



Housing Committee

Wednesday, July 12, 2023

City Hall Council Chambers – 601 Main St W. Ashland, WI 54806

9:30 AM

Take notice that a meeting of the Housing Committee will be held in- person in the City Hall Council Chambers, with the availability to attend virtually.

To join the meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone: <https://meet.goto.com/157765245>. Or dial in using your phone. United States (Toll Free): 1 866 899 4679 Access Code: 157-765-245

The following items will be considered:

1. Approval of Agenda

2. Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of minutes from the June 14th, 2023 Housing Committee Meeting

3. Citizen Comments

4. Old Business

- a. Update on progress with CDBG, HIP, and Property Maintenance

5. New Business

- a. Foreclosures - Discussion
- b. Vacant Properties - Discussion
- c. Rooming Houses - Discussion
- d. Main Street Housing - Discussion
- e. Empty Buildable Lots - Discussion

6. Announcements

7. Future Agenda Items

8. Adjournment

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City of Ashland - Housing Committee Meeting Minutes

The City of Ashland Housing Committee will be holding its Wednesday June 14th, 2023 meeting at 9:30am in the City Hall Council Chamber and via GoTo Meetings.

The meeting can be accessed using a computer, tablet or smartphone using the link <https://meet.goto.com/157765245>. The meeting can also be accessed by phone at 1-866-899-4679 using access code: 157-765-245.

Present: Tom Buzze, Charlie Ortman, Matt Mackenzie, Kaas Baichtal, Steven Wiley, Ray Kallio, Kelly Westlund

Absent: Priscilla Neiman

Agenda

- 1) Agenda Approval
Mayor Mackenzie called the meeting to order at 9:54 am and asked for approval of the agenda. Ortman and Baichtal seconded. Motion carried.
- 2) Election of Vice-Chairperson
Mayor Mackenzie explained that the Mayor chairs the committee. He stated that he was not a part of the committee originally. He would be willing to step aside if it makes sense and the committee can have that discussion. His intent is to sway things towards getting more housing with the committee. Ortman believed the Mayor should be the chair as the Mayor has access to various people and is the perfect choice. Baichtal nominated Ortman. Ortman asked if Buzzi or Baichtal were interested. Buzzi explained that he would like to have a better grasp first. Mackenzie made a motion to nominate Ortman as Vice-Chairperson and Baichtal seconded. Ortman was concerned about getting proper housing. He stated that people need homes regardless of who they are. We have people who are wandering and it creates problems by ignoring them. He accepted the nomination for Vice-Chairperson. Motion carried.
- 3) Consent Agenda
 - a) Approval of minutes from the October 12, 2022 Housing Committee meeting
Ortman moved to approve the minutes as written and Mackenzie seconded. Motion carried.
- 4) Citizen Comments
Baichtal had an update on the Homelessness Task force. It became a regular citizen group after it was done as a Mayoral task force. It seems to be settling out towards connecting more people with the Warming Shelter at Bad River. It is generally underused. Some things noticed by the Brick and others were that a person did not have to be a tribal member. People could not get in there drunk and they provided bus service to get back to town. They coordinate with the Sheriff, BART, and others. More people should be able to go there. A staffperson will provide the task force with a copy of the rules so the task force can include that information with the bus pass. The staffperson is involved with the task force so will be showing up every month. At one point the shelter was in an administrative building so they were using offices for the shelter. It was then in a trailer. Since the numbers were so low it worked. The

plan was to get back in the office building and have the trailer for single people and have the offices for families. There is a big difference in what the tribe is allowed to do versus what Millie Rounsville is allowed to do. The tribe can serve some people that could not be served at the homeless shelter. For example, if people have some recent histories that would keep them out of the homeless shelter the tribe may still be able to help them.

Kelly Westlund introduced herself and explained that she is a homeowner in Ashland and bought a home in 2009. She went through the CDBG program at the time and has been working on her home since buying it. She is also the Housing educator for Bayfield County. She applied to join the committee and thanked the committee for the work they do. Baichtal asked her if she was rehabilitating her home for her own use. Ms. Westlund explained that she was.

5) Old Business

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

Mr. Kallio provided an update. He explained that he was using HIP money for property clean up and for some repairs including having a couple doors replaced on an older lady's house. He has not had a lot of HIP applications come in. He stated that he was working on garbage clean up and enforcement for garbage and lawns. People have usually called saying they were waiting for lawnmower repairs. If a property owner did not mow a lawn staff sends letters before fining them and/or mowing it themselves.

Baichtal mentioned the need to leave the utilities on during the winter. Mackenzie suggested including this on a future agenda as demolition by neglect. He suggested looking at recommending an ordinance that requires minimum heating and if they are not an explanation of why not.

Mackenzie asked Mr. Kallio for an introduction. Mr. Kallio provided an introduction and explained that he grew up here and previously worked for BART as a bus driver and office worker. People can find him on the city website.

Ortman asked if Mr. Kallio kept track of foreclosures. Mr. Kallio answered that he did not and that it would be challenging without a property maintenance issue. Ortman stated that the City should track this if possible. Baichtal stated that foreclosure is a legal action and that there is a way to search CCAP for foreclosures and evictions in a way that is not available to the general public. It uses the same database as CCAP. Ortman has driven by probably 15 properties that are vacant. Wiley mentioned sheriff foreclosure lists that the City could obtain from the County. Baichtal mentioned that there have not been many auctions and many of the properties have been going to short sale before auction. Buzzi explained that this is a step before foreclosure. Mackenzie suggested putting foreclosures on as a topic for our next meeting as a discussion item.

6) New Business

a) Discussion/Action – Structure, Membership, and Goals of the Committee –

Mackenzie explained wanting to have a discussion prior to making another appointment. The Committee had renter and Plan Commission positions open. The Committee could increase its size with non-voting members. Baichtal just started coming to all the meetings and that is how she joined. Mackenzie asked

for input. Ortman suggested jumping on Ms. Westlund's desire to join. He wanted everyone there who wants to come. He stated that the Committee can let anyone who wants to come to speak. Baichtal agreed that anyone who took time to volunteer should be used. She stated that it was not possible to find a renter someone who advocated for renters would be good. Maybe a developer would be beneficial. Members should be someone who does not work for the City. The Brick or others help people in ways to prevent them from being evicted. The Housing Authority did Section 8 stuff and was familiar. There were more vouchers than there were places for people to rent. Baichtal explained that landlords are by definition technically adversarial to the tenant. For the last house she rented she got 11 applications all of which were qualified. For the last apartment she received 20 applications where half were qualified. Mayor Mackenzie mentioned that there could be ex-officio members who could attend as possible but would not be held against quorum if they could not attend. He stated that he did not want to commit to someone related to the City for the renter spot. He suggested looking for a regular renter but also an activist who is willing to be involved. Ortman was supportive of this. If Committee members have people they are thinking of reach out to Mayor Mackenzie or Ortman and discussion could continue at the next meeting. Baichtal mentioned an unfortunate incident at an early Homelessness Task Force meeting where she was harassed by an activist. Mayor Mackenzie mentioned that the Committee is nonpartisan.

b) Update on Beaser Avenue and Junction Road Sites

Wiley provided an update. Ortman asked if TIF assistance was a dealbreaker for developers. Wiley explained that in many cases it was. Baichtal mentioned that a low infrastructure way to help out with low income housing is to create a license for rooming houses. Rooming houses are rented by the bedroom but share the same kitchen and bathroom. She stated that it was frustrating that they were not legal in Ashland. Landlords could rent to students by the room. This was in action before. Baichtal asked for the rooming house item to be a future agenda item. The list of future agenda items included foreclosures, empty houses, the rooming house item, housing on Main St., empty buildable lots (city lots), and identifying development areas. The Committee wanted a map of city parcels including the railroad ROWs the City is dealing with.

c) Update on Timeless Timber redevelopment

Committee members asked if the staff for the new development were taking applications. Wiley answered that he was not sure. Mayor Mackenzie asked Wiley to follow up. Buzzi asked how many units were in the new development. Wiley answered that there were 50 units.

7) Announcements

Mayor Mackenzie asked if certain days/times do not work for people. Baichtal answered that afternoons were bad. Mornings work for Baichtal and Buzzi and if need be the start time could push back to 10:30.

8) Adjournment

Ortman motioned and Baichtal seconded. The meeting adjourned at 10:58 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Steven Wiley
Planning and Development Director