



Legislation Text

File #: 171041, **Version:** 1

171041 SUBSTITUTE 1

ALD. WITKOWSKI

Substitute resolution relating to implementing certain recommendations to address problems in the City's housing environment caused by property owners who are chronically delinquent on property taxes and code violation charges.

This resolution directs the Office of City Attorney to take the following actions to address problems associated with property owners who are chronically delinquent on property taxes and code violation charges and are insulated from litigation by seemingly duplicitous ownership structures:

1. Annually obtain a list from the City Treasurer of property owners delinquent on property taxes and other charges.
2. Closely analyze the list provided by the City Treasurer, identifying and untangling webs of ownership to connect chronic tax delinquent and code violating properties to the same, or closely related property owners.
3. Provide a confidential report to the Common Council outlining potential litigation strategies to collect delinquent property taxes and charges owed by hard-to-prosecute property owners.

This resolution further directs the City Treasurer to provide the list of property owners delinquent on property taxes and other charges to the City Attorney, and directs the Department of Neighborhood Services, the Municipal Court, the Department of City Development, the City's delinquent property tax collections contractor, and all City departments called upon by the City Attorney, to cooperated fully, and provide information on matters concerning this resolution as requested by the City Attorney.

Whereas, Certain property owners in the city are chronically delinquent on property taxes and code violation charges on numerous properties over many years; and

Whereas, Many property owners who are chronically delinquent on property taxes and code violation charges create elaborate ownership structures in an apparent attempt to hide their ownership interests and shield themselves from litigation; and

Whereas, The Office of the City Attorney, in a communication dated September 22, 2017, to the Common Council, presented a plan to develop effective litigation strategies to collect delinquent property taxes and charges owed by hard-to-prosecute property owners; and

Whereas, Implementation of the City Attorney's plan promises to stop practices of unscrupulous property owners who chronically refuse to remediate code violations and allow their properties to deteriorate and blight neighborhoods while they fail to pay property taxes owed; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee, that the Office of City Treasurer is directed to provide to the Office of the City Attorney not later than January 31 of each year, a list of all legal entities, excluding individuals, trusts and other entities commonly used as vehicles for estate planning, owning real estate subject to property tax delinquency action as of December 31 of the prior year; and be it

Further Resolved, That the Department of Neighborhood Services, the Municipal Court, the Department of City Development, the City's delinquent property tax collections contractor, and all City departments called upon by the Office of the City Attorney, are directed to cooperate fully, and provide information on matters concerning this resolution as requested by the Office of the City Attorney; and, be it

Further Resolved, that the Office of City Attorney is directed to:

1. Review and closely analyze the list provided by the City Treasurer, identifying and untangling webs of ownership to connect chronic tax delinquent and code violating properties to the same, or closely related, property owners.
2. Provide a confidential report to the Common Council, not later than March 31 of each year, outlining potential litigation strategies to collect delinquent property taxes and charges owed by hard-to-prosecute property owners.
3. Work in concert with the City's delinquent property tax collections contractor, and other City departments, including the Department of Neighborhood Services, the Municipal Court, and the Department of City Development, when analyzing the list provided by the City Treasurer and developing potential litigation strategies.

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Aaron Cadle
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