

Vacant property ordinance moves forward in Falls City

**(KLZA)-- The Falls City Council Monday night approved an ordinance on first reading that would require vacant properties to be registered with the Housing Study Committee.**

**This is an attempt to help the City define, regulate, suppress and prevent nuisances created by vacant properties and places a duty on the owner of the property to assist the City in preventing public nuisances.**

**City Administrator Anthony Nussbaum said the purpose is to register the properties so they can be brought back to code and avoid them contributing to blight, lower property values, endanger health, become fire hazards and criminal activity.**

**Nussbaum laid out the process the property owners would need to follow including registering the property at no cost. The property owner would then have 180 days to make improvements or remove the buildings from the property at not cost.**

**City Council member Mitch Merz said this is an attempt to help alleviate a shortage of workforce housing available in Falls City and keep the properties from becoming nuisances or hazards.**

**If property owners do not improve the vacant property within 180 days of registration, fees would be assessed. It would be \$250 for residential properties and \$500 for commercial properties with the fees increased to \$500 and \$1,000 every 180 day period during which no improvements are made.**

**Merz noted there could be exceptions for the property owners based on things such as attempting to sell the property or if the property is part of court proceedings.**

**Properties can be removed from the registration by providing sufficient notification and evidence, that the property no longer meets the definition of a vacant property.**

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