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Lead Safe Advisory Board

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Agency: [Lead Safe Advisory Board](#)

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Summary

- The Lead-safe certificate program is failing, said Zak Burkons, a lead inspector.
- The Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition is through its incentive budget for the year and moving on to next year's budget. It works with CHN Housing Partners on the incentives program.
- The lead-safe initiative does not have enough inspectors to do the work, according to Burkons.

Follow-Up Questions

- Who's in charge, and what will be done to have more lead-safe-certified rental units?
- Does the city really care, or do we just have the wrong leadership in place?
- When will there be enough inspectors?

Notes

The meeting started at 1:03 p.m.

All members were present except Sonia Monroy Matis.

Rob Fischer, the lead safe auditor, was set to present slides but ran into technical troubles. So the board moved on to "housekeeping."

Housekeeping

- Motion to adopt changes to December 2023 minutes was adopted, with the edit that it's CHN deploying funds for a *windows and doors* program, not Enterprise Community Partners
- Also adopted the March 2024 minutes
- Discussion on board membership and rolling terms from Board Member and Cleveland City Council Member Rebecca Maurer:

- Reappointment of Board Members Scott Kroehle and Wyonette Cheairs. Letters of recommendation are coming from the Mayor's Office. Then they must go through the Mayor's Appointments Committee at council.
- Sonia Monroy Matis is no longer on the board because of work commitments. There is one seat open.
- Anyone will be able to submit an application to the mayor. The open seat is a mayor's appointee.
- Emily Collins (mayor's office): Mayor is working to get out an open call for new applications and working on letters for those seeking reappointment.
- Board Member Scott Kroehle: No statutory requirements for this seat demographically. Anyone can apply.
- Board Member Diana Shulsky said Zak Burkons should apply. "He's really in the trenches" as a private lead inspector. Burkons later said he works with the largest contractor working to attain the city's goals.

Rob Fischer presented [slides](#):

- 31,000 rental units represented in total submitted lead-safe certificate (LSC) applications through March 2024
- About 350 new applications in each of the last three quarters
- Fischer said, "[New applications have] plateaued at this lower level that we know is not going to get the job done."
- 182 applications received 20-year LSC, representing over 4,000 units
- About 63% of all applications (7,964) still have active LSC
- 25% had LSC but now lapsed
- About 19,800 units currently active
- 3% of applications are exempt
- 7% of applications were denied

Fischer said he wonders if protection is still there for children in units with expired -- but previously approved -- certifications.

More data:

- Larger properties (with six or more units) are more in compliance than 2- and 3-unit properties.
- About 450 renewals vs. about 2,000 non-renewals for two-year certificates, or an 18.5% renewal rate

Fischer said there's an opportunity to look at differences in owners across

neighborhoods that are similar economically but have contrasting renewal rates. Kroehle said knowing the number of units owned per owner could be helpful, rather than just the owner type (LLC vs. individual).

Compliance Trends - presented by Fischer:

- Our compliance level exceeds peer cities
- To reach the 2028 goal of full compliance, we need 3,200 first-time LSC apps per quarter. Without higher compliance among two-year renewals, we are at risk; 18.5% renewal rate needs to change

Updates

- Sally Martin O'Toole, Cleveland's director of Building and Housing, said the updated online portal for rental registrations went live the first week of June and applications were coming in before issues stemming from the [ransomware attack](#).
- The new lead-safe certification application is not running yet due to a needed change in coding script and the cyber attack. Hope was that it'll be working by the end of the month.
- Wyonette Cheairs talked about [Lead Safe Cleveland's incentives program](#).
 - Getting payments out in 30 days
 - Have expended dollars for this year, moving into next year's budget
 - Kroehle commented about funds and duration of the incentive program. Cheairs said the incentives are funded with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money and are slated to be available through June 2026. There are discussions about incentives beyond that.
- Maurer: New administrators of lead safe home fund are up and running.
 - Cheairs: Admins of home fund accepting paper applications, no centralized application

Board Member Carol Smith: Are incentives available for two-year renewals? Cheairs: Yes.

Kroehle said there needs to be an intense focus on user experience as the city and its partners try to build a functional system for lead-safe certification and regulation.

Public comment

- Zak Burkons, lead inspector: Not enough inspectors/why are inspectors dropping out? "We continue to dive towards failure." Seven straight worsening quarters. We need leadership change
- Todd Knight, lead abatement contractor: Brought up red tape inherent in compliance

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