

Public Affairs Committee Report By Heath Clarkston

CITY COUNCIL ELECTION HELD ON TUESDAY, APRIL 2ND.

The Jefferson City municipal election was held on April 2nd for half of the 10 seats on the city council. The two incumbent council members with contested races were both defeated. Four of the five wards were contested, and the results were as follows:

Ward 1: Jack Deeken (Incumbent) 41.9% v. **Randy Hoselton 58.09%**

Ward 2: **Michael Lester (Incumbent) (100%)**

Ward 3: Amy Brix 46.98% v. **Treaka Young 53.02%**

Ward 4: Randall Wright (Incumbent) 31.74% v. **Chris Lueckel 68.26%**

Ward 5: **Mackenzie Job 61.14%** v. Virginia Shetler 38.86%

HBA OF MISSOURI HOLDS MEETING IN JEFFERSON CITY

The HBA of Missouri Board and local affiliates met in Jefferson City on March 28th to further discuss coordination at the state and local levels. Discussion continued with all local associations on ways to combat some of the publicly funded groups seeking to enact local laws related to green energy and energy conservation to which a homeowner is priced out of their home and has no option on participation. These initiatives on the local level have already had a "chilling effect" on the residential housing industry, specifically, in Kansas City Missouri. The Kansas City code was enacted without key amendments to the International Codes that limit the costs associated with the new requirements.

The City of Kansas City adopted the 2021 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) without any amendments in October and has since seen their housing permits fall to their lowest level in a decade. The HBA of Kansas City has reached out to our association for help and has always stressed the importance of pushing back on these crippling policies. The HBA of Missouri continues to discuss ways to coordinate and potentially pursue legislation that could ensure these types of local decisions do not continue to destroy the residential housing industry across the state.

BUILDING PERMIT REFORM ACT HEARING HELD IN MISSOURI SENATE

On Tuesday, April 23rd, the Senate Emerging Issues Committee gathered for a hearing on HB 2282, sponsored by Rep. Tony Lovasco (R-O'Fallon). The bill establishes the "Building Permit Reform Act." "Exempt homeowner" is defined for purposes of this section as a resident, noncorporate owner of a detached, single-family residence. HB 2282 prohibits a political subdivision from requiring an exempt homeowner to obtain a license, certification, or professional registration or be tested as a condition of applying for a building permit if all work is done by the owner. If the property is transferred by the owner within one year of completing any work, the political subdivision may assess the homeowner with a one-time administration fee not to exceed \$5,000. Applicable building codes or inspections required by law are not prohibited. Certain instances to which these provisions do not apply are specified in the bill. No exempt homeowner will be assessed a fine or fee for unpermitted work in an amount greater than double what would have been charged if a permit had been issued at the time it was discovered. These provisions do not require any political subdivision to enact building codes or standards if none currently exist. Testifying in support of the bill were the Opportunity Solutions Project, the Municipal League of Metropolitan St. Louis, and Arnie Dienoff. Testifying in opposition were organizations representing mechanical contractors, plumbers, and sheet metal workers, saying some provisions of the bill are not clear.

UNLAWFUL USE OF REAL PROPERTY BY SQUATTERS

On Monday, April 15th, the House Rules – Regulatory Oversight Committee met in executive session to vote “do pass” on HCS HB 2896, sponsored by Rep. Phil Amato (R-Arnold). The committee vote was 9-0. HCS HB 2896 allows property owners to file a verified petition in the relevant court to seek relief for removing “unlawful occupants,” as defined in the bill, also known as “squatters.” The bill specifies information that must be in the petition, including that the occupants lack permission or authorization from the owner to occupy the property and that the owner has instructed the occupants to leave, but they have refused. After a hearing, the court can issue orders for permanent exclusion, restraints, property expulsion, and cost reimbursement. Once the court grants the order, the local sheriff in the county in which the property is located is responsible for the enforcement of the court orders and removal of unlawful occupants. The offense is a class E felony.

ALLOWS LANDLORDS TO PROHIBIT LEASES, RENTALS TO SECTION 8

On Tuesday, April 16th, the Senate Emerging Issues Committee gathered in executive session to vote on SCS HCS HB 2385, sponsored by Rep. Ben Keathley (R-Chesterfield). The “do pass” vote count was 4-0. The bill adds a provision that no county or city can prohibit landlords from refusing to lease or rent certain residential or commercial rental property to a person because the person’s source of income to pay rent includes funding from a federal housing assistance program. A Senate committee amendment adds several housing assistance programs to the bill. The bill prohibits counties or cities from enacting any ordinance that prohibits landlords from using credit scores, credit reports, background checks, limits security deposits, and requires tenants to automatically receive the right of first refusal.