
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

December 14, 2019

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Council passes measures to spark deconstruction/demolition activity

Today the Common Council voted unanimously to approve a pair of ordinances that will create in-house deconstruction/demolition crews and training opportunities within the Department of Neighborhood Services and the Department of Public Works, helping to expedite overdue demolition activity and increasing the likelihood city residents will be employed on future home deconstruction/demolition projects in city neighborhoods.

One of the ordinances – sponsored by **Alderman Russell W. Stamper, II** and **Alderman Milele A. Coggs** – suspends a city requirement for deconstruction practices on razing one- to four-unit residential buildings. The requirement has caused a delay and backlog of buildings set for razing in city neighborhoods as there are few contractors available who can perform deconstruction.

The second ordinance -- sponsored by **Alderman Russell W. Stamper, II, Alderman Milele A. Coggs, Alderman José G. Pérez** and **Alderman Robert J. Bauman** – directs the Department of Neighborhood Services (DNS) and the Department of Public Works to take specific actions to increase demolition activity and to nurture deconstruction capability.

Specifically DNS must contract with outside vendors and/or staff one or more city in-house deconstruction crews (by April 1, 2019), and must spend at least \$1.2 million in currently appropriated deconstruction funding in a manner consistent with city ordinances. The department must also develop and implement a workshop to facilitate the acquisition by private contractors of the skills, expertise and certification needed to perform property deconstructions, and it also requires the Department of Public Works to staff one or more in-house mechanical demolition crews no earlier than April 15, 2019, and not later than May 15, 2019.

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Legislation approved/ADD ONE

Alderman Stamper said the legislation encourages the city to locate private contractors to expedite delayed demolition work, and also looks at using city employees to perform property deconstructions in the future. “We think this is a win-win-win for the city and especially for city residents who are looking for good-paying jobs that help remove vacant houses from neighborhoods in the future,” he said.

“Many of these vacant houses are targets for criminal activity and can be used for illegal purposes, and getting them removed is a high priority for me and for many members of the Council. I thank my colleagues for supporting this important measure,” Alderman Stamper said.

Alderwoman Coggs said the Council has agreed that public safety and public health require a move to expedite demolition while looking to build capacity to ensure property deconstruction in the future.

“By approving the pair of ordinances today we are recognizing the potential that exists in deconstruction in the future while removing decaying and unsafe properties through demolition in the near term,” the Alderwoman said. “The environmental benefits of deconstruction and the potential of creating (deconstruction) jobs for city residents in the future are positive pieces that I definitely support.”

The second measure approved today also requires the commissioner of DNS to report monthly to the Common Council regarding the status of the activities directed by the legislation.