



CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS AGENDA ACTION REQUEST

DATE: February 25, 2020

TO: Mark Washington, City Manager

COMMITTEE: Committee of the Whole

LIAISON: Mark Washington, City Manager

FROM: Karyn Ferrick, Legislative Affairs Manager
Executive Office

SUBJECT: Lead Free Kids Grand Rapids Advisory Committee Final Report

Mayor Rosalynn Bliss assembled the Lead Free Kids Grand Rapids Advisory Committee (committee) during the summer of 2018 to work on the issue of rising numbers of children who have tested positive for lead poisoning in Grand Rapids. The committee was comprised of Mayor Rosalynn Bliss; City Commissioners Senita Lenear and Kurt Reppart; County Commissioner Robert Womack; several community stakeholders including Kimberly Baron, Matthew Beresford, Sarah Edgington, Ken Fawcett, Paul Haan, Candy Isabel, Cle Jackson, Ken Klomparens, Alex Markham, Raven Odom, Clay Powell, John Smith, Shannon Wilson; Kent County Health Department staff including Joan Dyer, Joann Hoganson, and Sara Simmonds; numerous City staff including Karyn Ferrick (Chair), Doug Matthews, Connie Bohatch, Alison Sutter, Lou Canfield, Jonathan Klooster, and Laura Olson; and former members Doug Stek, Chandra Colley, LyRee Adams, David de Velder.

The committee met bi-monthly for a total of 9 meetings between August of 2018 and December of 2019. In that time, the committee heard from the Kent County Health Department, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), the National Center for Healthy Housing, Healthy Homes Coalition of West Michigan, Parents for Healthy Homes, the Rental Property Owner's Association, and the City's Housing Rehabilitation Office.

The committee's work focused on reviewing, assessing and providing guidance on City housing and lead-based paint remediation procedures, plans and programs. That work concluded at the end of 2019 with an understanding that all of the recommended options for consideration would be advanced in a final report to the City Commission in the hopes of informing future discussions and deliberations regarding this critical issue.

After several discussions regarding strategies and ideas to assist the City in its efforts to eradicate lead-based paint hazards in housing, the committee ultimately settled on the 21 recommended options that are presented below for consideration. They are primarily

organized in three categories: city initiatives; state legislation; and partnership opportunities.

Recommended Options for Consideration

CITY INITIATIVES

- Designate a liaison to be the single point of contact to coordinate and be accountable;
- Establish a timeline with outcomes and deliverables for action on city-led initiatives; and
- Evaluate outcomes and deliverables based on housing quality and child blood lead levels.
- Amend the City's housing code to require the following in the rental certification process:
 - Lead-based paint testing in homes built before 1978;
 - Remediation of lead-based paint hazards identified; and
 - Consider making this a targeted approach.
- Increase funding and capacity for training, code compliance and enforcement.
- Before issuing permits, verify contractor certification in lead safe work practices for renovation, repair and paint projects.
- Review and evaluate City programs and service requirements for lead-based paint remediation and abatement activities to ensure that funding is prioritized for those most at risk and most in need and barriers to achieving that prioritization are removed.

STATE LEGISLATION – *Propose and Support the Following Initiatives:*

- Statutory remedy for lessee to terminate if lead hazards are present in the rental by amending the Truth in Renting Act, PA 454 of 1978.
- State adoption of the federal RRP rule for renovate, repair, and paint projects. Require that contractors are trained and certified in the use of lead safe work practices by amending the Occupational Code, PA 299 of 1980.

- Codify a requirement for a lead inspection, testing or clearance before a sale or transfer of property intended for occupancy if built before 1978. Consider amendments to the Seller Disclosure Act, PA 92 of 1993. See [HB 5361](#), sponsored by Representative Leslie Love.
- Provide tax incentives for remediation of lead-based paint hazards in homes. For example, provide a tax credit by amending the Income Tax Act, PA 281 of 1967.
- Create a Lead Safe Housing Fund in the Michigan Department of Treasury for prevention of lead hazard exposure and assistance for families and children affected by lead poisoning. Possible source of funding is leveraging a fee on the sale of paint in Michigan. See [House Bill 5366](#), sponsored by Representative Rachel Hood.
- Create economic development and housing tools and incentives for lead abatement activities.
- Ensure flexibility in existing sources of State funding and target high risk areas and populations to treat the source of childhood lead poisoning.

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- Kent County – improved data sharing and integration; collaborate with health system to provide mobile health services in high risk neighborhoods including offering assistance, support and resources with lead hazard exposure.
- Foundations – Create philanthropic fund to provide resources to high risk populations and families and children affected by lead poisoning.
- Courts and legal professionals – Provide housing education specific to landlord tenant rights and responsibilities.
- Utilities – Identify programs offered by utilities and other energy efficiency programs to remediate lead (i.e. door and window replacement rebates and incentives).
- Community organizations – Offer free training and education about lead safe work practices for DIY home repair projects; contractor certification in RRP; and other lead-based paint hazard and risk identification in homes.

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS

Members of the committee were provided a survey to share with other members of the community, review the recommended options, and rank the items within each of the categories.

The survey results indicated that all of the items were important to someone and that priority ranking varied among members. In terms of additional input received, much of the comments were related to items already included in the recommended options. Below is a summary of some of the additional comments received:

- Prioritization was difficult as all of these items are important;
- Coordinate more intentionally with the County going forward;
- Add dust wipe sampling to rental certification process;
- Testing and dust wipe sampling in homes should be targeted at high risk areas;
- Collaborate with energy efficiency and weatherization programs;
- Funding is needed to assist families affected by lead;
- Landlords who intentionally rent homes with lead hazards to families should be penalized; and
- Legislative changes should focus both on rental and owner-occupied homes.

CONCLUSION

Since the committee concluded its work in December, City staff have continued to meet with partners, discuss and analyze the committee's recommended options, and determine next steps. An important collaborative effort with Kent County is underway that will facilitate action to address and prevent lead hazards in our community.

City staff also participated in a press conference in Lansing earlier this month with Representative Rachel Hood and other sponsors in support of the recently introduced Healthy Homes, Healthy Families legislative package to protect Michigan families from lead poisoning.

With budget and strategic planning work underway, the information contained in the final report is timely and will be thoroughly analyzed and carefully considered.

Prepared by Alicia Bernt

