

City of Ashland - Housing Committee Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Ashland Housing Committee was held on **Wednesday, June 10, 2020 at 8:00 a.m. via GoTo Meetings**).

Committee Members Present: Sam Ray, Ana Tochtermann, Kathy Beeksma, Eric Lindell, Kaas Baichtal, Liz Franek, and Megan McBride

Committee Members Absent: N/A

Staff Present: Chris Luebben, Mayor Lewis

Mayor Lewis opened the meeting at 8:06 a.m.

Agenda

1) Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda by Liz Franek. Seconded by Eric Lindell. Passed unanimously.

2) a.) Approve minutes from the May 13th, 2020 Housing Committee meeting

Motion to approve minutes from May 13th, 2020 Housing Committee meeting by Eric Lindell, seconded by Liz Franek. Passed unanimously.

3) Citizen Comments

None.

4) Old business

a) Updates on property maintenance, HIP and CDBG

Chris Luebben provided updates on the process of property maintenance and noted that the only types of property maintenance cases she is currently following up on are those involving junk and garbage in yards, and posting door hangers where grass needs to be cut and weeds eliminated.

Megan McBride provided updates on the City's CDBG Revolving Loan Fund, informing the committee that there are currently four (4) projects which have either completed or scheduled inspections and will be moving forward. Northwest Regional Planning Commission recently posted an advertisement for the program in both the Ashland Daily Press and on social media.

b) Discussion of Request for Proposals (RFP) for housing development on the City-owned Timeless Timber site

Megan McBride presented the updated project goals based on feedback from the previous meeting. The main point of discussion was if the Request for Proposals should solicit housing to provide rentals, affordable single-family homeownership opportunities, or a mixture as was presented in the current RFP draft.

Mayor Deb Lewis proposed the Housing Committee take time to review. She asked what the timeline would be for releasing the RFP.

Megan McBride explained that wetland delineation had taken place on the site in 2019 to identify any wetlands present. It was determined by the firm that completed the delineation that all identified wetlands were a result of the construction activities on-site, and therefore exempt from wetland mitigation requirements. Exemption requests have been filed with the WI Department of Natural Resources and Army Corps of Engineers, and approval has been obtained from the DNR to date. Once approval is received from Army Corps, this will improve the marketability of the site by reducing overall development costs by tens of thousands of dollars. At that time, the RFP will be ready for release. Megan McBride will bring back the draft RFP for final approval at the next Housing Committee meeting.

Mayor Deb Lewis discussed the need for supportive housing, and reaching out to Becki Schillinger with Northwest Wisconsin Community Service Agency (NWCSA) to discuss this.

5) New business

- a) Discussed request to relieve Jill Spagnolo of her responsibility to CDBG-RLF debt
Megan McBride explained that a request had been brought forward from Jill Spagnolo to have her name removed from a CDBG loan for a property she previously co-owned with the other party on the existing loan. She had not lived at the property for six (6) years, and the other person on the loan qualified per CDBG requirements and had communicated in writing to the City the willingness to take on full responsibility for the outstanding loan.

Motion made by Eric Lindell to approve request, seconded by Ana Tochtermann. Passed unanimously.
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- b) Discussed providing hotel vouchers for at-risk individuals related to COVID-19.
Megan McBride explained that the Wisconsin Department of Administration has announced the "Routes to Recovery" grant program which provides community allocations, scaled to population, for all cities and counties in the state. Reimbursement requests can be submitted for expenses incurred through October 31, 2020. An eligible category for reimbursement is costs incurred providing hotel vouchers to infected or high risk individuals to self-isolate. This is obviously not a long-term solution to the City's housing needs, but McBride requested feedback from the committee on the need, feasibility, and general desire to further explore this opportunity.

Questions and concerns that were raised included:

- Who will determine when a person needs to be isolated, and for how long?
- Who would directly administer the program?
- How would basic needs such as grocery shopping be met for individuals who receive vouchers to self-isolate?

Follow-up actions suggested included:

- Reaching out to Ashland County Health, who would need to be involved in setting policy, determining criteria for people receiving vouchers, and possibly administering the program; and
- Reaching out to other organizations such as NWCSA and The BRICK to assess needs, receive feedback, and potentially establish partnerships.

- c) Set next meeting date
The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, July 8, 2020 at 8:00 am.
[Meeting was rescheduled to July 15, 2020 at 8:00am.]

6) Announcements
None.

7) Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Eric Lindell. Seconded by Sam Ray. Passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:10 am. Minutes by Chris Luebben.