



CITY OF SHREVEPORT
MAYOR TOM ARCENEUX

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**MAYOR TO HOLD MEETING FOR DOWNTOWN PROPERTY OWNERS
REGARDING THE PROPOSED VACANT PROPERTY REGULATION ORDINANCE**

Mayor Arceneaux invites downtown property owners in Shreveport and other interested parties to attend a meeting to discuss the proposed Vacant Property Regulation Ordinance, which is currently pending before the City Council. The meeting will be held in the Council Chambers at Government Plaza, on Thursday, July 25, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

“I want to be sure that all owners of downtown property have the opportunity to be informed about this ordinance, because it makes significant changes to the way the City treats vacant downtown properties,” Mayor Arceneaux stated, “One goal is to encourage owners of vacant properties to keep them in an appropriate condition, but the larger intent is to encourage owners of vacant downtown buildings to return them to commerce whenever possible.”

Some of the features of this proposed ordinance include:

- The ordinance applies to all properties in the Downtown Development District (DDD), as well as the area along Texas Avenue to Murphy Street and a one-block perimeter around the described area.
- Vacant structures are defined as structures where all active lawful commercial activity has ceased for at least 30 days.
- The ordinance is to be enforced by the Department of Property Standards. Any decisions they make can be appealed, first to me and then, if desired, to the City Council.

- The ordinance establishes a number of minimum standards of care for the exterior of all vacant structures. Generally, these standards are meant to ensure that the exterior structure is kept from deteriorating while it is vacant.
- Vacant structures are required to be secured to keep out unauthorized persons. However, securing with plywood is only allowed for 90 days unless Property Standards approves a longer period in writing.
- All owners of vacant property are required to designate a Manager for the structure and provide the City with contact information for the Manager.
- The ordinance establishes a requirement that vacant buildings be registered with the City every six months. Registration will require a fee of \$500. The registration process will require owners to provide proof of at least \$100,000 in comprehensive general liability insurance. In addition, owners must provide a plan for correcting any violations and a description of how the owner plans to maintain the building and market it for sale.
- There are provisions for fee waivers in certain cases. These waivers are intended to incentivize owners to maintain their properties, to rehab them when necessary, and to market them for sale. We are not intending to use this process as money-maker, but rather as a way to move properties back into commerce as soon as possible.
- Failure to comply with the ordinance is a misdemeanor, with penalties increasing if the violations are not corrected.

Thank you to those who are working hard every day to make downtown Shreveport a better place. Mayor Arceneaux looks forward to the input from downtown property owners and others at the meeting on Thursday, July 25th, 2024.

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