just don't think we need fees. So maybe we do, but let's try our best not to have fees. I know it's complex, but yeah, there's a lot of other parts of town that aren't getting treatment too. Like the polar lofts. I trimmed all the trees around the polar lofts. I did that for free. The city didn't do that. I did that. It took me a long time to do that. Well, actually it didn't take me that long. It just, I did it little by little because I didn't want to get in trouble. So there's other places around town. I've trimmed trees downtown for free. There's a lot of things we can do for free just because we care, just because we have integrity to do the right thing. We're not going to charge money for it or anything like that. We're just going to do it. Anyway, I'm rambling on. Thanks.

Speaker 1 ([04:11:11](#)):

Thank you. Another public comment. Any online? Yes.

Speaker 2 ([04:11:30](#)):

Steven Watts.

Speaker 43 ([04:11:37](#)):

Yeah. Hi. For this opportunity, this presentation wasn't anything but a whole bunch of bullshit about charging people to use our parks. That's all this is. How much are we going to charge? Here's an idea. Why don't we partner with our good friends up on that hill a hundred meters from my house and charge oh 10 cents a ticket for every football and basketball or whatever game that people go to see and that

money come back to the community to invigorate our parks because after all, they are our neighbors and they are our partners. It is a concept that can work. The same thing can be set of charging a nickel or a dime for every high school basketball or football game that goes on to replenish the coffers to make sure that Mr. Ruiz can get his \$150,000 a year salary as he cuts back service over and over and over. The people who attend these parks in many instances have no other opportunities. Why not raise what we charge out of town people to come and use the giant facility that, what was that guy's name? Oh, I forgot it. And them guys dreamt up over there at that holy that mecca for stuff. I mean, there are just so many other possibilities. All of the words were to make a profit. This is what has become of our town. We must turn a profit or we're going to kill it.

(04:13:35):

Paying for the value it gives you as an individual what happens when the individual doesn't have the money to pay. And there are a lot of us and a lot of them, it is just incredible that we sit here and talk about destroying our parts. I mean, some of 'em are closed now. What's that one that was closed? And we just finished raping that other one where we blew away all of the grass and said, oops, sorry. It doesn't have to be centered around charging the citizenry to get in to enjoy the beautification of these lands that we set aside as a community many, many years ago to function as arcs. I want to go back and emphasize why aren't our market rate paid staff negotiating with the University of Kansas

Speaker 2 (04:14:39):

Time?

Speaker 1 (04:14:40):

Okay, thank you, Steve.

Speaker 2 (04:14:43):

That's all the comments, mayor.

Speaker 1 (04:14:46):

Okay. Thank you very much. Thank you very much for the presentation comments. I know we've got some comments. Yeah,

Speaker 10 (04:14:59):

I know. We're just taking this in. I do believe, and I'm fully aware of the master plan and many, many things that are part of it. I do know that it's going to be a sticking point for me as well as in the community as we talk about utilizing TGT. I know we're going to have to have a deeper conversation about that. I think to come out the gate is a good way of ripping the bandaid off. But I think there's a deeper conversation to be had about leveraging those dollars and how we do that and what that actually looks like. So I think there's some folks that are not in this room that definitely want to have that conversation with you, and I think we're in a space that we could do that. And so I do. I appreciate you put it on the slide, which meant you wanted to emphasize it or someone wanted to emphasize it and bring it to our attention. And so attention has been sought received, and I just know we're going to have to take a deeper look into that as far as the key recommendations around cultural integration.

(04:16:00):

Yay, glad we're doing that. We should be. A couple of points on here that I'm kind of like where we need to look at this as a partnership and not parks and recs and culture co-opting because these things are already done in the community. So when we say work with cultural organizations like Lawrence, arts Center Theater, Lawrence, and Walk-Ins to co-create programs that celebrate the city's diversity. There

are other cultural organizations in our community that are not listed on here. These are institutions, but they're not the only institutions in our community. So that could be considered a little bit of whitewashing because these are white led organizations. So when we look at diversity, I'm not looking at about from race, but there are other organizations other than these three that do the things that these three do in our community, which goes to the other point about developing flagship cultural celebrations that draw visitors and reflect Lawrence's unique character.

(04:16:58):

I want us to be very careful with that because we have organizations in this community that are already doing flagship cultural celebrations. We just don't support them or we support them on a marginal level. So I think there's a bigger conversation to be said about where there's partner, what does that partnership look like? And not necessarily the city needs to be the one saying, oh, we're doing the insult culture festival or insert culture celebration. There's space for that if that wants that to be done, but we should be doing a better job of elevating that work that's already being done in the community and not necessarily co-opting it. So not saying that was the intent of this bullet point, but that's how I read it and I just want to make sure that's not what we're trying to do. But other than that great presentation. Look forward to implementation.

Speaker 51 (04:17:47):

Thank you. Can I address that last thing?

Speaker 10 (04:17:49):

Yes, you can.

Speaker 51 (04:17:49):

I think we can actually tie in TGT and that last point about celebrating cultural organizations.

(04:17:56):

We need a more robust grant program. We have A TGT. It's \$150,000 a year. It's not enough to even reach a hundred percent of all requests. So that's how I see it working together more than supporting the mowing of a park, unless it's TGT is to be used for visitation and things that increase visitation and tourism. So we want to be deliberate about that. So there's ways to potentially bolster TGT that we will discuss, and just because it's in the master plan doesn't mean that it doesn't. I think anything in there requires further conversation every point they've made. So it's just about bringing awareness to what options we have and when we do decide to talk about it that it was prescribed at least, or described inside of the master plan. But your point is well received. Thank you.

Speaker 10 (04:18:53):

Thank you. I was going to say, this brought up just another thing I was thinking about. I know this had come up in some conversations when there was talk about possibly taking Woody Park offline and there was a group that came out when we did the dedication to the family on that and how we've lost history around the importance of Woody Park and how many people in this community don't even realize its connection to the Negro Leagues and the inception of night ball games. And that Lawrence played a significant role in that. And so when we talk about opportunities to leverage dollars, I think one way that we've kind of lost that, we've lost the momentum, and I would love for us to see that us rebuild that was that there was a group here that spoke about utilizing major league dollars to come into our community to address access to baseball and softball and utilize dollars that are out there to do that.

(04:19:58):

I mean, we saw it in Kansas City, we've seen it in Kansas City with the work they've done with the Negro League museums and then with the academy facility that they put there. Same things. I think these are opportunities where we are changing and we're pivoting. And when we talk about that community engagement and that citizen participation experience where there are folks out here that are wanting to do that work, they just don't know how to connect. And so I'm seeing where things about cultural integration and how we intersect that with partnering with community members, that co-governance, we can do some exceedingly abundantly things. So I think putting some of these things in place is going to help us elevate that work. And while we see folks in the community, we'll see parks, recs and culture as a partner in this work, and we'll want to be kind of those extra hands as far as capacity and how do we do that. So glad to see that called out and hopefully it will encourage those in our community to be more aware and to make themselves more engaging in that work with US Parks and Rec.

Speaker 51 ([04:21:03](#)):

I don't want this to be a spoiler alert, but there will be something coming in front of the commission probably not too long, too far in the future that speaks to what you just mentioned, so

Speaker 10 ([04:21:16](#)):

Look forward to it.

Speaker 51 ([04:21:17](#)):

Yeah, I think so.

Speaker 10 ([04:21:18](#)):

Great.

Speaker 1 ([04:21:20](#)):

Anything else for this? Thank you very much. Okay, the next item on the agenda is to consider revised.

Speaker 49 ([04:21:30](#)):

We have to, I think

Speaker 2 ([04:21:31](#)):

So. There's no action that needs to be taken. Oh,

Speaker 49 ([04:21:33](#)):

There isn't. No action. Okay. Just accept. Okay. Yeah. Is that vote require? I wasn't because usually we have receive.

Speaker 1 ([04:21:43](#)):

Yeah. Just an exception, but Well, I mean we can go ahead and if we'd like to vote on accepting the 2025 parks recreation and Culture comprehensive master plan.

Speaker 49 ([04:21:54](#)):

I'm getting the nod from Randy in the

Speaker 47 ([04:21:58](#)):

I move to accept the 2025 Paul's recreation, culture and comprehensive master plan.

Speaker 6 ([04:22:02](#)):

Second.

Speaker 1 ([04:22:03](#)):

Alright. Moved by Fin Dye, second by sellers. All in favor say aye. Aye. Those opposed? Motion passes. Five zero.

Speaker 10 ([04:22:13](#)):

Thank you staff. Thank you all. Thank

Speaker 49 ([04:22:14](#)):

You guys.

Speaker 1 ([04:22:16](#)):

Okay. Now the next item is to consider the revised final development plan DP 24 dash 1 0 0 4 for 1200 Ette Avenue to install additional wireless communication antennas. This is submitted by Verizon Wireless and Fortune Wireless, Inc. On behalf of Orette, MMH Holdings, LLC, the property owner of record.

Speaker 54 ([04:22:37](#)):

Good evening commissioners, Ellie Mullins, planner one with Planning and development Services. The next item tonight is a request to revise a final development plan for the Orad Hotel located at 1200 Orad Avenue. The applicant is requesting to add additional cellular antenna infrastructure on the west side of the existing penthouse. There's an existing approved development plan on file for this site from 2009 that included a note that antennas and communication equipment are to be located within the four flagpole structures on the north end of the roof observation deck to disguise the equipment. At the time this plan was approved and the note was placed on the plan. There were no other communication facilities or disguising methods proposed.

([04:23:25](#)):

Verizon Wireless would like to add additional equipment on the building to satisfy demand in this location. Adding additional equipment would require removal or revision of that note on the existing plan, which would constitute a major change to the development plan, which is why it's here in front of the city Commission tonight. It requires your approval. The proposed antennas will be building mounted on the penthouse and will be disguised facilities. Any wireless support structure, including associated antennas within or adjacent to a residential district in the city is required to be disguised. And that term is defined in our code. The portion of the antennas mounted on the side of the building will be concealed in a printed wrap that will match the stone exterior of the wall. A portion of the antennas extends above the building and that part will be concealed with a reflective wrap that mimics the surrounding sky.

([04:24:22](#)):

Examples of these materials were included in the staff report in the agenda packet tonight. Additionally, one of the flagpole concealments, the existing flagpole concealments will be updated and repaired. Under this plan, the applicant will be replacing the antennas within the pole and replacing a piece that is currently missing from the encasement that is all in line with the existing approved plans. Per staff's review, the placement and concealment of the proposed antennas meets the use standards for wireless

facilities in section 25 29 of the Land Development Code and meets the criteria for approval of a modified final development plan listed in section 20 dash 1304. As discussed in the report included in tonight's packet, staff recommends approval subject to the listed conditions of the modifications to the final development plan for the Orad Hotel. I'm here for any questions if you have any, and then the applicants I believe are online tonight.

Speaker 1 ([04:25:24](#)):

Okay, great. Thank you very much.

Speaker 54 ([04:25:26](#)):

Thank you.

Speaker 1 ([04:25:28](#)):

The applicant like to speak.

Speaker 2 ([04:25:32](#)):

No one has raised their hand. You do you know if the applicant was planning to say something?

Speaker 1 ([04:25:39](#)):

It looks like he's raising his hand though

Speaker 2 ([04:25:41](#)):

Into the meeting. Okay. Yeah, it should be James. Okay. Yep.

Speaker 49 ([04:25:46](#)):

Oh yeah, he raised his hand

Speaker 2 ([04:25:50](#)):

Just now. He did. He's moved over.

Speaker 55 ([04:26:11](#)):

Hi, I'm James Cardinal on behalf of Verizon Wireless and tonight I should have the radio frequency engineer with me at Hank Madden from Verizon. I just wanted to say that this presentation covered most of everything that I could think of and me and Hank will be happy to answer any questions that the board may have.

Speaker 1 ([04:26:30](#)):

Awesome. Well thank you very much. Okay,

Speaker 6 ([04:26:33](#)):

Thank you.

Speaker 1 ([04:26:34](#)):

Any questions for staff or him for right now? Alright, any public comment on this issue?

Speaker 56 (04:26:45):

Good evening. My name is Jason Hodge. I'm a manager in the police department information services division. I'm here to speak on behalf of the police department's support for this. Since 2008, the city has partnered with Verizon to provide mission critical connectivity to our officers in the field, enabling them to respond effectively to incidents and maintain public safety. The addition of these antennas would significantly enhance coverage and throughput in a key area of the community, particularly during high traffic events such as football games, parades, and final force celebrations. When communication demands spike and network congestion can hinder critical operations by improving signal strength and data speeds. This would ensure the officers have seamless access to real-time information, even under the strain of large crowds or peak usage. This upgrade aligns with the city's commitment to create a safe and secure community by leveraging technology to protect and serve the public more efficiently. Thank

Speaker 1 (04:27:46):

You. Thank you. Okay. Any other public comment in the room?

Speaker 22 (04:27:56):

This is a general public.

Speaker 1 (04:27:57):

No, this is on this item three. That's okay. Anybody online for this?

Speaker 2 (04:28:03):

Yes. Steven Watts.

Speaker 43 (04:28:08):

Excuse me. I'm all for this tower, particularly now that I've learned it's Verizon. Verizon is one of the easiest networks to get into. Do, I mean, just to take a look to see what's going on and all of this digital heebie GB secret squirrel stuff that the police and the sheriff's office are trying to do with their DMR and their DDS and this, that, and the other. Please continue on with Verizon. It's great. Thank you.

Speaker 1 (04:28:41):

Thank you Steve.

Speaker 2 (04:28:44):

That's all the comments.

Speaker 1 (04:28:45):

Alright. Alright. Back to commissioners. Any questions or comments on this issue?

Speaker 49 (04:28:55):

It looks pretty straightforward.

Speaker 1 (04:28:56):

Yeah, it does. Safety technology,

Speaker 47 (04:29:03):

Words, words. I would say I like some of the disguised nature of some of that. I also say, and I dunno how much this plays into it when we change the water and water tower park, we still have some of our dispatch antennas on there, but when we moved some of the local, I don't know if Verizon was on it or one of them or not, but I know we lost some of those towels, so this certainly could be a replacement for that.

Speaker 1 ([04:29:36](#)):

Yeah. Anybody else?

Speaker 47 ([04:29:41](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 1 ([04:29:42](#)):

Is there a motion to approve it?

Speaker 47 ([04:29:44](#)):

I move to approve the revised development plan DB 24 dash 1 0 0 4 for the modifications to the O found development plan subject to the following conditions. One. Any visible cables associated with the wireless communication intent shall be of a material that matches the support structure or shall be painted as such two concealment film must be used in all of the proposed cellular antennas, not an existing encasement three. Chapter 33 of the 2018 International file code to be followed by ONO and contracted during demolition and construction.

Speaker 4 ([04:30:18](#)):

Second.

Speaker 1 ([04:30:19](#)):

Okay. Motion by Fin Dye, seconded by Larson. All in favor say aye.

Speaker 4 ([04:30:24](#)):

Aye.

Speaker 1 ([04:30:24](#)):

Aye. Aye. Most opposed. Motion passes five zero.

Speaker 3 ([04:30:30](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 1 ([04:30:30](#)):

Thank you very much. The next item is a work session item, which is to receive a presentation on the Douglas County Tenant Experiences report.

Speaker 57 ([04:30:42](#)):

Hi there. Good evening, mayor and commissioners. I am Leah Roselyn, the Affordable Housing Administrator and I am joined by Christina Holt who will be joining us online via Zoom. Unfortunately, she came back from vacation sick. She's with the KU Center for Community Health and Development

and Vince Munoz with Lawrence Tenets who will be presenting the themes and outcomes from the tenant experience survey. The survey and resulting report were released in 2024 and provides a deeper understanding of the experiences of Lawrence renters and offers critical policy recommendations that the governing body may wish to consider as we work towards our goals of increasing safe, quality, affordable housing where all residents can live with dignity and decreasing housing instability and homelessness. The survey was conducted by the Sexual Violence Prevention Work group, which I'm a part on behalf of the city and which has been heavily involved in working towards improved rental protections as a key upstream strategy for sexual violence prevention, homelessness prevention and stabilizing affordable housing.

(04:31:51):

This work advances the city's strategic goals in particular S SW N five, relating to reducing the number of households experiencing housing stress and SW N six relating to reducing homelessness as indicated in the point in time count given that over half of Lawrence renters are housing cost burdened and that over half of Lawrence households are renters. This report and the policy recommendations contained within offer critical guidance towards achieving our goals outlined in the city strategic plan and the place for everyone. Plan at this time I would like to invite Christina and Vince to present and I'm going to have a seat but we will all be available after for any commission or questions at the conclusion of the presentation. Thank you so much for your time this evening.

Speaker 58 (04:32:40):

Thank you so much Leah and thank you all for inviting us to be with you this evening. My name is Christina Fold. I'm from the University of Kansas Center for Community Health and Development. The work that we'll be sharing with you this evening is on behalf of the LiveWell Douglas County Sexual Violence Prevention Work Group and many local partners and has been supported by funding for the primary prevention of sexual violence from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. The work group that focused on this survey really focused on tenant experiences because our local community assessments have shown that housing insecurity is a priority local issue and also housing insecurity is a risk factor for experiencing sexual violence. A 2016 article published by the National Institutes of Health found that among a nationally representative sample contact sexual violence is approximately three times as likely among those who had experienced recent housing insecurity within the last 12 months. The goal is that by learning from renters who may experience barriers to housing, our community can experience our efforts to ensure that we are affordable, safe, and welcoming for all and as Leah described, this is also in close alignment with our city's strategic plan.

(04:34:18):

Nearly half of homes in Douglas County are renter occupied and as Leah said, half of renters are cost burdened and are community, which means that they're paying more than one third of their income towards rent. Additionally, 35% are severely cost burdened, meaning that rent is more than 50% of their income and our housing choice voucher has a wait list of approximately one and a half to two years. I'm going to hand it over to Vincent who will share with us a bit about how the survey was distributed here in our community, including by our close colleagues at Lawrence Tenants.

Speaker 33 (04:35:08):

Yeah, thanks Christina. So the survey sought information on residents demographics, housing basics, experiences, finding housing, housing, quality conditions, maintenance and accessibility, also current living situations, rental payment methods, risk of displacement, rental application processes, lease non-renewals and evictions safety and other ideas for improving housing conditions. In Douglas County, the group was really intentional to reach out to community members who experience housing instability to

inform the efforts to improve housing for all in Douglas County and working with community partners for outreach online and paper copies of the survey were distributed and Lawrence Tenants, along with a number of other community partners helped obtain 1000 thousand and 51 responses reflective of the diversity within our community.

Speaker 58 ([04:36:01](#)):

Thank you Vince. Of those who responded to the survey, it took applicants an average of three months and five rental applications to secure a rental and 67% of respondents reported rent increases. Of those 22% reported an increase of \$200 or more per month. Residents also reported difficulties posed by increasing rent and shared making very difficult choices such as whether to pay for food or prescriptions or pay for rent. Our residents report barriers to obtaining or renewing leases including credit and financial history, source of income and rental unemployment history. They also report being negatively affected by excess fees with nearly 40% of respondents reporting having their security deposit withheld. Residents also report lack of rental properties in their budget and that meet their needs.

([04:37:12](#)):

A total of 86 survey respondents reported that they had received an eviction notice during their time as renters here. During that eviction process, 94% of them did not have legal representation and evictions resulted in a loss of housing for 62% of those impacted. 20 respondents lost their housing and became homeless. Additionally, almost half of those surveyed have felt unsafe in their rental home. Nearly two thirds of respondents reported that there had been times when they had submitted a maintenance request and it was not resolved. 337 respondents reported that they had chosen not to submit a maintenance request at all for fear of retaliation.

([04:38:11](#)):

24% reported the quality of their housing as being poor or very poor and reported issues including that the housing lacked regular inspections or code enforcement and hazardous conditions including things like mold foundation and plumbing issues, non-working appliances and uncontrolled pests. One resident shared you are stuck and they know it because you can't afford to move. Additionally, 90 respondents reported that their landlord had verbally harassed them, called them names or threatened or otherwise intimidated them and 12 respondents reported that their landlord or representatives of their landlord had physically harassed or assaulted them. One in five of those surveyed said that their landlord or property manager had made them feel unsafe. This was the highest in 6 6 0 4 4 1 resident shared. I almost wanted to get a restraining order, but I'm thinking how do you get a restraining order from your landlord?

([04:39:30](#)):

Almost one third of respondents have a household member with a disability. 36% of those households rate the accessibility of their housing as very poor or poor tenants with physical disabilities report housing often lacks accessibility features or fails to meet a standards one person shared. All the units have steps either to get to the front door or inside. I cannot always walk or use stairs, but this was one of very few properties I could afford. Others reported barriers to housing included discrimination due to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identification, disability, age and parental status. A few quotes from our local residents, housing is not a luxury, it is a need we had to move because we couldn't afford to eat. I have been traumatized by my experiences renting in Lawrence and renters need support from the city. We have heard the voices of our residents, so what are we to do?

([04:40:55](#)):

Tenant protections passed in the form of laws and policies can be important and critical tools for protecting our residents. This also helps against increased risk for sexual violence, poor mental health, decreased access to healthcare, increased stress, chronic diseases and poor overall physical health. These policy options that we'll be sharing would help us realize our vision for Lawrence in the goal area of

strong and welcoming neighborhoods. Two indicators for strong welcoming neighborhoods five and six are decrease the percentage of renter households experiencing housing stress and decrease the number of people experiencing homelessness as indicated in the point in time count.

(04:41:47):

Policy options that can help us advance in these areas include a tenant bill of rights, junk fees, prohibition, ordinance, eviction sealing and expungement tenant right to counsel and just cause eviction ordinance faced with threats of eviction and homelessness. Tenants at times endure large rent increases harassment and unlivable living conditions with few options for recourse. This instability is amplified for tenants of color, disabled tenants, families with children and older tenants whose rental housing options are limited by historical segregation and present day discrimination, lack of rental protections, perpetuate housing instability and in worse cases homelessness. When tenants have the rights they deserve their lives and their communities and improve. Policies that establish rights and protections for tenants may include right to fair application, fair lease freedom from harassment and discrimination and reasonable rent and costs.

(04:43:07):

Kansas City implemented a tenant Bill of rights in 2019 which outlines protections from minimal health and safety standards, freedom from discrimination and retaliation right to organize right to privacy and self-determination and right to fair and equitable treatment under the law. The National Consumer Law Centers report identified 27 different types of fees that can arise at all stages of tenancy and that drive the cost of renting up. Such fees include application processing fees and inspection fees which can arise during the housing surge and application process while fees such as trust fees, technology fees and a common area and amenity fees are levied during tenancy E. So there are a number of things that can be done to prevent landlords from charging excessive or unnecessary fees. Things like banning fees that are excessive or greater than the actual cost for services Banning or adopting limits to application fees, limiting providers to charging only certain fees in addition to rent.

(04:44:25):

Next is eviction record sealing and expungement and these are laws that are protections that seek to minimize negative consequences of having an eviction filing present on attendance's public record. In 2024, Idaho, Maryland, Minnesota, and Virginia all passed or expanded eviction record ceiling or expungement laws which helped remove barriers to housing for thousands of residents and tenant right to counsel ordinance helps guarantee tenants facing eviction have access to needed legal representation. We know that tenants are much more likely to stay housed if they receive this representation. Kansas City implemented a right to counsel program in June of 2022 and 91.5% of tenants avoided eviction. This is almost a complete reversal from prior to this implementation when 99% of tenants were evicted before the program.

(04:45:41):

This is also a strategy that is recommended in our local A place for everyone plan the just cause eviction protections, limit reasons or causes for which a landlord can evict a tenant or refuse to renew a lease when the tenant is not at fault or found to be in violation of any law just cause eviction standards explicitly define the reasons for which a tenant can be evicted including nonpayment of rent or another verifiable violation of the lease agreement. This past legislation legislative session Colorado secured just cause protections for renters passing house bill 10 98 to prevent eviction proceedings without verifiable cause.

(04:46:36):

This helps promote housing stability by limiting the grounds upon which a landlord may evict a tenant or not do a non-renewal and creates procedures that landlords must follow in order to establish just cause to evict. Again, this would include things like nonpayment of rent or intentional damage to the unit or other obvious non-compliance with terms of the lease. These policy options would help create fairness and

more balance of power for local tenants, which would help create housing neighborhood stability, prevent homelessness and reduce risk for sexual violence and overall improve quality of life and wellbeing for our local residents.

(04:47:36):

When asked about their hopes about what they would say in 2035, a local focus group participant shared, Lawrence is an all inclusive community. There is no discrimination. You can find affordable housing that is safe. Your landlord treats you as a person, as our local policymakers. You are in such a position to help work towards that vision and thank you so much for your ongoing work to do so I believe we have a bit of time for questions and answers and I have also shared contact information if you would like to be in touch. Thank you so much.

Speaker 1 (04:48:20):

Thank you Christina.

Speaker 6 (04:48:28):

Any questions? Comments? Nope.

Speaker 10 (04:48:35):

Christina, in the survey was there any discussion around what was the average of some of these junk fees that we see? I know some of those are disguised as admin fees and there's really no articulation of what an admin fee is. Was there any questions on the survey that's kind of spoke to? What in our community are landlords and property management companies charging for? It's what some of these junk fees?

Speaker 58 (04:49:02):

That's a great question, Amber. Unfortunately we did not ask about that. That's something that really came out through residents comments was the problem of junk fees, but we do not have data on what the average cost of those two renters are.

Speaker 10 (04:49:19):

Okay. Also, do we know of any landlords who report rental payments to the credit bureaus? I know Johnson County, several property management companies do that. Do we know of any here in town that do that? That's open to anyone to answer if they

Speaker 47 (04:49:42):

Can answer. I know of least one. I'm trying to think of the name of the apartment complex. I have one of the affordable housing one, the 31st in Michigan. They do

Speaker 4 (04:49:57):

Union

Speaker 47 (04:49:58):

What

Speaker 4 (04:49:59):

Union at the Loop,

Speaker 47 (04:50:00):

Not the other one next to it, the one in front of it. I'm drawing a blank blank on it. Wikipedia, but the one I know that was an option. A couple questions on, well I guess some of these would seem like only the state could do them like sealing eviction records. I don't think we could do that as a city, but what have we seen? I think we could do a bill of rights. I think we could do right to counsel. I know the county has worked on that, at least some, I guess some of these I am not sure if we could do and I guess could we implement a just cause for eviction and enforce that even though there's a state law that governs, I guess I'm asking the question have we looked into that, what we could accomplish versus what the state would have to allow us to do?

Speaker 58 (04:51:14):

My understanding is that you could, but if Leah has any additional information I would welcome her to share that. Also,

Speaker 57 (04:51:28):

This is Leah Lin. So other than tenant right to counsel, we have not explored any of these policies in depth. The first step is really presenting the report and seeing what the commission might be interested in further exploring and if there are any policy recommendations that have been made that you all are interested in exploring, then we're happy to take that back and look more closely to see what we can do locally.

Speaker 47 (04:51:56):

Well I have a follow-up question, but maybe so answer, wasn't there an eviction ceiling statute in the legislature ordinance being proposed in the legislature this session?

Speaker 6 (04:52:07):

I

Speaker 47 (04:52:07):

Don't know if it got very far, but I think there was one other question though. Is there an update? I know the county at one point was looking at right to council. Have they done anything with that since?

Speaker 33 (04:52:24):

Yeah, this is Vince Munoz. So there's currently a work group with the county that county staff has and paneled and we've met several times. Some of the commissioners have been as just individuals and so we're in the process of writing a potential ordinance to present to the county. And so obviously there's questions about the logistics of that. But yes, the county has explored what that looks like and Lawrence Tenants has been a part of that work group along with a lot of other local partners including Kansas Legal Services, Kansas Holistic Defenders and so on.

Speaker 47 (04:52:54):

Excellent. I knew they had worked on it, so I'm glad they still are.

Speaker 10 (04:53:06):

Do we have a timeline of when this group might be ready to present that?

Speaker 33 (04:53:13):

I sort of, but I don't know that I'm at liberty to say, but we definitely have talked about the timeline. I'll say that.

Speaker 10 (04:53:28):

I know this kind of came up in the presentation. I know we've had a couple of municipalities around us as it relates to just cause eviction, but also there's been some look at retaliatory ordinances where we know that there is some state statute on that, but where other municipalities have kind of come in with their own, I know that spoke to that a little bit in the presentation. Are we seeing where the tenant experiences that they're feeling like they're being retaliated as a form of some of that just caused eviction that it's a form?

Speaker 58 (04:54:04):

Yes,

Speaker 10 (04:54:06):

Go ahead, Christina.

Speaker 58 (04:54:07):

Sorry. There were a number of residents that did share stories of retaliation, folks who would report something and then later receive an eviction notice that they felt was tied to making a complaint. And a lot of people out of fear of retaliation are not reporting things that are serious health and safety concerns.

Speaker 57 (04:54:41):

I think if I could just add to that, I think one of the problems right now is that renters don't know who to call, don't have, there aren't local resources for folks who can help them. Even if tenant right to counsel, even if an ordinance is approved by the county right now, the scope of that is fairly limited. Right now the group is just looking at a tenant right to counsel for eviction and there's such a great need for just access to legal services for low income people. For low income renters. Really, if you don't have the funds to hire a private attorney, then you're just subject to a great deal of oppression. Really. The landlord has all the power and the tenants just oftentimes acquiesced because they don't have any resources to do anything else. They need to stay housed.

Speaker 1 (04:56:00):

So since you've provided numerous policy recommendations, I think I wasn't prepared to give specific instructions, but I do like some of these proposed ideas or least solutions. I'm not sure how we could implement some of them. Vice Finkel was pointing out, I don't know how many legal hurdles we might have in order to put some of these in place, but I'd like to try to pick ones that we could probably have authority over immediately and not have to deal with the state or federal regulations that might have a problem overreaching unto us. But several of these seem pretty reasonable. I just don't know how we manifest them funding. For example, would we fund an at large attorney for someone to call and pay those fees and subsidize those fees or whatever? And that's kind of clearly what seems to be needed the most right now, but I don't know how we go about funding that directly. And maybe you could speak to that. I don't know what other communities do for this kind of situation.

Speaker 57 (04:57:11):

In my mind, the tenant bill of rights is one of the most achievable of the policy recommendations that, I mean there would be staff time to look into what a potential ordinance would be, the legal review, et cetera, but the ordinance itself would not necessarily come with an ongoing budget item. I think it would be a good first step just establishing tenant rights.

Speaker 1 ([04:57:43](#)):

So step one

Speaker 57 ([04:57:45](#)):

In my mind, yeah, list

Speaker 1 ([04:57:46](#)):

Of rights for tenants that are agreed upon by industry and or comment. We don't want to reinvent these ideas I guess as we just need to adopt many of them and maybe tweak them for our community.

Speaker 57 ([04:57:58](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Do you have any thoughts?

Speaker 33 ([04:58:03](#)):

Yeah, I was just going to say that, so in many places where right to council has happened, they are done at the city level because in larger cities it's the municipal court where evictions happen. And here that's not the case in Kansas, it's in district courts. And so that's part of the reason for the rationale for the program being or as the working group is thinking about it for thinking about doing it at the county level where the courthouse is. But obviously there's opportunities for co-funding and just partnership between the city and the county. Of course the city has a lot of partnerships regarding the community shelter and a whole host of other things. And so the precedent for us is about a specific funding stream. I guess it's kind of an open question, but I definitely think that it would be, it's an opportunity for partnership between the two governments for sure. Right,

Speaker 1 ([04:58:53](#)):

Absolutely. I see that. Thank you.

Speaker 49 ([04:58:55](#)):

To jump on what the mayor is alluding to, I think it would help us a great deal if we had a little bit more of a roadmap, kind of like what it gets that we can achieve short term, what are middle term and then what are long term if we were to build the infrastructure for it, if we wanted to go ahead and maintain it over a while that we wanted to do. So I think that would really be helpful if just in the future, just to kind of wrap our minds around it a little bit,

Speaker 57 ([04:59:25](#)):

Just to clarify, are you referencing the tenant right to counsel specifically or,

Speaker 49 ([04:59:31](#)):

Yeah, that's a great example. I mean just short term, that's something that seems that's something we can attain. And then the other things as the mayor was alluding to that might actually involve us hiring

counsel for it for these folks that'd probably be in the middle or long term just to make sure it would be an ongoing thing that we would have to go ahead and sustain. So that's a great example

Speaker 10 (04:59:59):

And Leah, I might even take it a little bit further because kind of been down this road in different iterations and we just haven't brought it together. I do believe when we brought source of income, there were multiple pieces to it that we kind of left on the side of the road to address source of income as a whole and that we didn't look into things like common app and things of that nature. Spoke about it earlier this evening about the Healthy Homes piece and I think going with that's a little bit more broader and it speaks to a lot of what we talked about around tenant rights, tenant rights to council and tenants bill of rights. So maybe using that model of the Healthy Homes Initiative, whether it's Kansas City's model or New Orleans model that speaks to those pieces and brings something back that addresses if it comes to attendance, right?

(05:00:56):

What's our scope on a local level or if it's something that has to do with just cause is it more attainable on the local? Does it have to go through county? Is there a partnership or is that something that we need to leverage in state? So I think that'll give us a, we talk about not necessarily a roadmap, but more of a crosswalk of these different pieces that speaks to the tenant experience because the report just doesn't talk. It's a little bit bigger than rights, it's council. There's a lot of different things that go into play that we talked about as it relates to zoning that we might as well start having that conversation more broadly because these pieces do go together looking at is there an opportunity for us to create an ordinance that requires landlords to report rental payments to credit bureaus as an incentive?

(05:01:47):

That's a way of building tenant to landlord relationship. So I think that the idea is that utilizing that Healthy Homes framework as a model to create a crosswalk of what is more attainable locally, what is there for a partnership with the county or maybe these are things that probably need to be handled on a state level as it relates to the different aspects of the healthy homes piece. So that's a little bit more comprehensive, robust. So then we can look at it as a commission to see what menu items are available to us and then we can digest and identify what are things that are low hanging fruit or where we have consensus to keep moving these things forward.

Speaker 57 (05:02:35):

That's helpful. Yeah, I think the scope is, the problem is so big right now that we really wanted to give an overview of what the challenges of renters are and present some policy options for you to consider and maybe help us prioritize if there are any that you're interested in. I hear you think Commissioner Sellers look at the Healthy Homes initiative. Is that something that the commission would be interested in us bringing back?

Speaker 49 (05:03:11):

I would be interested in learning more about it. I personally don't know too much about it, so

Speaker 4 (05:03:18):

I think part of your survey kind of weaved into that whole document

Speaker 6 (05:03:24):

And

Speaker 4 ([05:03:24](#)):

So I think it's a good place to start pulling from that.

Speaker 6 ([05:03:27](#)):

Okay. Yeah's helpful.

Speaker 57 ([05:03:29](#)):

Thank you.

Speaker 1 ([05:03:32](#)):

And to Bill of Rights, I think that's important. I think we got to set something up, a framework and then move from there. I think for me that's something we could do without too much.

Speaker 4 ([05:03:43](#)):

It's kind of a low hanging fruit to start with at least,

Speaker 1 ([05:03:46](#)):

And I don't know what that looks like. So I'm going to see that expertise from y'all.

Speaker 10 ([05:03:59](#)):

I appreciate the survey. I think it's just a matter of stating what we already knew that we didn't want to, I don't want to say acknowledge, but I truth hurts and it's unfortunate that we have community members that are experiencing this, but I think it's an opportunity for us to close those gaps and identify again as we talk about code and a place for everyone and closing the gap on affordable housing. There's a lot of different moving parts that go with this, and so it's not necessarily a linear black and white piece. It's not even gray, so it's like a mucky abyss color. So I don't know what that color is, but we're just going to call it abyss. So yeah, but I mean these are things that as a governing body we need to look at and so I appreciate you bringing it to the surface and it gives us something to reflect back on as we continue to go through this process with the Land Development code. But thank you

Speaker 49 ([05:05:00](#)):

Mayor. Have we done public comment yet on this? I can't remember.

Speaker 1 ([05:05:03](#)):

No, we haven't done public on this yet. I just wanted make sure. I guess we can do public comment now. I don't want to have anything else to add to your suggestions on this.

Speaker 49 ([05:05:17](#)):

Thank you all.

Speaker 1 ([05:05:18](#)):

Any public comment?

Speaker 22 ([05:05:22](#)):

Yeah, I'll just say something really quick. Yeah, it's right. All that stuff they mentioned, but we could have taken a little bit less time explaining it all to us. We're smarter than we look. We're not stupid. Alright. None of us here are stupid, so talk to everybody with some more respect. Please. I'm sorry, I'm a little upset about this. I've been waiting to deliver a public comment for over four hours and not on this goddamn topic. Yes, I've been exploited by apartment complexes, but I got it taken care of by myself and I have a disability and I can take care of myself.

(05:06:00):

They were PEs where I was living, just all this crazy stuff. I was dealing with Cherry Hill Properties, great company. I'm being sarcastic. I moved out of that, got out of my lease. They didn't want me to leave at all. Now I live at the Polar Lofts great place. You still have to take care of your, you still have to work with your apartment complex managers. Yeah, stuff. Bad stuff's going to happen. I've been slandered by a lot of my neighbors. A whole bunch of crap has happened to me. Kansas Legal Aid, all those people, they don't help anybody. I mean that's not true. They help some people, but they don't help me. Anyway.

(05:06:42):

Great. Let's talk about it. If you guys ever read the Bible, you don't even have to be a Christian, just read the Bible. It's about morality. That's the greatest solution to all these problems we're talking about. You don't need policies, just read the goddamn Bible, learn about some morality, read some other books like that. You don't have to be anything religious. You can be an atheist still. Just learn about morality and ethics. You guys frustrate me so much. You just talk and talk and talk. You say all the right things but you don't do anything. You even admitted it yourself. Oh, we haven't even looked into this policy. We haven't looked into that policy. Well, why are you talking about it then? Do your homework anyway. I'm sorry I'm upset. I've been here for over four hours to deliver a public comment that's not about any of this. Thank

Speaker 1 (05:07:34):

You, sir. Any other public comment online?

Speaker 2 (05:07:43):

Steven Watts.

Speaker 43 (05:07:46):

I appreciate the opportunity to provide some input on this and clearly there is a rental crisis that exists in our community and there has been for years and years. At the same time, there may be sets of expectations that need to be modified. I don't want to use myself as a personal example, but I will, even though it's 50 plus years of age, I lived in a \$35 a month room at 1115 Tennessee Street to start to finance my University of Kansas education. And I didn't need a two and a three bedroom house or an apartment with a basketball quarter or a swimming pool or an elevated elevator. Elevated elevator. An elevator that goes up like here, which didn't work. And so there's some things in there that can be taken into consideration. At the same time, it is an embarrassment that our community development office has forgotten. Those people who are barely hanging on the homes that they own we're forgotten, we're viewed as greedy according to Leah Roslin. And I would like to see the town also take a survey about how many senior citizens are there in our community that are holding on for dear life, paying the property tax and also trying to eat.

(05:09:18):

There are programs that are available for those, but they have taken a gross back seat. Surely there is a way that we can find to work together with providing affordable housing and it isn't on a onesie twosie basis. We need to set up a housing and urban development housing plot that the town owns. This is where

we've gone awry, going with all these not-for-profit operations and thinking that the problem's going to go away when it doesn't. At any rate, let's try to combine both those who are struggling for rental properties as well as senior citizens and not so senior citizens who are doing their best to hold on to their homes but at the same time struggle and they're going to lose their homes. Just something else to think about. Thank you.

Speaker 1 ([05:10:18](#)):

That's all the comments. Okay. Alright. Thank you very much. So do we need to provide any other feedback on the work assessment item or have you gotten the general advice that you need? I want to make sure that we leave here with some clear direction. Okay. Alright, very good.

Speaker 10 ([05:10:39](#)):

Lee, I just wanted to add real quick. Like I said in the overview of that Healthy Homes model, I do want to make sure that you're including the policy recommendations that was included in the presentation.

Speaker 58 ([05:10:57](#)):

Thank you all so much.

Speaker 10 ([05:10:59](#)):

Okay, thank you. Thank you, Christina.

Speaker 1 ([05:11:04](#)):

All right. Next item on the agenda is commission items. Do any commissioners have any specific items they'd like to bring up at this time? Nope. Nope. Seeing none. Future agenda items, anything to discuss there? Like it. All right. Can we move on to the city manager's report then? Yep.

Speaker 59 ([05:11:37](#)):

Good evening. Just two quick items. One is the February utility billing report that you all are used to seeing. And the second item is an update on some building permit and planning application review times. Want to highlight this item? If you haven't had a chance to look at it? It is in part available due to our new permitting and software licensing or licensed software system, the EPL that you all supported. And so just wanted to make sure to highlight that item for you all. Happy to answer any questions.

Speaker 47 ([05:12:12](#)):

Thank you,

Speaker 1 ([05:12:12](#)):

Casey. Any questions for Casey?

Speaker 47 ([05:12:14](#)):

One of my questions, I guess, are we going to see this report monthly, quarterly? What's the plan from here on out? I

Speaker 59 ([05:12:23](#)):

Know Jeff is behind me and I'll let him answer if he wants to add, but I think that our expectation is that now we have more data readily available. We're working through what data we have and trying to figure

out what is of the highest and best use for what audience. So it might not look exactly like this, but I think your expectation should be that we'll try to have more regularly reported data available. Jeff, did I get that right?

Speaker 50 ([05:12:53](#)):

Yeah. The only thing I throw in is there's a two-part item that's coming up in the future. We're going to have something called Citizen Connect, which is the part where the maps come back online. So you'll be able to see live where code cases, rental licenses, planning submittals, building permits. You'll be able to pull that up online and see that as it's coming through the system. And as part of that we'll have I refer to it as a dashboard component where you can pull this up and be able to see this kind of information live coming out of the system. So it may not be the PDF report, but you'd be able to kind of pull up and see what's going on, what those numbers look like as it's going through. So stay tuned. We hope to get that launched here very quickly on the last step of getting it out the door right now.

Speaker 47 ([05:13:35](#)):

Great. I guess a follow-up question, I know at least one community member, and I'm not sure I am going to say this quite right, that the talking about the average review time like for a single family permit and they were asking about the length of time from submission to issuance of the permit. Am I saying that right?

Speaker 52 ([05:14:08](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 47 ([05:14:09](#)):

And I guess tell me the difference in what we were seeing here in that report and any other analysis you have with that.

Speaker 50 ([05:14:20](#)):

Sure. So the difference is probably about it's time when it's actually in the city's court to do the work. And so between an application and issuance, there's a lot of sometimes back and forth or an applicant defers an item or holds it for any number of reasons. And so we keep the permit going on. And so while it may sit for a few weeks while somebody works on a drawing or if there's a funding that needs to be worked out, they might put it on hold for a while. But we try to report on is time that it's actually being worked on by staff to go from do the reviews and then when we send the comments back out so that we're making sure that we're being responsive on time for that. We can't control for the whole process necessarily, but we want to be able to show that we can where we're at meeting our mark where it is in our control. Perfect. Thank you.

Speaker 1 ([05:15:09](#)):

Good. Any other questions before we go to the public comments? Any public comments on the city manager's report? Any online?

Speaker 2 ([05:15:27](#)):

Steven Watts.

Speaker 43 ([05:15:33](#)):

Hi. Them versus us Lawrence Community members identify barriers between police and themselves. July 27th, 2024, Lawrence Police Chief Rich Lockhart said at the end of the meeting that he wanted the community to hold him accountable for the department to accomplish some of these tasks over the next six months. And if they don't, to reach out to local news reporters, we're going to implement ideas from this. And I don't want you to feel like your time was wasted, Lockhart said, he said as an example that he loved the idea for the community to be involved in department policymaking making. Let's see how that works.

(05:16:26):

And yet, in the City Commission meeting on February 11th, 2015 during the city manager report, what we found was the department received a report from the Department of Justice in December, 2024. We will be working with our committee that helped plan the initial event to draft an implementation plan. Upon completion, the committee will release the entire Department of Justice report and implementation plan to the community. Hopefully this will be complete by the end of March. Okay, it is March 18. We're just about there. It'd be too much right for it to come in early. And I got a funny feeling it's not going to come in on time of the end of March, but I just wanted to remind our fine illustrious group up there that we have a report coming that's been a year plus coming. Can you please make some inquiries about what the status of that report is for those of us here and paying attention land? Have a great night. Thank you,

Speaker 1 (05:17:43):

Steve. It's all public. Okay. Very good. Move on to commission calendar if nothing to add there. I'm going to go ahead and end the live broadcast at this time.

Speaker 49 (05:18:13):

Do you guys need to?

Speaker 1 (05:18:15):

Yeah, you go.

Speaker 49 (05:18:16):

Yeah,

Speaker 1 (05:18:18):

You know the drill. You don't need my authority. Okay. And then the last item is going to be the open public comment forum. And if there's a.