

The Review

Committee discusses land contract legislation

EAST LIVERPOOL — City council’s licensing and economic development committee discussed legislation Wednesday that would regulate land contract deals between property owners and potential buyers.



Requested by city housing inspector Kayla Crawl, the legislation outlines rules and regulations for agreements in which the property owner retains title to the property as security while a potential buyer makes installment payments until the entire price of the property is paid.

According to Crawl, the idea behind the new ordinance, modeled after similar code enacted in the city of Youngstown, is to curtail the use land contracts *“as a crutch to hide rentals.”*

She said, *“The issue we have is landlords using (land contracts) to get out of (obtaining) rental licenses, inspections and insurance.”*

Crowl said people are buying gutted homes with no water lines intact, selling them on so-called land contracts to others who are living in them, even though they are not inhabitable, and once a house is inhabited, getting inside for an inspection is more difficult, sometimes requiring a search warrant.

With the legislation in place, proper certification of compliance would be required before a land contract could be registered with the county auditor.

The owner of properties under land contract would also be required to maintain insurance, obtain a rental license and an inspection, the same as for rental units.

Committee Chairman John Mercer said that, while he agrees with many of Crowl's points, he has some concern that the ordinance would treat the owner of property differently than a bank loaning money for a property, when they are essentially the same.

Mercer pointed out a bank that loans money for a home is not required to adhere to a rental license fee, for instance.

He said the ordinance will be sent to Law Director Charles Payne before being presented for council's consideration.

In other matters, Mercer presented for consideration a liquor license transfer from the Marathon gas station on St. Clair Avenue to another company, which Planning Director David Dawson said he will look into.

A report from the ELCPR group regarding the liquor permit it had obtained for an event last year was also accepted.