



Geauga County Planning Commission

12611 Ravenwood Dr. • Suite #380 • Chardon, OH 44024
Phone: (440) 279-1740 • Email: Planning@co.geauga.oh.us
<https://bocc.geauga.oh.gov/departments/planning-commission>

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 7, 2024

TO: Planning Commission members

FROM: Linda M. Crombie, AICP, Planning Director

RE: Senate Select Committee on Housing, Discussion and Information Gathering, Agenda Item 7A

As a follow up to the April 9 meeting, Senator Sandra O'Brien and the Geauga County Township Association were invited and will be attending the May 14 Planning Commission meeting for discussion on the efforts of the Senate Select Committee on Housing.

You were previously provided SB 243 and 244 but four (4) more bills were introduced since then relating to housing, tax credits, grants, and more. It will take some time to fully review and understand the scope of each one. **Please note that legislation proposed thus far does not specifically reference R.C. 519 related to township zoning.** The bills have been referred to various committees and this will continue to be monitored as additional legislation is anticipated.

To aid in the meeting facilitation, this memo is divided into three parts with Part 1 and Part 2 serving as background information, so we are all of the same understanding before opening it up to questions and discussion in Part 3. The questions were provided to Senator O'Brien in advance of the meeting.

Part 1: Timeline of meetings, public hearings, and bills introduced thus far

Part 2: Senate Select Committee on Housing recommendations as released on 4/17/2024

Part 3: Questions and Discussion (time as needed)

When the Ohio Legislative Service Commission releases their Bill Analysis for each proposed bill, I will provide them to you. In the meantime, please refer to the timeline on Pages 2-4 for a brief summary.

Lastly, since this will be an ongoing effort, a separate Dropbox folder was created so all information related to these efforts is in one location, separate from any particular Commission meeting agenda. Some of the materials in this folder are for your general reference that I came across while researching the subject. I will add materials in the future as needed.

Part 1: Timeline of meetings, public hearings, and Senate bills introduced thus far

Some descriptions contain a line-item # reference to find the relevant section of the bill more easily.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Description</u>
August – September 2023	Four (4) Ohio Senate Select Committee on Housing meetings held in Columbus to explain the Committee’s purposed and to hear initial testimony related to barriers to housing and potential solutions in Ohio.
December 2023	Central Building Industry of Ohio releases its white paper prepared by The Montrose Group LLC. Fourteen (14) recommendations were made, two of which were to eliminate non-home rule township zoning and zoning referendums.
October 2023- January 2024	Ohio Senate Select Committee on Housing hold six (6) regional public hearings across Ohio to hear testimony related to barriers to housing and potential solutions.
March 2024	The Ohio Township Association release their publication “Zoning Rights, Importance of Township Zoning” that outlines the current process for zoning amendments, plan of action and more.
April 17, 2024	Ohio Senate Select Committee on Housing releases its “Housing Reimagined Building a Solid Foundation for Ohio's Future” report that includes summaries of potential solutions to housing obtained through the various regional public hearings as well as recommendations from the actual Senate Select Committee on Housing. The report is to be considered by the Ohio General Assembly when drafting proposed legislation.
April 17, 2024	Senate Bill 243: Indicates only that the General Assembly intends to enact legislation addressing local zoning regulations that impede the development of housing in this state.
April 17, 2024	Senate Bill 244: Allows the County Commissioners to create a Residential Stability Zone to allow for a partial property tax exemption for real property or manufactured home tax for homeowners who qualify. (See 658).
April 17, 2024	Senate Bill 245: Allows the creation of the Eviction Defense Fund (see Line 237) to fund legal representation of indigent defendants in eviction proceedings. Also relates to residential building code enforcement in regard to certifications and inspections, real estate representation agreements, and real property transfers.

April 17, 2024

Senate Bill 246:

- Change the name from the Department of Development to the Department of Housing and Development.
- Require the Department of Housing and Development and TourismOhio to create a campaign promoting Ohio as a pro-housing state to educate Ohians about the benefits of growth and innovation in housing and economic development. (See Line 1033)
- Regarding qualifying residential properties related to grants for land bank acquisitions and rehabilitation. The criteria for “qualifying residential property” is being broadened from just a “single family residential property” to include one that has 800 square feet of habitable space, and which is either a residential stand-alone unit, a unit within a multi-unit property containing not more than 10 units, or a unit within a multi-unit property with other non-residential uses. (See Line 8428-8443).
- Increases the amount of tax credit to construct affordable housing as well as other terms. (See Line 8781)
- Adds new section 122.634 to add “Accessory dwelling unit” definition (see Line 8938)
- Allows for the creation and maintenance of two online resources: Ohio Housing Toolkit (see Line 8951) and the Ohio Housing Dashboard (see Line 8977). See Page 4 of this memo for the description of these two resources.
- Expand the use of the Ohio Future Fund beyond infrastructure projects to include 1) site-readiness and preparation and 2) housing to accommodate a growing workforce (See Line 12999)
- Proposed changes to language regarding JEDD territory definitions (See Lines 19044 and 19055)

April 23, 2024

Senate Bill 249: Provides grants to qualifying applicants for mortgage, property tax, and utility bill assistance to a homeowner making \$75,000 per year or less and who is at least 65 years old, disabled, or a caretaker of an individual who is disabled.

May 1, 2024

Senate Bill 256: Increase minimum wage by \$1.00 each year starting with \$12.00/hour beginning January 1, 2025 and ending in 2028 at \$15.00/hour. Also changes

regulations regarding non-fundable and refundable tax credits. (See Line 459)

Part 2: Senate Select Committee on Housing Recommendations released 4/17/2024

The items below were copied directly from the 4/17/24 report. A blue arrow was inserted by the Planning Commission staff to indicate topics that relate to zoning and underlined text are key words.

1. Ohio Housing Dashboard

Encourage the Ohio Department of Development to work with stakeholders, to develop a one stop, transparent statewide Ohio Housing Dashboard--a centralized platform to increase transparency in Ohio's housing market. The dashboard would allow for monitoring and analyzing key metrics and data related to Ohio's housing market. Initial data could include various indicators such as home prices, rental rates, housing inventory levels, homeownership rates, foreclosure rates, population growth, and demographic trends. The Ohio Housing Dashboard would provide transparency to the public.



2. Ohio Housing Toolkit

Require the Ohio Department of Development to launch and maintain the Ohio Housing Toolkit- a resource toolkit for local governments. This online resource hub would be designed to support local government officials and housing stakeholders in navigating the complexities of housing development and community planning. This platform will offer real-time access to essential tools and knowledge, providing a wide range of resources, including templates, models, best practices, and expert guidance, specifically tailored to aid municipalities in tasks such as revising zoning codes, and creating comprehensive plans.



3. Zoning

Consider providing technical assistance to help local governments address their zoning codes to modernize opportunities for housing.



4. Alternative Housing

Review other state's policies on the successful promotion of alternative housing. Consider implementing policies that encourage the increased use of and access to alternative types of housing, including manufactured and modular homes, tiny homes, and accessory dwelling units (ADU's).



5. Homeownership

Continue to review data sets related to homeownership in Ohio. Review Ohio's existing down payment assistance programs and housing tax incentives. Review state policies that may adversely impact Ohioans looking to purchase a home. Review state and local policies that encourage the redevelopment of owner occupied housing into rental units. Review home equity investment models as a potential public-private solution and ensure that proper consumer protections are in place. Continue to study the widespread impacts of institutional home purchasing.

6. Consumer protection

Review existing consumer protections in the home buying process, including co-equity housing arrangements, as well as representation in the buying and selling of homes.

7. Updating Codes for Renters

Market-driven forces, including inflation, often pose unexpected challenges for renters. The state should continue to monitor these factors to mitigate potential fallout regarding affordability. The Ohio Department of Development, Ohio

Housing Finance Agency, and industry stakeholders should work together to update rental applications for subsidized housing. Require owners of subsidized housing units to annually recertify the eligibility of tenants and provide financial education and counseling to all individuals residing in subsidized housing or receiving a housing subsidy. Protect renters by requiring a contact phone number where they can reach their landlord. Review state law and existing procedures regarding eviction sealing and propose solutions to ease the burden of individuals looking to secure rental housing with a past eviction.

8. Workforce Housing Tax Credit Program

Review the state's housing tax credit programs. Consider allocating a portion of the state's housing tax credit program to middle-income workers in Ohio's high-demand jobs.

9. Transaction Transparency

Consider incentives and requirements for safeguards and transparency for renters in housing owned by out-of-state Limited Liability Corporations.



10. Housing Legislation

Recognizing that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to the complex challenges facing Ohio's housing crisis, introduce comprehensive legislation that addresses a broad spectrum of policy reforms designed to enhance housing affordability, accessibility, and availability in Ohio.

11. Qualified Residential Construction Personnel

Review current training and certification requirements in the Ohio Revised Code to increase the workforce of qualified residential construction personnel throughout Ohio.

12. Third-party reviewer services

Review other states' laws regarding pre-approved building plans for residential development. Recommend a process for statewide building permit application approval.

13. Ohio Department of Development

Giving additional emphasis to housing at the state level, consider renaming the Ohio Department of Development (DOD) as the Ohio Department of Housing and Development (DHD). Consider also renaming the position of Director of Development to the Director of Housing and Development as head of DHD, who is appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate.



14. Ohio Housing Accelerator

As Ohio's equity and affordability home accelerator, review early successes and barriers to the Welcome Home Ohio Program. Incorporate changes to increase the number of projects completed, as well as expand the eligible buyers to increase the owner-occupied housing supply for working Ohioans. Permit additional types of homes to be eligible for funding. Consider providing additional funding to increase the production of new starter homes, including alternative forms of housing, including manufactured and modular homes, tiny homes, and accessory dwelling units (ADU's).

15. Ohio Housing Finance Agency

Add four legislative members appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives to the Ohio Housing Finance Agency. Require OHFA to present an annual update to the House and Senate Committees dealing with housing. Review OHFA's process and scoring of projects.

16. Ohio Housing Trust Fund

Add four legislative members appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives to the Ohio Housing Trust Fund Board.

17. Ohio YIMBY Campaign

➔ Launch a statewide messaging campaign, promoting Ohio as a pro-housing State i.e. "Ohio Says YIMBY" (Yes In My Backyard) through the collaboration of the Ohio Department of Development and the Ohio Department of Tourism. This campaign is designed to help change Ohio's housing landscape by educating and engaging Ohio citizens to embrace Ohio's growth and innovation in housing and economic development.

18. Ohio Housing Capacity Building Grant Fund

➔ Consider funding to administer an Ohio Housing Capacity Building Grant fund. The fund would provide an incentive to political subdivisions to build responsible density and act as a resource to assist local communities with housing challenges. Grants could address a variety of housing challenges tailored to a community's needs from market analysis, housing studies, planning, land use and zoning updates, surveying and engineering costs, developing comprehensive housing plans, legacy housing revitalization projects, controlling blight and nuisance properties, and programs aimed to increase homeownership.

19. Property Taxes

➔ Submit all testimony and items for review from the Select Committee on Housing to the Property Tax Review Committee including, owner-occupied property, residential rental properties, property tax relief programs, undeveloped subdivision corrections, and LIHTC.

20. All Ohio Future Fund

➔ Consider expanding the All Ohio Future Fund to include funding for residential infrastructure needs of local communities to develop workforce housing as a component for site readiness and preparation.

21. Department of Medicaid

Consider a pilot use of Medicaid 1115 waiver options for Ohio Medicaid recipients to expand options for housing stability and support through their managed health care plans.

22. Housing Tax Policy

➔ Review tax policies that provide either an incentive or disincentive for the construction of single-family housing and other housing types including subsidized and rental properties. The state has several longstanding housing programs and funding sources that should be reviewed and could be altered to better focus on desired outcomes including increasing homeownership.

23. Housing Referendum

➔ Consider legislation to increase the threshold for signatures to place a housing referendum on the ballot to align with other common types of ballot issues.

Part 3: Questions and Discussion

1. In regard to the brevity of SB 243, do you have a sense of what may follow?
2. Do you have an idea of a potential timeline for any additional proposed legislation?
3. What can the County Planning Commission do to support townships keeping their zoning authority?
4. What can local townships do to support keeping their zoning authority?

5. Per SB 244, a Board of County Commissioners may designate a Residential Stability Zone. Is there a limit on the number of zones created in a county?
6. What is the mood of the State Senate, generally, regarding this effort?
7. Why would the State Senate be in favor of a special interest groups destroying local sovereignty.
8. This appears to be an effort led by Urban State Senators. Can you explain their reasoning?
9. What can the residents of our State do to defeat this effort?
10. Where do you stand on this effort?

The Senators who participated in the committee were provided an opportunity to write a letter regarding the subject matter. I encourage you to read them (located on pages 17-46 of the Senate's report) as many indicated there is no one size fits all approach, the focus should be on homeownership, and that businesses/private sector can help solve housing issues.

At the May 14 meeting you will each be provided a paper copy of the Senate committee's housing report, the OTA's Zoning Rights publication, as well as the most recent Geauga County census profile document as it contains housing, income, rent, and mortgage statistics. If at any point you desire to have a paper copy of any of the other materials, please let us know.

c: Senator Sandra O'Brien, Ohio Senate, District 32
S. Wieland, County Prosecutor's Office
J. Tiber, Geauga County Township Association
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