



Office of the City Administrator

To: Mayor Welch, Common Council Members
From: Al Hulick, City Administrator
Date: July 21, 2020
Subject: Discussion, Direction, and Possible Action Regarding the Creation of a Vacant Property Ordinance

Summary

Members of the Common Council have been contacted regarding concerns related to the condition of a handful of vacant properties scattered throughout the community. Some neighbors have grown increasingly frustrated with the owners of these properties unwillingness or inability to maintain these properties.

As such, members of the Common Council have asked staff to place an item on the Council agenda to discuss the possibility of creating a vacant building ordinance. Therefore, staff is seeking direction from the Common Council as to the desire to advance, research, and/or create an ordinance that addresses these issues.

Analysis

Included with this memorandum are example ordinances from other municipalities including the City of Janesville. The purpose of these ordinances is to have a record of vacant buildings in the respective communities and a contact person who is responsible for the properties if issues occur with the site that need to be addressed. Unfortunately, these ordinances typically do not give any greater authority to the municipalities to remedy potential property maintenance concerns. They are merely a mechanism to ensure contact can be made in the event issues arise. They also potentially serve as a financial “motivation” for owners lease, sell, or occupy these buildings.

The City Administration is not opposed to the creation of a vacant building ordinance if directed by the Common Council but does have concerns about the availability of resources necessary to effectively monitor and manage this initiative. Additionally, the ability to gain compliance once enacted would still be limited by the procedural, ordinance, and statutory requirements of abatement.

Recommendation

To provide staff with direction to further research, evaluate, or prepare a vacant building ordinance for the City of Milton. Additionally, whether said ordinance should include all vacant buildings, or be restricted to certain uses and/or zoning classifications.