

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Sharon Schwartz at 3:30 p.m. on March 5, 2009, in Room 446-N of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Representative Mario Goico - Excused
Representative Steve Huebert - Excused
Representative Mike Peterson - Excused

Committee staff present:

Ken Wilke, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Martha Dorsey, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Jill Shelley, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Carol Bertram, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Representative Stan Frownfelter, Kansas City, Kansas - 31st District
Ashley Jones, Director of State Policy, Local Initiatives
Ed Jaskinia, Associated Landlords of Kansas
Luke Bell, Vice President of Governmental Affairs, Kansas Association of Realtors

Others attending:

See attached list.

Committee members had been sent copies of the minutes of the meetings of February 5, February 10, February 12, and February 17, 2009. Chair Schwartz asked if there was a motion to approve these minutes. Representative Otto moved the February 5, February 10, February 12, and February 17, 2009 of the Local Government Committee meetings be approved as written, seconded by Representative Slattery. The motion carried.

Representative Schwartz, Chair, recognized Martha Dorsey, Kansas Legislative Research Department, who distributed a document which contained the answers to questions raised by the Committee at an earlier meeting regarding **SB 35** (Attachment 1).

Chair Schwartz opened the hearing on **HB 2247 - Cities; rehabilitation of abandoned houses; nonprofit corporations**. Ken Wilke, Office of the Revisor of Statutes, explained the bill. He reviewed each amendment to the bill and noted how the changes will affect the handling of properties that have been abandoned.

Questions and answers followed.

Chair Schwartz recognized Representative Stan Frownfelter who presented testimony in support of **HB 2247** (Attachment 2). He stated the bill's intent is to help area cities/counties to better handle properties that have been abandoned. He reviewed three steps which would take 90 to 120 days, and after that time, the city/county could start the process to assume the property. Also, he mentioned there has been talk about no tax leniency. He pointed out if the bill changes the tax portion (page 1, line 21) from none to one year or back to two years, the bill's proponents request to change the "and" on line 21 to "or." By doing this, the bill would allow the municipality to respond to the property abandoned quickly before it affects the surrounding properties.

Questions and answers followed.

Chair Schwartz recognized Ashley Jones, Director of State Policy, Local Initiatives Support Corporation, who presented testimony in support of **HB 2247** (Attachment 3). She stated her organization is dedicated to revitalizing urban core and rural neighborhoods. She urged the Committee to support **HB 2247**, as it will help create decent, safe and affordable housing in Kansas communities.

Questions and answers followed.

Chair Schwartz referred to the written-only testimony from Mike Taylor, Public Relations Director, Unified

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Government Public Relations, which was submitted in support of **HB 2247** (Attachment 4). She asked the Committee to read it.

Luke Bell, Vice President of Governmental Affairs, Kansas Association of Realtors, (KAR) came before the Committee to provide neutral testimony on **HB 2247** (Attachment 5). He stated KAR supports the intent of **HB 2247** to make it easier for non-profit housing organizations to redevelop abandoned housing. However, KAR absolutely opposes the proposed language in Section 1 (c) that would eliminate the requirement that taxes be delinquent on residential real estate for the preceding two years before the property could be seized under the Kansas Abandoned Housing Act.

Ed Jaskinia, President, The Associated landlords of Kansas, appeared before the Committee in opposition to **HB 2247** (Attachment 6). He stated the current law is a fair and balanced way to deal with abandoned property, and urged the Committee to reject this bill in its entirety.

Chair Schwartz called the Committee's attention to written-only testimony by John Todd, a private citizen in Wichita, who submitted a letter in opposition to **HB 2247** (Attachment 7). She asked the members to review the letter.

There being no further conferees to appear before the Committee, Chair Schwartz closed the hearing on **HB 2247**.

Since there was no further business to come before the Committee at this time, Chair Schwartz adjourned the meeting at 4:35 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting for the Local Government Committee is March 10, 2009.

Representative Sharon Schwartz, Chair