
Revise #260401 to protect our local commercial property owners-Don't charge them fees

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Mayor Lucas & Members of the city council,

We need to **protect our commercial property owners and local businesses** from new cost burdens - especially now, after the property tax reassessment hit so many with excessive increases and the economy has left many struggling.

There's real irony here. Businesses the city might have financially incentivized to open for the World Cup are, now that it's over, some are being penalized for being in the very position they were in before. Maybe **the answer is a program that actually helps** them reopen.

There's a reason these buildings sit empty. **No one takes on heavy monthly debt just to leave a property vacant** if they don't have to. I understand the ordinance aims to push owners to make their property useful, but my guess is they've already tried, and they need help, not a penalty.

My hope is that if they decide to sell, the economy will support new businesses that can buy, survive, and thrive where these couldn't.

Don't charge them a tax simply for owning real estate in our city.

And don't penalize owners of vacant land either. Some hold land to pass down as an inheritance, for a future build, or simply as **part of their American Dream** to own something. If they'd wanted to develop or sell, they would have by now. A \$200 annual fee might cost them a week of groceries, a tank of gas for the family, or a

dinner out - but it won't make them build a home or sell the lot. An incentive would go much further than a penalty toward getting them to release their investment.

If the goal is truly more housing, not more fees from citizens, can we **try something innovative**? Can we sit these owners down and ask what they need to reopen?

So, as a member of the Kansas City Regional Association of REALTORS® and someone who works closely with property owners, investors, and businesses in our community, I urge you to support an amendment to Ordinance #260401 that **exempts all commercial buildings and vacant lots from these fees**, one that would run owners thousands of dollars they most likely don't have, and protect our local property owners.

The ordinance states its purpose is to encourage vacant properties back into productive use through rehabilitation, sale, and active reuse. **Let's actually help them** do that.

A property owner who hires a licensed broker, invests in marketing, and actively seeks a buyer isn't prolonging vacancy — they're working to end it. For many properties, a sale is what brings new investment, redevelopment, jobs, and economic activity. If sale is one of the outcomes this ordinance is meant to encourage, the City shouldn't charge a fee to owners who are actively pursuing it.

Finally, please **don't require citizens to publish their date of birth in the application process during registration**. With so many scammers out there, people shouldn't have to expose sensitive personal information to comply.

Please amend this ordinance to remove the fees before final passage of Ordinance #260402.

Thanks,

Stacey Johnson-Cosby

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