

City of Ashland - Housing Committee Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Ashland Housing Committee was held on Tuesday, May 13th, 2020 at 8:30 a.m. via Go To Meetings.

Committee Members Present: Elizabeth Franek, Sam Ray, Eric Lindell, Megan McBride, Mayor Lewis, Ana Tochtermann

Committee Members Absent: Kathy Beeksma, Kaas Baichtal

Staff Present: Christine Luebben (Property Maintenance Specialist)

Citizens Present: Betsey Harries

Mayor Lewis opened the meeting at 8:30 a.m.

Agenda

1) Consent Agenda and Approval of Minutes

Minutes tabled to next meeting as some committee members did not receive prior to the meeting.

2) Public Comment (non-agenda items)

None.

3) Old Business

a) Updates on property maintenance, CDBG, and HIP

Property Maintenance

Christine Luebben updated the committee about current property maintenance enforcement taking place, which has been limited to only focus on cases with significant amounts of garbage in lawns. Letters are being sent out to people who received property maintenance letters in the past with due dates of this summer, extending their timelines to the end of summer 2021. This has been done in recognition of the financial hardships and uncertainty many people are facing related to the COVID-19 health crisis.

Housing Improvement Program (HIP)

Christine Luebben informed the committee that advertisements for contractors for the HIP program had been posted in the newspaper, the City website, social media, and hardware stores. As of the May 11, 2020 deadline, the City had not received any bids and several contractors who typically submit estimates for the HIP program reached out to indicate that they are too busy to take on additional jobs at this time. The City will continue to do outreach to new contractors and work directly with paint distributors to attempt to find available painting contractors. A second round of bid solicitation will take place in June.

Christine Luebben also updated the committee that she received her Lead Safe Renovator Certification in March to assist with supervision and training as needed for contractors working on HIP projects which may include lead paint. It is currently a requirement of any contractors placing bids for paint projects that they provide proof that they also have their Lead Safe Renovator Certification.

Megan McBride updated the committee that this time is being used to identify additional funding sources to support the HIP program. Chelsea List, who is interning in the Planning Department, is working on a budget summary from 2015-present which can be shared with potential grantors and donors in the future to clearly demonstrate impact and need for the program.

Community Development Block Grant Revolving Loan Fund (CDBG-RLF)

Megan McBride updated the committee that Northwest Regional Planning Commission was not doing inspections at this time out of safety related to the COVID-19 public health crisis. A pre-scheduled advertisement of available funds was released on Facebook, which has generated additional contacts and potential applicants. Once inspections are taking place again, an additional advertisement will go out on social media and in the newspaper to get the word out about the program. Information on the CDBG program as well as HIP is also being sent with property maintenance letters as applicable.

b) Update on ordinance amendments related to ADU's

Megan McBride updated the committee that the recommended revisions to the City's Unified Development Ordinance related to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's) had been postponed due to cancelled meetings related to COVID-19. This item will be placed on the next Plan Commission meeting for review and approval, followed by approval by City Council.

4) New Business

a) Discuss 2020 tangible goal for addressing housing needs through public-private partnership

Mayor Lewis explained that the committee has had a number of conversations to strategize about short- and long-term steps for addressing homelessness in Ashland. She requested that the committee focus on identifying one tangible goal based on resources the City currently possesses and potential community partnerships. She noted that one major asset the City currently owns to help facilitate needed types of housing development is land.

Megan McBride updated the committee that after thoroughly reviewing all City-owned land, the City does not own small or irregular pieces of land that would be available for housing development. This would be the case even if setbacks and minimum lot sizes were reduced to incentivize tiny home development. The majority of smaller lots owned by the City either have legal restrictions prohibiting development, or are located along the ravine and therefore have too steep of slopes to be available for housing development. However, the City's Public Works Department has the ability to demolish homes to support strategic demolition efforts identified in the City's Comprehensive Plan and Strategic Housing Plan. Funding was approved in the Planning & Development Department budget in the amount of \$3,500 in 2020 to assist with strategic demolition activities. These 1-2 demolition projects which the budget could support in

2020 are still being identified, but create an opportunity to facilitate new infill housing. Megan McBride will bring updates to the committee on this as more details are determined.

Mayor Lewis informed the committee that she had been contacted by a developer who has experience in constructing and managing affordable housing and has interest in developing in Ashland. Mayor Lewis and Megan McBride will be following up with this individual to learn more about what they would be interested in doing in Ashland and identify what City-owned land could best support this.

b) Review and discuss future RFP for housing on City-owned Timeless Timber site

Megan McBride explained that the City will be soliciting proposals for residential redevelopment of the southern ~22.5 acres of the Timeless Timber site (2200 Lake Shore Dr E) in 2020 with anticipated construction in 2021. Wetland delineation of the site took place in 2019, and it was determined that all wetlands on site were created as a result of the demolition process. Exemption of these human-made wetlands from wetland mitigation standards has been requested and approved by the Wisconsin DNR, and the City is awaiting approval from the Army Corps of Engineers. Once both approvals are secured, the City will be ready to release the Request for Proposals and development costs will be significantly reduced as a result of the wetland exemption approvals.

Recommendations by the Committee for goals that should be included in the 2020 Request for Proposals for residential development of the Timeless Timber site included:

- Providing options for affordable home ownership to help young families and first-time homebuyers stay in the community and begin to build wealth in this way;
- Facilitating a mix of different housing styles (i.e. townhomes styles, traditional multi-family, tiny homes, etc.) to help diversify Ashland's housing options for a variety of age and income ranges;
- Creating additional housing to support identified community needs, including housing that is attractive and accessible to seniors, quality new-build rental housing, supportive housing or housing that includes some level of services; and
- Encouraging housing development that is compatible with and takes advantage of the surrounding amenities including the adjacent pedestrian trail, nearby St. Luke's Clinic, public transit access, existing stream on the east side of the property, and future anticipated commercial development just north of the residential redevelopment site.

Follow-up actions based on this will be:

- Megan McBride will reach out to Impact 7 to determine their interest and ability to partner on housing development on the Timeless Timber site. In past discussions, Impact 7 indicated that they do not have the capability to be the developer or provide financing for a Community Land Trust (CLT). She will discuss their ability and interest in partnering on an alternative type of housing development that still meets identified community needs;
- Mayor Lewis will reach out to Becki Schillinger with Northwest Wisconsin Community Service Agency (NWCSA) to discuss their needs and capacity to partner on a housing development project as well; and

- Megan McBride will write a draft Request for Proposals based on the Housing Committee's feedback, and will bring this to the next meeting for review and feedback.

- c) Set next meeting date and discuss possible agenda items
Mayor Lewis asked the group if the current meeting time of 8:30am on the second Wednesday of each month.

Ana Tochtermann requested that the meeting be moved up to take place at 8:00am.

After discussion, the committee agreed that Housing Committee meetings starting in June will take place at 8:00am.

5) **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn by Eric Lindell. Seconded by Megan McBride. Unanimously approved.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:43 am. Minutes done by Megan McBride and Lucas Phillips.