

City of Ashland- Housing Committee Meeting Notice

A meeting of the Ashland Housing Committee will be held on **January 16, 2019**, at **8:30 AM** in the **Ashland City Hall Council Chambers (601 Main St. West)**

Agenda

- 1) Consent Agenda
- 2) Approval of Minutes
 - a) Approval of minutes from the November 14, 2018 Housing Committee Meeting
- 3) Citizen Comments
- 4) Old Business
 - a) Updates on Property Maintenance, HIP and CDBG
 - b) Updates on December 10, 2018 Landlord Forum
- 5) New Business
 - a) Updates on Rental Registration
 - b) Discuss Strategic Housing Plan implementation and 2019 goals
- 6) Announcements**
- 7) Adjournment

It is possible that members of and a possible quorum of members of other governmental bodies of the municipality may be in attendance at the above stated meeting to gather information or speak about a subject, over which they have decision-making responsibility. Any governmental body at the above stated meeting will take no action other than the governmental body specifically referred to above in this notice.

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cc: Daily Press with Staff Reports

City of Ashland- Housing Committee Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Ashland Housing Committee was held on **November 14, 2018 at 8:30 a.m.** in the **City Hall Council Chambers (601 Main St W).**

Committee Members Present: Sam Ray, Betty Harnisch, Kathy Beeksma, Megan McBride

Committee Members Absent: Ginger Nuutinen, Steve Pierce, Ana Tochtermann, Liz Franek

Staff Present: Chris Luebben, Mayor Lewis, Brant Kucera

Mayor Lewis opened the meeting at 8:30 a.m. She introduced new City Administrator Brant Kucera to the committee.

Agenda

1) Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda by Kathy Beeksma. Seconded by Betty Harnisch. Passed unanimously.

2) Approval of minutes

a) Approval of minutes from September 12, 2018 meeting

Motion to approve the minutes from the September 12, 2018 meeting by Betty Harnisch. Seconded by Kathy Beeksma. Passed unanimously.

b) Approval of minutes from October 10, 2018 meeting

Motion to approve the minutes with corrections from the October 10, 2018 meeting by Betty Harnisch. Seconded by Kathy Beeksma. Passed unanimously.

3) Citizen Comments

Terry Schemenauer, Criminal Justice Coordinator with Ashland County, updated the committee that the group he is working with on a sober drop-in center has completed their business plan and are working on identifying a location. The purpose of the drop-in center will be to provide a safe and sober social environment as well as a meeting space for various sobriety support groups (i.e. AA, Al-Anon, etc.).

Jerry Moore informed the committee of his ongoing efforts to create a sustainable intentional community for people who are or have struggled with substance abuse, people in transition, and homeless individuals. He shared a conceptual layout on the Beaser Avenue site with the committee. The site would include a combination shelter types including permanent tiny homes, tents, and the potential for more innovative designs such as shipping container small homes. Also included in his concept plan is a restaurant with associated greenhouses on the property to provide quality food as well as job training opportunities for residents of the intentional community. He also owns about 39 acres of land just south of Ashland which could be used to supplement food production.

4) Old business

a) Updates on progress with:

- CDBG

Megan McBride updated the committee that she successfully found all of the past CDBG housing files that NWRPC needs and they will be picking them up the next time they are in Ashland. There have been 3 projects approved since the last meeting, 2 of which have inspections scheduled and the third is under review. She asked committee members to continue to help get the word out about these available funds. This is also something the Marketing & Public Outreach intern (starting in January) will work on.

- HIP

Megan McBride provided the following updates about the HIP program:

- 812 Vaughn Avenue: The HIP program contributed \$2,000 of funding towards the roof repair which is now complete. The property owner will be saving up to address the foundation this summer, and the HIP program will assist with materials and volunteers to repaint the home as well.
- 2106 4th Street East: The demolition of two dilapidated sheds has been completed with the cost of the dumpster covered through the HIP program. The property owner will be working to repair the third remaining shed or demolish and construct a new one in spring of 2019.
- Starting in 2019, Chris Luebben will take over identifying HIP projects and working with property owners and contractors. Megan will shift to being in charge of approving projects and will work on fundraising.

- Property Maintenance

Chris Luebben provided before and after pictures to illustrate some of the many successes she has had in getting residents to address property maintenance violations. She highlighted a specific example which has been ongoing for years where a resident worked with Chris to bring the property into compliance while still maintaining many of the quirky/artistic features the property owner wanted. Chris informed the committee that one of the biggest issues she's having recently is working with property owners who park across the sidewalk. She has and will continue to work with anyone currently parking across the sidewalk to determine a suitable alternative parking location on their property. So far, all of the properties who have been contacted about this have had an alternative available to them.

b) Update on December 2018 Landlord Forum

Megan McBride informed the committee that a poll was sent out to landlords requesting their input for a date/time that would work for the most people and would send out follow-up postcards and post on the City website with the selected date/time.

Agenda items for the forum will include:

- 1) Presentation and discussion about bed bugs by Kathy Beeksmma

- 2) Presentation and discussion about the water Utility by Julie Vaillancourt (Finance Director for the City of Ashland)
 - 3) Presentation and discussion about property maintenance by Chris Luebben
- c) Discuss Strategic Plan Implementation
No discussion, postponed until January meeting.

5) **New business**

- a) Discuss of Health in All Policies project focus and resources

Megan McBride went over the summary sheet that Katya (Ashland's Health in All Policies project manager) provided based on the Housing Committee's previous discussion and interest areas. The project focus previously agreed upon would focus on exploring models for coordinating local resources for individuals experiencing homelessness and housing instability. She asked if the committee still agrees with this focus, and if they have ideas for narrowing the scope to a specific project.

Kathy Beeksma pointed out that local providers are generally aware of available services and where to send people based on their needs, but many landlords are not aware of opportunities to get people connected to these resources. She suggested an online hub of information about how to recognize potential symptoms related to mental health or substance abuse issues and what to do/who to contact for assistance could be a good focus for the project.

Sam Ray agreed that area providers are very connected and aware of what resources other organizations have available. She pointed out that there is an overall lack of supportive housing services in the Ashland area with Superior being probably the closest community that offers permanent supportive housing. Therefore, part of the problem is that providers don't necessarily have the appropriate type of resources to assist individuals who would benefit greatly from a permanent supportive housing environment. She also cited an example of scattered site permanent supportive housing that exists in Ann Arbor, MI through an organization called Avalon where their local Salvation Army is the point of entry for individuals in need of their services.

Mayor Lewis asked how people who are not providers (i.e. landlords, inspectors) know where to send people for resources in Ashland?

Kathy Beeksma said that a lot of people come to the Housing Authority when they need help. However, the Housing Authority is not set up for rapid rehousing services and there are also parameters set by HUD for who they can rent to which may disqualify some individuals. She suggested that identifying resource gaps related to housing would be helpful.

Terry Schemenauer said that he works with small claims cases for Ashland County and a large portion of them involve landlords who are trying to evict a tenant which can end up being a lengthy process. He suggested that a housing program could be set up to which landlords could contribute and would help fund housing that offers needed supports, particularly for individuals with substance abuse and mental health issues

contributing to the underlying causes of the eviction. This would benefit both parties as it would speed up the timeframe for getting the tenant out of the home (and likely help minimize property damage) and would also ensure that people being evicted still have a place to go.

Sam Ray said that another component involves working with landlords to give people second chances who may have a bad rental record but have gone through treatment and/or taken other steps to improve their situations.

The Committee decided that an IT option such as an online information hub seems like a low-hanging fruit and, combined with education/publicizing, would help address the issues discussed and help with homelessness prevention.

6) Announcements

- a) Set next meeting date and discuss possible agenda items
 - There will be no meeting in December 2018, and Megan will send out the full 2019 meeting calendar with the January meeting packet.

7) Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Megan McBride. Seconded by Betty Harnisch. Passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:45am. Minutes by Megan McBride.

City of Ashland Landlord Forum Summary

December 10, 2018

Agenda:

- 1) Presentation and discussion about Bed Bugs by Kathy Beeksma (Director of City of Ashland Housing Authority)
- 2) Presentation and discussion about the Water Utility by Julie Vaillancourt (Finance Director for the City of Ashland)
- 3) Presentation and discussion about Property Maintenance by Chris Luebben (Property Maintenance Specialist for the City of Ashland)
- 4) Input on future meetings and agenda items

Find yourself next to the water.



City of Ashland, Wisconsin
601 Main Street West — Ashland, WI 54806 — www.coawi.org

All handouts and resources that were available at the Landlord Forum can also be found on the City of Ashland website at

<http://www.coawi.org/173/Landlord-Tenant-Resources>

Bed Bug Presentation

Key Takeaways:

Recommendations for Preventing Bed Bugs:

- Invest in intercept traps which are inexpensive (less than \$5 per trap) and an effective way to monitor for bed bugs. These are available in stores and online.
- Communication and education of tenants about bed bugs (resources available on City of Ashland website or by contacting the Planning & Development Department).
- Don't allow tenants to bring in used furniture, especially things like couches and mattresses.
- Encourage tenants to minimize clutter—bed bugs love clutter as it gives them plenty of places to hide.
- Routinely inspect your own home, paying particular attention to corners of mattresses and bedding and bindings of books for evidence of bed bugs (i.e. fecal matter, blood spots).

Treatment Methods if Bed Bugs Occur:

- Heat treatment is the most effective form of treatment
- For heat treatment tenant must remove items from drawers to ensure everything is adequately heated to kill the bed bugs
- Bed bugs can quickly become resistant to chemical treatment methods

Follow-up Questions and Responses:

Q: What can people do to prevent bed bugs from being transferred from secondhand clothing that they purchase?

A: Put them in the dryer on high heat for 20-30 minutes.

Q: Is freezing an effective treatment method for bed bugs?

A: Perhaps for a vehicle or small space, but unlikely for a principal structure since it must be at a cold enough temperature for a sustained period of time to kill bed bugs. Heat treatment is typically a more effective method.

Q: Where can this information be found for those who could not attend the meeting?

A: City of Ashland website on the "Landlord and Tenant Resources" page
(<http://www.coawi.org/173/Landlord-Tenant-Resources>).

Water Utility Presentation

Key Takeaways:

An overview of utility billings and collection process can be found at <http://www.coawi.org/DocumentCenter/View/736/Overview-of-Utility-Billing-and-Collections-Process> and on the “Landlord and Tenant Resources” page of the City website.

Collections Process and Overview:

- Approximately 4,000 utility bills go out each month.
- While the disconnection notice states that the water will be shut off if unpaid bills are not paid, this is partly to ensure that the language is strong enough to encourage tenants to pay. Since there is a very specific shut off procedure set by the state, the City sometimes does not have enough staff to get to all shut offs that notices are issued for.
- Total delinquent water bills have greatly reduced from approximately \$248,000 in 2011 to about \$51,000 in 2017.

Recommendations from the Public Service Commission (PSC):

- Landlords can call the water utility on a regular basis (i.e. monthly, every other month, etc.) to check that utility bills on their rentals are up to date.
- Landlord can put the water utility account in their name and include cost of water in rent. If a landlord would like assistance determining what the average water bill cost will be to add onto rent based on the number of tenants, contact the City of Ashland utility department at 715-682-7056.
- Landlords can include a water deposit in lease agreements to pay delinquent water fees if they occur.

Follow-up Questions and Responses:

Q: Why can't a delinquent water bill follow a tenant once they move out?

A: Delinquent bills can be sent to the former tenant if the utility has a forwarding address. Otherwise, [Wisconsin State Statute 66.0809\(3\)](#) requires that the outstanding utility bill be placed as a lien on the property.

Q: How are water rates set?

A: Explanation and overview of the City's water rates and the water rate study that was conducted can be found at <http://www.coawi.org/213/Utility-Information-Payments>.

Property Maintenance Presentation

Key Takeaways:

Snow Removal:

- The City's Property Maintenance Specialist position has been expanded to be a full-time, year-round job as opposed to limited term employment as it was in the past. A big focus this winter will be enforcement of sidewalk snow removal.
- Sidewalks must be cleared within 48 hours of a snow event
- Sidewalks must be cleared so that they are passable by pedestrians

Follow-up Questions and Responses:

Q: What constitutes a "measurable" amount of snow?

A: There is currently no exact amount defined in the Property Maintenance Ordinance. Staff will be working to determine an appropriate, more exact amount for this and welcome any input.

Q: Can landlords be notified by phone of property maintenance violations at their properties?

A: Landlords will still receive a letter to have documentation in writing. Time allowing, Chris will also start calling landlords to ensure they are made aware of the issue as soon as possible.

Q: How are property maintenance violations identified?

A: In the beginning of the summer it was primarily complaint-driven. New cases are randomly identified when she is out doing inspections if she drives by or they are in the vicinity of an open property maintenance case.

Q: What should a landlord do if they are aware of a home with property maintenance issues that is owner-occupied?

A: Contact Chris at 715-685-1609 or property@coawi.org to make her aware. Owner-occupied properties are treated the same as rental properties in terms of property maintenance, and she does not know if a building is owner-occupied or a rental when she identifies it out on inspections.

Future Meetings and Agenda Items

It was agreed that the City will continue to hold landlord forums on a bi-annual basis, with the next one being in early summer of 2019. Central to that meeting will be discussions about existing City ordinances to get landlord feedback and input on recommended changes. Existing City ordinances can be found on the City of Ashland website on the "Landlord and Tenant Resources" page.

Find yourself next to the water.



City of Ashland, Wisconsin

601 Main Street West — Ashland, WI 54806 — www.coawi.org

City Of Ashland Strategic Housing Plan



ADOPTED: August, 2018

HOUSING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Kathy Beeksma

Liz Franek

Betty Harnisch

Mark Hoglund

Joel Langholz

Jenny Lucius

Bob Miller

Ginger Nuutinen

Sam Ray

Ana Tochterman

Tom Waby

CITY OF ASHLAND STAFF

Mayor Deb Lewis, City of Ashland

April Kroner, City of Ashland Planning & Development Director

Megan McBride, City of Ashland Assistant Planner

BACKGROUND

One of the four Strategic Priorities for the City of Ashland for the five year period 2016-2020 is Housing Infrastructure Improvements. For the past two years, numerous conversations and shared ideas have identified current needs related to housing in Ashland and proposed solutions to the needs. These discussions have taken place, among other places, in the City of Ashland Housing Committee, at City Council meetings, as well as Ashland's SOARs Forum, held in September 2015; at a Homelessness forum and at Landlord forums.

There is consensus that Ashland's housing needs are an economic development issue and that solving them will require long-term planning and commitment by the City in order to facilitate population growth. What is needed from city leaders in order to move forward effectively is financial, staff, and political support.

HOUSING PRINCIPLES CONTAINED IN THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Strengthening the Housing Market is a prominent priority contained in the Authentic Ashland Comprehensive Plan approved by the Ashland City Council in 2017. The narrative on page 13 of the Plan states: **"Make Ashland a city where neighborhood pride is widely evident, where housing options are broad and appealing, and where residential investment is focused around the city's historic core."**

Ashland's peak population was more than a century ago, yet the majority of the residential structures that served that population remain. The resulting combination of falling demand, too much supply, job losses, and demographic changes all make for a weaker housing market. The loss of 1,916 people or roughly 700 families since 1960 means excess units need to be absorbed into the housing market. It means current owners need encouragement to re-invest. And it means existing homes need to be creatively marketed to first-time buyers. (p.12)

Six goals in the Section of the Comp. Plan related to How to Strengthen the Housing Market are laid out on page 27:

"Ashland should pursue actions that positively and strategically influence the housing market so its neighborhoods become marketable, brand-enhancing assets instead of the liabilities they are otherwise destined to be. Successful interventions must simultaneously do the following:

GOAL 1: Diversify existing stocks through creative in-fill development at the intersections of weak and middle strength blocks and within middle strength blocks.

GOAL 2: Rebalance supply and demand by thinning excess supply through locationally-precise demolition and establish a conservation buffer.

GOAL 3: Pursue strategic demolition to remove excess housing supply and relieve downward pressure on property values.

GOAL 4: Impose intensive standard-setting code enforcement on middle market and weaker blocks.

GOAL 5: Encourage owner reinvestment on blocks of middle market and strong market strength.

GOAL 6: Develop disposition strategies for large land holdings (Roffers and Timeless Timber, etc.) that reinforce other strategies in this plan.

“Successful interventions must consciously prioritize the retention of strong households on middle strength blocks, as well as definitively marketing home ownership opportunities to new graduates of Northland and new employees of Memorial Medical and other employers.” –*Authentic Ashland*, 2035

Recognizing that much work needs to be done to fully meet the above goals, summarized below are prominent identified housing needs.

City of Ashland Strategic Priorities 2016 – 2020

Goal 1: Facility Improvements to City Hall, Police, and Vaughn Public Library

Goal 2: Housing Infrastructure Improvements

Goal 3: Development of a Sustainable Infrastructure Improvement Plan

Goal 4: Economic Development and Marketing Strategic Plan Development and Implementation

		COMPLETED	
COMPLETED ACTION	COMP PLAN GOAL(S)	COMPLETION DATE	
City implemented Landlord Registration Program <u>Purpose:</u> Require all landlords to register rental properties within city limits so that landlords can be contacted when legitimate complaints are received regarding sub-standard rental housing.	4 and 5	2016	
City sponsored symposium bringing together all local entities to discuss housing insecurity and homelessness	1	2016	
Complete a comprehensive housing study to identify current needs and opportunities for new development.	1, 4, 5, 6	2017	
Explore and compile information about other communities that have implemented voluntary inspection programs.	4	2018	
Identify the organizations in our area that are already working on providing transitional and supportive housing and determine how City can assist and support.	1	March 2018	

STRATEGIES & ACTION STEPS BY NEED	COMP PLAN GOAL(S)	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	COMPLETION DATE
NEED: IMPROVE SAFETY AND QUALITY OF HOUSING STOCK			
Rentals			
A. Ongoing updates to the rental registration list to ensure all rentals are registered	4, 5	Planning Department	Annual Updates (January)
B. Establish Voluntary Rental Property Inspection Program <u>Purpose:</u> Encourage inspection of all rental properties in city limits to ensure compliance with minimal code requirements and to reward landlords who voluntarily comply with greater visibility and promotion.	4, 5	Housing Committee, City Council	2020
1. Develop clear guidelines including what would be inspected to start a pilot program with a small number of landlords to determine an appropriate, effective inspection process	4, 5	Ginger Nuutinen & Megan McBride	September 30, 2018
2. Create a list of code requirements/city ordinances for each type of rental category	4, 5	Megan McBride	September 30, 2018
3. Review existing research that analyzes top priorities people have when choosing a rental	4, 5	Aidan Johan and Megan McBride	September 30, 2018
4. Establish a rating system for assessing properties and assign point value to each item	4, 5	Planning Department	September 30, 2018
C. Review and recommend changes to the zoning ordinance in residential areas to allow duplexes, carriage, or tiny house construction enabling responsible property owners to supplement their mortgage with rental housing available on their property	1	Planning Department, Housing Committee	Long term/Ongoing
D. Continue efforts to engage landlords	4, 5	Planning Department	Long term/Ongoing

1. Get email contacts for easier communication	4	Planning Department	January 2019 (part of annual update)
2. Compile a list of information needs (can be a combination of expressed needs and what the City would like property owners to know)	NA	Planning Department, Online resource hub, Landlord Forums	November 2019
a. Substance use and behavioral health (basics, how to recognize an emerging crisis, who to call)	NA	Planning Department, Online resource hub, Landlord Forums	November 2019
b. Resources (funds for rehab, resources for tenants)	5	Planning Department, Online resource hub, Landlord Forums	November 2019
c. Support for posting rentals online	NA	Planning Department, Online resource hub, Landlord Forums	2020
Non-Rental Residential			
A. Continue public investment in rehab	5	Multiple agencies	Ongoing
1. HIP program	5	Planning Department	Ongoing
2. CDBG Loans	5	NWRPC	Ongoing
a. ID projects	5	NWRPC	Ongoing
b. Promote program	5	NWRPC, Planning Department	Ongoing

B. Pursue partnership with public health because of the role of public health in performing inspections to ensure safe/sanitary housing conditions and the overall link between health and housing	4	Planning Department, Housing Committee	Ongoing
C. ID partners to develop a community land trust/shared equity (with a rehab component)	1	Councilor Tochterman	2020
D. Develop a plan and funding mechanisms for strategic demolition of dilapidated, vacant homes	2, 3	Housing Committee, Planning Department	Winter 2018
1. Inventory houses that are in severe disrepair and not likely to be restored to get a sense for the overall number and associated cost (utilize 2016 property survey ratings completed for the Comp Plan to assist)	2, 3	Planning Department, Housing Committee	Spring 2019
2. Research procedures and funding sources for strategic demolition	2, 3	Planning Department	Winter 2018
3. Evaluate feasibility and need for the City to allocate funds for strategic demolition	2, 3	City Council, Planning Department	Summer 2019
NEED: INCREASE AFFORDABILITY AND EXPAND AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS FOR ALL INCOME GROUPS			
A. Compile and market an inventory of available city "in-fill" sites (those located within the City center rather than outskirts of City) and provide tax incentives for new housing development.	1, 6	Planning Department	2019
B. Promote rehabilitation of historic existing buildings for housing purposes	1	Historic Preservation Commission, Planning Department	Ongoing

1. Have Historic Preservation Commission submit a listing of historic buildings that could be renovated into housing	1	Historic Preservation Commission, Planning Department	October 2019
C. Promote rehabilitation of blighted downtown building(s) for re-use as housing	1, 4, 5	Mayor, Plan Commission, City Council, Planning Department	Ongoing
D. Collaborate with other regional municipalities to maximize available tax incentives for affordable housing projects	1	Planning Department City Council	As needed
E. Partner with affordable housing developers	1, 6	Planning Department, Plan Commission, City Council	Ongoing
1. ID city owned lots and actively market	1, 6	Planning Department	2019
2. Offer supports tied to commitments for affordable units	1, 6	City of Ashland, WHEDA, State of WI	Ongoing as available
3. Hold public listening sessions to gauge housing interest and needs of various populations	1, 6	Housing Committee, Planning Department	Ongoing (As projects arise)
F. Identify community partners who can collaborate and assist in efforts to provide additional affordable housing options	1	Housing Committee, Planning Department, Mayor	Ongoing
1. Involve local PHAs and providers in strategic planning	1	Planning Department, Housing Committee	2020
2. ID partners interested in pursuing a co-op housing project	1	Councilor Tochtermann	2020

NEED: ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS/INADEQUATE TRANSITIONAL HOUSING OPTIONS

A. Advocate for Supportive Housing Development and Scatter-Site Housing Services	1	Housing Committee, Mayor	Ongoing
B. Collaborate with Ashland Housing Authority, Ashland County, WHEDA, AADC, and other non-profits to develop safe and affordable housing <u>Needs identified include:</u> - Safe/sober - Transitional - Permanent supportive	1, 5	City of Ashland, Housing Committee, City Council	Ongoing
C. Seek funding for research to determine need by obtaining real numbers from information that has already been gathered and through programs that are working with homeless individuals as well as people in need of transitional and supportive housing (ie hospitals, school districts, the Brick, criminal justice, Northland Counseling)	NA	Center for Rural Communities or UW-Extension	Ongoing
D. Create an online hub of information and resources for providers and other people working in fields related to homeless services	NA	Planning Department	January 2020
1. Publicize funding streams and obtain clear criteria for each funding source	NA	Website Hub of Resources and Information	2020
E. Participate in meetings and processes related to addressing homelessness, and facilitate collaboration between individuals working on issues related to housing	1	Mayor, Planning Department	Ongoing
1. Invite providers to public listening sessions for all perspective housing developments	1	Planning Department	Ongoing (As projects arise)