

Advocates press Fresno City Council to clean up decaying homes

By Ricardo
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A boarded-up home in Fresno is seen in an August 2014 file photo.

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More than 100 community leaders and housing advocates on Monday urged the Fresno City Council to pass a revised vacant property ordinance that they believe will help clean up neglected and decayed homes.

Community members shared personal stories and research on blighted homes and apartments that they said rob their communities of an identity.

City Council is expected Thursday to review the ordinance, which advocates say will help enforce maintenance of blighted homes. A task force comprised of elected leaders and community advocates has been working with the city on those revisions.

Monday evening's forum at Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church near downtown Fresno served as yet another push by code enforcement reform advocates to get their point across.

The crowd heard the stories – of an elderly woman without a working fridge to store her medicine and a couple who



were stunned to find their central Fresno apartment had a faulty toilet that flooded their bathroom floor with fecal water every time it flushed.

“It’s inhumane,” said Richard Daniels, one of the church’s pastors.

Council Members Clint Olivier and Esmeralda Soria heard the community’s pitches on amendments to the ordinance, which include vacant property registration and city inspection and approval of properties previously found to be violating city code before they can house tenants.

Olivier and Soria promised they’d share those concerns at Thursday’s council meeting, but were noncommittal on all but one of the proposed changes – a measure that calls for a community task force to monitor progress.

Olivier, who said much of his 7th District is affected by blighted properties, reassured the crowd that City Hall and the community want the same thing: a blight-free Fresno.

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