



Small, Serene, Simply Garnett.

To: House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development
From: Christopher T. Weiner, Garnett City Manager
Subject: Testimony in Support of HB 2314
Date: Friday, February 22, 2019

Dear Honorable House Committee Members,

The City of Garnett supports HB 2314 and asks for your passage of this Bill to help the City of Garnett, and other Kansas cities, in dealing with one of our most significant issues- blighted and abandoned properties.

Access to nice, affordable homes is key to attracting industry and new businesses to our community. Of the 1,664 homes in Garnett, 194 are vacant with an overwhelming percentage of these houses are in a state of dilapidation and/or abandonment. This leaves us with a less than 5 percent vacancy rate of decent rental housing available; a serious housing shortage. We desperately need legislation that would speed up the process for private businesses, cities like ours, and neighborhood organizations to address foreclosures, abandoned properties and properties. The City of Garnett mows many of these properties, assessing the costs to property taxes. In only a few instances does the City see reimbursement for these costs due to properties awaiting a Sheriff's (tax) sale. The costs associated with city mowing, along with the unpaid property taxes puts a huge burden on the tax payers of a small community such as ours. These abandoned properties can lead to an increase of police calls for intruders, vandalism and sometimes arson.

Please see the attached photos of just a small sampling of houses and miscellaneous structures where the overgrowth of vegetation and the deterioration of structure, including 111. W. 4th Avenue, 245 W. 5th Avenue, 110 E. 5th Avenue, 145 W. 7th Avenue, 130 E. 6th Avenue and 131 E. 6th Avenue. The City has been dealing with these issues and many others like them for decades where there is overgrown vegetation, dangerous and deterioration of structures, trash and debris.

HB 2314 would give cities the same ability to deal with abandoned and blighted property as they now have when dealing with dangerous structures. It would also allow rehabilitation to begin before the property becomes subject to demolition as a dangerous structure/nuisance.

We again ask that you give the passage of HB 2314 serious consideration and help our community and others like us by giving us the tools to address blight and abandoned property.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher T. Weiner / sm". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C" and a trailing "sm" at the end.

Christopher T. Weiner
City Manager

CTW/sw

Enclosures



111 W. 4th



110 E. 5th



130 E. 6th



140 E. 5th



145 W. 7th



131 E. 6th



245 W. 5th