

1. ROLL CALL

The Housing Commission meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. with the following members calling in via Zoom conference call: Angie Davenport, Marvin Mast, Kelly Anne Lanham, Nathan DeBerry, Aubrey Patterson, Jeff Thomson, and Lisa Gleason. Roy Little, Ryan Patton, Lucas Soltow, and Dan Rich were absent. Adam Stewart, Neighborhood Coordinator and Steve Dechant were also in attendance. Staff present were Ryan Hvitløk, Director of Planning and Development; Jim Seitnater; Downtown and Housing Coordinator; and Charlene Mosier, Planning Technician; and City Manager Jeff Cantrell.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the March 25, 2020 meeting were approved on a motion by DeBerry, seconded by Davenport, passed unanimously.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS – Hvitløk introduced and welcomed new City Manager, Jeff Cantrell.

4. WRITTEN REPORTS

a. **March and April 2020 Housing Dashboard**

The Housing Dashboard report was included in the agenda packet. Hvitløk said inspections and violations have slowed during the pandemic. There have been approximately 300 violations this year. There was one new residential permit in March and five new residential permits in April. There have been eight Brush Up Hutch applications to date.

5. ORAL REPORTS

a. **Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative**

Stewart said he is conducting neighborhood interviews for the area between 11th and 17th Avenues and Main St. to Monroe St. The Grace Arbor neighborhood cleanup has been rescheduled. There will be a yard waste drop-off site utilizing a roll-off container that will be located at the Salvation Army property. The Creekside neighborhood is working on a project in Bernard White Park to remove old wire fencing and replace with decorative fencing. Neighborhood newsletters have been sent out. A grant from AARP has been applied for to help train neighborhood organizations in problem solving and working with local governments. We should hear back about this grant in July.

b. **Hutchinson Land Bank**

Seitnater explained there is interest in six of the ten advertised Land Bank properties. The next Land Bank meeting is June 2.

c. **CDBG Housing Rehabilitation Grant Update**

Hvitløk said staff and SCKEDD are working on the Housing Rehabilitation Grant. The City Council has approved the housing rehab plan and guidelines. A Zoom meeting is planned in June with SCKEDD to solicit contractors.

d. Federal Home Loan Bank Grant

Hvitløk said City Council directed staff to move forward on a contract with SCKEDD to write the grant to the Federal Home Loan Bank. The grant is for up to \$500,000 to repair approximately 50 homes. SCKEDD will be the contact for writing the grant. The city Council will consider approval on June 4 and we hope to hear back in December.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Effect of COVID-19 Pandemic on Landlords and Tenants

Gleason said there is concern of how the pandemic is affecting our community, specifically landlords and tenants. Hvitløk said unemployment is a major issue now and he included informational charts on unemployment statistics in Kansas. There is a 700% increase in unemployment since last year. There were about 2,100 residents of Reno County receiving unemployment in April, 2020. The concern is these residents will not be paying rent and the moratorium on evictions is scheduled to expire May 31, 2020. Non-profits, Reno County and City of Hutchinson will have stressed budgets. Hutchinson does not receive money unless we apply for it and are awarded. The question is how to address possible increase in homelessness. One possibility is to ask local representatives to extend moratoriums. City Council is asking how inspections will handle housing violations and they want the City to work with landlords on housing code violations.

Lanham said in her rental management business, she has rented 40 units since March and this includes new people moving to town. Of the 328 units, there are only 20 units behind in rent and those had issues prior to the pandemic. It is possible this could change if the situation continues.

Gleason said she is happy to hear the inspectors are working with landlords. United Way, Chamber of Commerce and Hutchinson Community Foundation have worked with Rally Reno to assist businesses and those with financial needs for rent and utilities due to job loss.

Dechant thought speaking with legislators and collaborating with landlords are both good ideas he would like the Housing Commission to pursue. Possibly asking landlords to think about forgiving some rent payments is another option.

Lanham is appreciative of the help from United Way and Rally Reno and said there are lots of resources available to help tenants. The City could also help disseminate the information for assistance that is available.

Hvitløk said those struggling with payments now should also talk with their banks on payment plans. The City is working with residents on utility payments.

Mast said he is glad everyone is trying hard to keep up with everything. He will let others know more about Rally Reno.

Lanham said home purchasing is looking up and she is getting lots of inquiries.

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Davenport reported that mortgage rates are good now and she is busy with refinancing. Mortgage payments can be extended 3 to 4 months; however, it is easier to keep payments current each month than having to pay a big amount at one time.

Governor Kelly said there will be CDBG grants available to small businesses. The City is working with SCDEDD to get an application to apply for these funds from the Federal Government. The City has received some funds to assist with Police and Fire expenses.

7. OPEN COMMENTS

a. None.

8. OTHER

a. The next regularly scheduled Housing Commission meeting is June 24, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. The plan is to have that meeting in person at City Hall.

9. ADJOURNMENT – The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Charlene Mosier, Planning Technician

Approved this 24th day of June, 2020.



Secretary

Ryan Hvitlök, AICP, CFM - Director of Planning & Development