



Legislation Text

File #: 22-1866, **Version:** 1

Resolution Directing City Administrator to Investigate the Establishment and Funding of an Office of Ombudsperson for the City of Ann Arbor

Reviewed By: John W. Reiser, Senior Assistant City Attorney

Whereas, The mission of the City of Ann Arbor is to deliver exceptional services that sustain and enhance a vibrant, safe, and diverse community;

Whereas, Core values that form the basis of the City's Organizational Strategic Plan include being accountable to the public we serve and being committed to the pursuit of excellence, with the goal of delivering exceptional service to the public;

Whereas, The City of Ann Arbor provides services through dozens of departments including Zoning, Planning, Building, Rental Housing, Engineering, Community Standards, Trash and Recycling, Assessing, Customer Service, and several other departments, boards, and commissions;

Whereas, The City lists at least four dozen types of permits and licenses on its website;

Whereas, The City residents and users of City services often become frustrated by the complexity associated with applying for the myriad permits, certificates of compliance and occupancy, plan review, and various licenses available or required in Ann Arbor;

Whereas, Although the City has several avenues for users to appeal adverse decisions by City staff, including the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Housing Board of Appeals, the Construction Board of Appeals, the Historic District Commission, it can be prohibitively expensive to exhaust those remedies;

Whereas, Other Michigan municipalities, including the cities of Detroit and Flint, and the University of Michigan, have created Offices of the Ombudsperson to assist their residents, students, faculty, and staff with problems that arise during their interactions with governmental and educational staff and officials;

Whereas, National and international professional organizations such as the United States Ombudsman Association and the International Ombuds Association exist to assist in the creation and administration of ombudsperson offices; and

Whereas, The staffing and budget necessary to support a potential Office of Ombudsperson can only be determined by the City Administrator, with approval of City Council, after the scope, functions, and funding of the Office of Ombudsperson are investigated and articulated;

RESOLVED, That the City Council directs the City Administrator to investigate the formation of the Office of the Ombudsperson and to address the following:

- Staffing levels,

- Anticipated policies and procedures,
- Appropriate record-keeping and reporting requirements,
- Startup costs, including recruiting and training, and
- Annual costs; and

RESOLVED, That the City Administrator report back on his findings at a regular City Council meeting prior to the finalization of the 2023-2024 budget.

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Hayner, Griswold, Nelson and Ramlawi