


David Whitaker, Esq.
Director
Irvin Corley, Jr.
Executive Policy Manager
Marcell R. Todd, Jr.
Director, City Planning
Commission
Janese Chapman
Director, Historic Designation
Advisory Board

John Alexander
LaKisha Barclift, Esq.
Paige Blessman
M. Rory Bolger, Ph.D., FAICP
Victory Corley
Lisa DiChiera
Eric Fazzini, AICP
Willene Green
Christopher Gulock, AICP
Marcel Hurt, Esq.
Sandra Jeffers

City of Detroit
CITY COUNCIL
LEGISLATIVE POLICY DIVISION
208 Coleman A. Young Municipal Center
Detroit, Michigan 48226
Phone: (313) 224-4946 Fax: (313) 224-4336

Kimani Jeffrey
Anthony W. L. Johnson
Phillip Keller, Esq.
Edward King
Kelsey Maas
Jamie Murphy
Dolores Perales
Analine Powers, Ph.D.
W. Akilah Redmond
Rebecca Savage
Sabrina Shockley
Renee Short
Floyd Stanley
Thomas Stephens, Esq.
Timarie Szwed
Theresa Thomas
Janice Tillman
Ian Tomashik
Emberly Vick
Ashley A. Wilson

TO: Honorable Detroit City Council

FROM: David Whitaker, Director
Legislative Policy Division 

DATE: February 24, 2025

SUBJECT: Status of the newly formed Tenants' Rights Commission

City Council Member Mary Waters submitted a series of requests prompting the Legislative Policy Division (LPD) to provide the following report related to the status of the recently formed Tenants' Rights Commission. Please accept this as our response.

1. Please provide the City Council with a list of all members of the Commission, including the Mayoral appointees.

As stated in the ordinance, the Commission shall consist of nine voting members, four members appointed by the City Council, two of which must be individuals who are actively renting residential property in the city, four members appointed by the Mayor, two of which must be individuals who are actively renting residential property in the City, and one member appointed jointly by the City Council and the Mayor who must be a Detroit resident who owns not more than ten rental properties.

The following is a list of names of the individuals who have been approved for appointment as voting members to the Tenants' Rights Commission.

Council Appointments

Doneisia Davis
Sherri Smith
Tenesa Sanders
Jamie Junior

Mayoral Appointments

Rogelio Landin
Steven Hawring
Chad Fleno

Joint Appointment

Josephina Ramon

2. Please provide the City Council with confirmation that all members of the Commission have been notified of their appointment.

Our office can only assume that all members of the Commission have been notified of their appointment. However, it has been brought to our attention that some attempts to contact individuals to schedule times for swearing-in have been unsuccessful. Efforts to contact all the individuals and have them sworn in are ongoing.

As of this writing, we have been unable to confirm the mayor's appointment of a fourth member and only one Commission member has been officially sworn in, Mr. Steven Hawring. However, once all members are sworn in, a quorum of the commission could be assembled, and technically the Commission can begin to conduct business utilizing the members who are currently in place.

3. Please confirm the exact amount of funding available to the Commission, as \$500,000 was appropriated in the current FY budget that hasn't been spent and should have collected interest.

The City of Detroit's Deputy Budget Director, Donnie Johnson, has confirmed that funding for the Tenants' Rights Commission in the amount of \$521,000 is appropriated in the Housing and Revitalization Departments budget in the General Fund. Unfortunately, interest earnings do not accrue for items in the General Fund.¹

4. Please confirm the exact department that holds the funding and the responsibility to support the Commission.

Although the funding for the Commission is housed in the Housing and Revitalization Department, Sec 12-12-22 of the ordinance establishes the Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department (BSEED) as the responsible entity for the promulgation of administrative rules and regulations. The department responsible for the oversight of the Commission appears to be at the discretion of the Administration, and going forward this issue will probably be best resolved through further conversations with the mayor's office.

5. Please confirm the plan to hire support staff with the goal of having all positions filled by March 31st, 2025.
6. Please work with the appointed members to identify a date, time, and location for the Commission's first meeting, with the meeting occurring before March 31st, 2025, in a location easily accessible to the public.

When hiring support staff, the Legislative Policy Division (LPD) suggests that the members first meet to discuss the type of support the Commission will require to function as anticipated. At the helm, LPD envisions the Commission hiring an attorney skilled in mediation and landlord tenant law. We are available to assist in the posting of the job opening and related duties, once the specific candidate criteria are received by LPD from the Commission.

If we can be of any assistance in the next phases of making the Tenants' Rights Commission operational and

¹ Deputy Budget Director, Donnie Johnson, Email communication 2/20/25

functioning, please let us know and do not hesitate to contact our office.