

Minutes

Wednesday, January 27, 2016 - 3:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers, 125 E. Avenue B

Housing Commission

City of Hutchinson, Kansas

1) CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL

The following members were present: Greg Binns, Kevin Bleything, Richard Greever, Luke McConaughy, Lisa Gleason, Anthony Finlay, Scott Cooley, Ron Fisher, Dan Rich, and Sue Poltera. Shelley Kiblinger, Aubrey Patterson, Mark Clark, and Dianna Hart were absent. Steve Dechant, City Councilmember; and Mark Eaton, Land Bank, were also in attendance. Staff in attendance were Jana McCarron, Director of Planning and Development; Amy Denker, Housing Program Coordinator; and Charlene Mosier, Planning Technician.

2) APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the December 16, 2015 meeting were approved on a motion by Greever, seconded by Finlay, passed unanimously.

3) ANNOUNCEMENTS

3a. McCarron said the Planning Department is currently recruiting for an associate planner position.

4) ELECTION OF 2016 OFFICERS

4a. Finlay made a motion that Poltera be nominated for another year as the Chair of the Housing Commission. The motion was seconded by Binns and passed unanimously by acclamation.

Gleason made a motion that Finlay continues to serve as Vice-Chair. The motion was seconded by Cooley and passed unanimously by acclamation.

5) UPDATES

5b. Avenue A CDBG

Denker said four new housing contracts have been received for approval. We now have 17 of the needed 18 houses for the grant and five of the six required rental houses needed for the grant. April is the deadline to get a contract for the remaining needed house. The average house receives \$23,000 for rehabilitation. There were many homes that could not be approved because they were too large and would cost too much to be repaired with this program.

5b. Rental Registration and Inspection Program

McCarron updated the group on the RRIP Program. There have been 1100 units registered and 800 exceptions. There are approximately 4000 units left to register with a deadline date of March 31, 2016. On March 1, reminder invoice letters will be mailed out. On-line registrations are currently at 18% and most have been coming in person. Invoices can also be mailed in. The inspections have been going well.

Greever commented he did not think there should be that many exemptions. McCarron said the affidavits are signed documents and at this point we take their word. Exemptions may also need to be updated every year.

Gleason commented we are still working out all the components of the program but we have a good start.

5c. Avenue G Test Build

Ron Fisher, Interfaith Housing Services, said the two foundations at the Avenue G and Maple St. location are completed and the modular homes are being built now. They will be ready to be moved onto the foundations by mid-February. Patios will be poured that are ADA accessible and sidewalks will be constructed for access to the driveway.

McCarron said the Housing Commission could tour the homes after the meeting in February.

Fisher shared with the commission a strategic collaboration effort in Wichita with Habitat for Humanity. An area on 13th to the east of I35 was selected for homes in decline to be demolished and new homes constructed for families that are prequalified. This is an example of infill development and targeting a neighborhood for positive impact. Fisher asked who would be interested in going with him on February 3 to look at this project. Dechant, McCarron, Denker, and Poltera said they would be willing to go.

5d. Hutchinson Healthy Neighborhood Initiative

Denker said neighborhood meetings with the Graber School Neighborhood and the Avenue A School Neighborhood were held with Michael Schubert. NeighborWorks and Hutchinson Community Foundation grants have made these meetings with Mr. Schubert possible. The Graber School group met at the Cosmosphere and discussed ideas to keep the neighborhood filled with homeowners rather than investors. One idea was to invite friends and family to open houses when they come up for sale as a way of “picking neighbors”. They also discussed ideas for naming the area and volunteers were assigned to various duties. Finlay said the group was engaged and he thought there were good ideas with a sense of commitment from the residents.

Gleason said 22 residents attended the Avenue A group meeting and there were a number of good suggestions. She would like to see a stronger confidence factor especially with residents volunteering. They are interested in beautification, cleanup, safety, and a “coffee on the porch” type of get together. They believe the school in their neighborhood continuing to stay open is a positive for this area.

McCarron said Mr. Schubert mentioned housing is not always the problem but the neighborhood has concerns that can be a problem and this becomes a marketing issue. Mr. Schubert asked about a housing policy and the best strategies to improve the market of the neighborhood. The work of the neighborhood ultimately needs to be done by the residents.

Bleything said one idea is to identify members of a neighborhood that are the “spark plugs” and give others an incentive to participate and become involved in their neighborhood.

Fisher said he is working in the Lincoln area with a completely different approach as there has been little participation. He does not call a “meeting” but calls a get together for a meal or coffee as just a “visit” to build neighborhood trust and get acquainted. Elmdale is a good place for them to meet. There are also addiction issues that add to the lack of confidence and trust.

Gleason said last year the Avenue A neighborhood picnic and carnival was very successful in brining neighbors out and getting to know each other in a fun, no stress setting. Binns agreed that groups can do sport activities or games that have no real expense; however, sometimes the residents may just need to be asked to participate.

5e. Dodge City Housing Website

Denker said that she and McCarron had a conference call with the Dodge City Development Corporation to discuss the Dodge City housing website. Denker said the Dodge City website was originally developed to market Dodge City with items included such as jobs, homes for sales, rentals available, community information, and was designed to be a one-stop shop for housing information. The City Council has an initiative fund of \$70,000 and we could apply these funds toward the website development for Hutchinson. Request for Proposals would be sent and the City Council would approve who is chosen.

Bleything said he knows someone who may be interested in doing the website.

6f. Rural Housing Incentive District Approval

McCarron said the State has approved Resolution 1 and the Rural Housing Incentive District Policy will be on the City Council agenda for February 2, 2016.

6) NEW BUSINESS

6a. 2015 Annual Reports

McCarron reviewed the 2015 Annual Report for the Planning & Development Department and pointed out the customer contact chart which showed the number of calls, walk-in customers and emails that are handled by staff on a monthly basis. She gave an overview of housing projects including grants, Brush Up Hutch, and Land Bank progress. The Land Bank purchased seven properties of which four have been put back into use.

CitizenServe is a new software that is being implemented for building permits, the Rental Registration and Inspection Program, and code enforcement. This should be up and running completely by June. McCarron said this year we have also switched to electronic packets instead of mailing the paper packets.

7) OLD BUSINESS

7a. The group was asked to consider the 2016 Residential Rehabilitation Loan Program, a loan for rehabilitation of homes for three years by Interfaith Housing Services. This is a \$50,000 forgivable loan designed for a target area south of 11th Avenue. Reports would be given to the Housing Commission and accountability reports listing the electrical, plumbing and HVAC work and dollar amounts done for each home.

Bleything said Interfaith Housing has the experience to use the money wisely and it will put unlivable homes back on the tax roll.

A motion by Binns, seconded by Greever to approve the 2016 Residential Rehabilitation Loan Program for Interfaith Housing Services for a \$50,000 forgivable loan with detailed reports to be given to the Housing Commission on the homes repaired, passed with unanimous vote.

7b. Non-Profit Exemption Discussion for RRIP

The commission discussed exempting non-profits and federally subsidized housing units from the RRIP program. HUD does inspections; however, it is a different type of inspection than the City is conducting. With approximately 1000 subsidized units, \$25,000 would have to come out of the general fund to support the RRIP program or the \$25 fee would have to be raised.

Greever pointed out that HUD gets tax dollars already. Cooley commented that a six year exemption for new construction could be considered but the \$25 fee should still be paid. He believes that this program has been approved and is under way and we should not be changing the regulations at this point.

It was the consensus of the commission to not exempt any subsidized housing rental units from the RRIP program.

The City Council will review this topic on February 16, 2016.

8) OTHER

8b. The next Housing Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 24, 2016 at 3:00 p.m.

9) ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Charlene Mosier