

1. ROLL CALL

The Housing Commission meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. with the following members present: Lisa Gleason, Lucas Soltow, Angie Davenport, Aubrey Patterson, and Dan Rich. Ryan Patton and Kelly Anne Lanham arrived at 4:00 p.m. Steve Dechant, City Councilmember, and Adam Stewart, Neighborhood Coordinator were in attendance. Nathan DeBerry and Jeff Thomson were absent. Staff present were Ryan Hvitløk, Director of Planning and Development; Jim Seitnater, Downtown and Housing Coordinator; and Charlene Mosier, Planning Technician.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the July 24, 2019 meeting were not approved as a quorum was not present at that time.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. None.

4. WRITTEN REPORTS

a. **Housing Report**

Hvitlok reviewed the YTD Housing Report that was included in the agenda packet. The goal is to have all rentals inspected by year end. There have been three new residential construction permits issued this year. There were no housing program applications in July.

5. ORAL REPORTS

a. **Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative**

Stewart said approximately 700 persons participated in the August 6 SW Bricktown, Farmington Park and Creekside neighborhood block parties. Food was served until the storm came. Residents in the Faris neighborhood are planning a cleanup on September 28 and Salvation Army will allow the use of their west parking lot for a dumpster site. Creekside will be voting on the logo for sign toppers. A neighborhood resident has come up with the designs. They will also discuss a neighborhood project. Faris residents had a meeting with Tony Finlay, Hutch Rec, Justin Combs, City Parks Director and the Salvation Army Major about possible plans for a park on the Salvation Army property.

College Grove will have their Donuts in the Driveway on Saturday, August 24. In addition, a guest from the Cosmosphere will give a presentation on astronomy.

b. **Hutchinson Land Bank Update**

Hvitløk said the Land Bank continues to work on their strategic plan. One item to explore will be the possibility of acquiring lots with homes on them in addition to vacant lots. At their next meeting, they will consider an application from an out of state applicant to purchase lots on Avenue C between Maple and Elm.

6. DISCUSSION OF RENTAL REGISTRATION AND INSPECTION POLICY

Hvitløk said the committee has been working the past few weeks to revise the Residential Rental Registration and Inspection Program to a Residential Rental Licensing and Inspection Program. A draft of the proposed licensing program was included in the agenda packet. The group also reviewed other programs in Kansas. Changing from registration to licensing gives the city a way to revoke licenses, which would be handled by the building official. The language about internal inspections would be removed. An inspector cannot go inside a home without consent. Landlords that request interior inspection of property would be incentivized by lower license fees and listed as a best practice rental on the City website or given a sign or insignia to place on their unit. There was a question about program cost. The program fees typically break even with implementation. Fees would remain the same at \$20 for single family and duplexes and \$15 for apartments on an annual basis. Information about where rental units are located is helpful to public safety officials such as the fire department.

Rich asked about Lawrence and other towns that have internal inspections. Hvitløk said they have had their program for years and it is voluntary and expected there as part of the culture. It is not incentivized.

Soltow said most towns do not have the amount of land contracts Hutchinson has and this program does not address this issue. He said the new licensing proposal is do-able, as was the previous one, but his opinion is that it will not change rentals or housing very much. He said poverty, many people with no credit and a number of landlords that should not be in the business are things this program cannot address. Soltow would rather see the \$100,000 collected spent in some other way.

Dechant said staff can develop an incentive package that could make a difference in the culture. At some point tenants may pass up the rentals that do not have a certificate. State legislation would need to be more involved with land contracts to see changes. Having an escrow agent for a land contract is best practice.

Davenport said other professions have to pay a fee to be licensed and landlords should also have to pay a license fee for their business or risk damaging their reputation.

Patterson said some slumlords will sell out and that will affect the landlord base for those that step up and meet the standards. Being a landlord is a privilege and not a right.

Davenport asked what happens if a license is revoked and renters are in the property. Hvitløk said a policy would need to be developed for that. It would be like revoking a contractor license and would be reviewed by a Board of Trades, a group that represents all the trades plus some members at-large.

The Residential Rental and Inspection Program ends this year and we need to complete our proposal soon to get notices to landlords. A joint study session will be held with the City Council to see if they would like to move forward with this.

Soltow believes the incentive is too weak for landlords to comply with licensing. There should be a greater reward for landlords that have units that are all older and need a lot of maintenance and they truly improve them than ones that manage new complexes that should be in excellent condition.

Gleason said she would like to move forward with the licensing program.

Dechant said he hopes the Housing Commission will be unified in support of a rental licensing program if they present the program to the City Council.

Motion by Patterson, seconded by Davenport to meet with the City Council for a work session on a Residential Rental Licensing and Inspection Program, passed unanimously.

Staff will schedule a study session with the City Council on Sept 10 at a time to be determined.

7. OLD BUSINESS

a. **CDBG Grant Update**

Hvitløk said Staff is completing the 2020 CDBG Grant application with the Kansas Department of Commerce for the Creekside Neighborhood area which is the area between West 5th Avenue and West 8th Avenue and Main St. to Adams St. Pre-applications have been turned in by owners and renters. The application is due to the State on August 29. We should hear the outcome in January, 2020. The grant would be for \$250,000 to rehabilitate ten homes at approximately \$25,000 each.

8. OPEN COMMENTS

- a. Staff is applying for a grant from the Community Foundation for tactical urbanism/placemaking for pilot projects in Midtown, Farmington Park, State Fair and Hyde Park.
- b. Davenport asked if applicants can apply for the zero interest loan to make repairs for earthquake damage. The consensus was it would not qualify for just damage from quakes unless it was included with other qualifying projects.

9. OTHER

- a. Lanham said a house on the northeast corner of Plum St and Avenue A is being remodeled and looks very nice with the improvements. This house appears to be a flip house. Stewart said another home being flipped is at Plum St and 7th Avenue.
- b. Rich complimented Hvitløk on tackling the RRIP program at this point in the process and handling the project well.

10. ADJOURNMENT – The meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

- a. The next regularly scheduled Housing Commission meeting is Wednesday, September 25 at 4:00 p.m.

HOUSING COMMISSION MINUTES
Meeting of: Wednesday, August 19, 2019

Respectfully Submitted,
Charlene Mosier, Planning Technician

Approved this 23rd day of October, 2019.



Secretary