

City of Ashland - Housing Committee Meeting Notice

A meeting of the Ashland Housing Committee will be held on **Wednesday February 10th, 2021 at 8:00 a.m. via GoTo Meetings.**

Please join the meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone at <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/655112853>. You can also dial in using your phone at United States (Toll Free): [1 866 899 4679](tel:18668994679) using access code: 655-112-853.

Agenda

- 1) Consent Agenda
- 2) Approval of minutes from the January 13, 2021 Housing Committee meeting
- 3) Citizen Comments
- 4) Old Business
 - a) Update on progress with CDBG, HIP and property maintenance
 - b) Updates and discussion regarding Task Force to address homelessness
 - c) Review and recommendation of revisions to Housing Strategic Plan
- 5) New Business
 - a) Updates and discussion on public input related to Timeless Timber site residential development proposal
- 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.

The City of Ashland does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or provision of services, programs or activities.

NOTE: Upon reasonable notice, the City of Ashland will accommodate the needs of disabled individuals through auxiliary aids or services. For additional information or to request this service, contact Megan McBride at (715) 682-7041.

City of Ashland - Housing Committee Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Ashland Housing Committee was held on **Wednesday, January 13, 2021 at 8:00 a.m. via GoTo Meetings.**

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

Committee Members Absent: Eric Lindell

Staff Present: Chris Luebben, Mayor Lewis

Citizens Present: Millie Rounsville

Mayor Lewis opened the meeting at 8:00 a.m.

Agenda

1) Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda by Elizabeth Franek. Seconded by Kaas Baichtal. Passed unanimously.

2) a.) Approve minutes from the December 9, 2020 Housing Committee meeting

Motion to approve minutes from December 9, 2020 Housing Committee meeting.
Motion made by Sam Ray, seconded by Kaas Baichtal. Passed unanimously.

3) Citizen Comments

None.

4) Old business

a) Updates on progress with CDBG, HIP, and property maintenance

Megan McBride noted that there were 11 new CDBG Housing loan applications and one down payment assistance project in 2020.

Megan McBride updated the committee that she will be submitting an application to the Chequamegon Food Co-op to have HIP be one of their Round Up partners for a month later in 2021. If selected, this is anticipated to raise between \$800- 1,200 to support future HIP projects.

Chris Luebben reported that there are currently 32 active HIP applications. She will continue to work to identify contractors to ensure projects will move forward in the spring.

b) Review and revision of City Housing Plan: Part 2 (Need: Increase Affordability and Expand Affordable Housing Units for All Income Groups)

Megan McBride moved several completed items to the “Completed” section of the Strategic Plan document. Based on the City’s 2020 acceptance into the Wisconsin Main Street Program, McBride recommended adding the following two (2) action items to the plan:

1. Complete a downtown housing study with Wisconsin Economic Development Corp. as one of the City’s free technical assistance projects.
2. Explore potential funding sources for a Downtown Building Improvement RLF or Grant Program to support build out of new residential units in downtown projects.

Kaas Baichtal noted that construction of new downtown housing can be cost prohibitive to bring historic buildings up to code and meet accessibility requirements.

Ana Tochtermann commented that there are other benefits to rehabilitating downtown buildings for housing, including historic preservation as well as the vibrancy and economic vitality that additional downtown density brings.

Discussion of *E. 3. Hold public listening sessions to gauge housing interest and needs of various populations.* Millie Rounsville, Director of Northwest Wisconsin Community Service Agency, commented that community education is needed and could be incorporated through this process as well.

Millie Rounsville commented that CARES money can be used for renovation. She explained that she has been speaking with the owner of a private residence which was damaged by fire this past winter. This is a small single-family home, and NWCSA would potentially like to convert it into a warming shelter. She will work with the Planning & Development Director to discuss the zoning to see if this would be feasible. If so, she emphasized that COVID-19 precautions and planning will be especially important for any future use.

Mayor Deb Lewis noted that the topic of warming shelters and other needs to address homelessness is an important community concern which the Housing Committee simply does not have the capacity to adequately address given the many other housing needs which also need attention. She will be proposing the creation of a Task Force to address homelessness at the upcoming City Council meeting, and updates about Task Force activities will be provided to the Housing Committee. She will also likely reach out to one or more Housing Committee member(s) to serve on this Task Force.

Housing Committee members were very supportive of starting a Task Force to address homelessness in Ashland.

5) New business

- a) Discussion of potential Unified Development Ordinance amendments related to transitional/emergency housing in light industrial zoning districts

Megan McBride told the committee that she met with Rich Larson and Carla Ward, representatives of Crossroads Outreach Human Services, at the end of 2020 to discuss their hopes for their existing building at 3600 Ellis Avenue. The building currently consists of light manufacturing space, which works with their rehabilitation program to

provide skills training and interim employment for participants. They would like to add a residential component to their building, to better support people first entering their program who would be able to both live and work in this supportive environment.

Mayor Lewis asked what the building is currently zoned, and what changes would be needed to facilitate this use.

Megan McBride stated that the property is zoned Light Industrial (LI), and the best way to allow this mix of uses would likely be through a text amendment to the City's Unified Development Ordinance to allow for emergency residential facilities in industrial districts. Another notable property which would be impacted by this would be the former New Day Shelter building, which currently is a nonconforming use and therefore could not be used as an emergency residential facility if the use were to lapse for more than twelve (12) months.

Sam Ray agreed that finding emergency residential units is very difficult in Ashland, so she would support exploring zoning changes to expand these options.

The committee supported McBride taking action to work with Center on WI Strategies staff to explore the health implications of allowing emergency residential facilities in industrial districts as part of the City's Health in All Policies project.

6) Announcements

a) Updates on Healthy Neighborhoods project and partnership with Northland College

Megan McBride updated the committee that she is working with professor Nicole Foster in the Sustainable Community Development department at Northland College to develop a pilot Healthy Neighborhoods project. The details are still being worked out, but the project will identify one neighborhood to engage around interests, neighborhood assets, and initiatives which could improve quality of life for residents. McBride will provide additional updates about this project as details are identified.

7) Adjournment

Next meeting scheduled for February 10, 2021 at 8:00 am.

Motion to adjourn made by Sam Ray, seconded by Kaas Baichtal. Passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:22 am. Minutes by Chris Luebben and Megan McBride.

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
Updated: ____, 2020**

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 ACTIONS

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
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	2019
Research procedures and funding sources for strategic demolition	2, 3	2019-2020
Evaluate feasibility and need for the City to allocate funds for strategic demolition	2, 3	Budgeted funds in 2019 and 2020. May utilize CDBG RLF funds in 2021.

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	March 2020
Continue public investment in the HIP program	5	2019; 2020
Have Historic Preservation Commission submit a listing of historic buildings that could be renovated into housing	1	February 2020
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	Ongoing as needed, initiated in 2019
Resources (funds for rehab, resources for tenants)	5	November 2019: Landlord/Tenant Resource Page of City website; Periodic emails to landlord emails on resources
A. Continue public investment in rehab	5	Ongoing
1. HIP program	5	Ongoing
2. CDBG Loans	5	Ongoing
a. ID projects	5	Ongoing
b. Promote program	5	Ongoing
B. Collaborate with other regional municipalities to maximize available tax incentives for affordable housing projects	1	Regional affordable housing study in 2020-2021
1. Get email contacts for easier communication	4	Ongoing: Send out periodic emails about resources for both landlords and tenants

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	Ongoing
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	Planning Department, City Council	2022
1. Develop clear guidelines including proposed inspection checklist to start a pilot program with a small number of landlords	4, 5	Planning Department	Fall 2021
2. Develop clear marketing materials with benefits and requirements of the program clearly identified	4, 5	Planning Department	2022
3. Identify subset of landlords to participate in pilot program	4, 5	Planning Department	2022
C. Continue efforts to engage landlords and tenants	4, 5	Planning Department	Long term/Ongoing
2. Compile a list of information needs and resources to post online for both landlords and tenants	NA	Planning Department, Online resource hub, Surveys	2022

a. Substance use and behavioral health (basics, how to recognize an emerging crisis, who to call)	NA	Planning Department, Online resource hub, Landlord Forums	2022
b. Support for posting rentals online	NA	Planning Department, Online resource hub, Landlord Forums	2022
Non-Rental Residential			
A. Continue public investment in rehab	5	Multiple agencies	Ongoing
3. HIP program	5	Planning Department	Ongoing
4. CDBG Loans	5	NWRPC	Ongoing
c. ID projects	5	NWRPC	Ongoing
d. 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 Tochtermann	Ongoing
D. Implement Strategic Demolition Program	2, 3	Housing Committee, Planning Department	Ongoing as needed

1. Inventory potential candidates for strategic demolition. Contacts could be made through direct outreach to these property owners, and/or advertising that City is willing to take on properties for strategic demo	2, 3	Planning Department	Ongoing
2. Utilize CDBG RLF funds for strategic acquisition and demolition of dilapidated structures	2, 3	Planning Department, Housing Committee, NWRPC	Ongoing
NEED: INCREASE AFFORDABILITY AND EXPAND AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS FOR ALL INCOME GROUPS			
A. Promote rehabilitation of historic existing buildings for housing purposes	1	Planning Commission, WEDC	2022
1. Complete a downtown housing study with Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation as one of the City's free technical assistance projects	1	Main Street Board, WEDC	2022
2. Explore potential funding sources for a Downtown Building Improvement RLF or Grant Program to support buildout of new residential units in downtown buildings	1	Main Street Manager, Planning Department, City Administrator	2023
B. Collaborate with other regional municipalities to maximize available tax incentives for affordable housing projects	1	Planning Department City Council	Ongoing
C. 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	Beaser Avenue site, Oredock Upland sites

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)
D. 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	Ongoing as projects arise
2. ID partners interested in pursuing a co-op housing project	1	Councilor Tochtermann	Ongoing
NEED: ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS/INADEQUATE SUPPORTIVE 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 - Rapid rehousing - 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 (i.e. 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	2021
1. Publicize funding streams and obtain clear criteria for each funding source	NA	Planning Department, NWCSA	2021
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)