

1. ROLL CALL

The Housing Commission meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. with the following members calling in via Zoom conference call: Roy Little, Ryan Patton, Steve Dechant, Kelly Anne Lanham, Angie Davenport, and Lisa Gleason. Marvin Mast, Lucas Soltow, Nathan DeBerry, Jeff Thomson and Dan Rich were absent. Adam Stewart, Neighborhood Coordinator; Julia Westfahl, SCKEDD; and Diane Crabtree, Interfaith Housing and Community Services, were also in attendance. Staff present were Ryan Hvitløk, Director of Planning and Development; Izzy Rivera, Building Official, and Charlene Mosier, Planning Technician.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the December 16, 2020 meeting were approved on a motion by Dechant, seconded by Little, passed unanimously.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. None

(Lanham arrived).

4. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- a. Chair - Dechant nominated Gleason to serve another year as Chair. The motion was seconded by Patton, passed unanimously.
- b. Vice-Chair - Motion by Davenport to nominate Patton to serve another year as Vice-Chair, was seconded by Lanham, passed unanimously.

5. WRITTEN REPORTS

a. **2020 Housing Dashboard**

Hvitløk said rental investigations and other property maintenance investigations are tallied separately. There has been a drop in rental investigations due to the policy change last year. There were 13 new residential permits in 2020 and 44 house demolitions. There were no new NRP applications, two Zero Interest Loan applications and eight Down Payment Match applications.

b. Brush Up Hutch – 2020 Annual Report

Hvitløk said Brush Up Hutch applications were down due to covid, with 9 completed homes totaling \$4,128.63 and a few of the homes went over the \$500 maximum. There has been another \$5,000 budgeted for this year with a total of \$12,000 available. Patton said one of the completed homes was his rental home and it took a lot more paint than he thought because the wood just absorbed the paint. He thought raising the dollar amount per house may be worth considering.

c. Down Payment Match Incentive – 2020 Annual Report

Hvitløk said this has been a popular program and was supplemented mid-year to keep it going. Almost \$17,000 was paid out in 2020. Most homes were in College Grove but there were two homes in Houston Whiteside and one in Grace Arbor. With approximately \$6,100 remaining in the account, we may have to pause the program or add more funds later in the year. Lanham said realtors are becoming more knowledgeable about the program and it will continue to be popular. The program is user friendly and does not halt the closing of a home. Dechant would like to see more funding added to this program. If we want to make a greater impact in housing in our community, this is a good program to do that. Possibly some Infill Development funds could be shifted to Down Payment Match. Gleason said the Housing Commission should discuss our goals and work plan for the next year and that will help determine where we want to put the most funding. Hvitløk said this will be on the next meeting agenda. Dechant asked Gleason to list our needs and successes in a letter to the City Council so they have this information when they work on the budget on February 20.

d. Zero Interest Home Repair Loan – 2020 Annual Report

Hvitløk said this program is open to property owners in the feature neighborhoods and if the applicant is approved, the City will pay up to \$2,500 in interest payments for the improvement project. Financing is approved through Peoples Bank and Trust. This year approximately \$4,500 was paid and approximately that amount remains in the fund. Davenport said it is still a viable program and will be popular as additional new featured neighborhoods are added.

6. ORAL REPORTS

a. **Featured Neighborhood Report**

Stewart said four annual neighborhood meetings have been held and two more are coming up. Southwest Bricktown wants to get involved with the Police Department and have neighborhood events in September or October and a neighborhood cleanup event. They want to improve outdoor lighting and look into more affordable internet service. College Grove met and they want to get back on track after the past year and relaunch Donuts on the Driveway and invite the Police Department. They want to renew the sidewalk stencil project, rejuvenate block captains, develop a welcome program for new homeowners in the neighborhood and address long term vacant houses in the neighborhood that are not on the market. Farmington Park wants to keep momentum going on the neighborhood park and celebrate with a reopening and social events. They would also like to promote home improvements with incentives and grants. Creekside wants to work with the Police Department on crime prevention, celebrate improvements to Bernard White Park, have a neighborhood cleanup that is more involved than just a dumpster drop-off. They want to have a work day and help a neighbor make a noticeable improvement. Three of four churches had representatives at the meeting and there is interest in helping with outreach and volunteering. A sidewalk repair demonstration could help some owners repair their sidewalks, even without outside funding. Build a resource network for property maintenance and a network to share tools was also listed. They would like to promote home ownership as over half of the units in Creekside are rentals. The hope would be to slow down rental turnover so

residents stay in the neighborhood longer. Gleason would like to highlight owners who improve their sidewalks. Stewart said an average of five or six residents and other interested parties were the typical number in attendance at the neighborhood meetings. Dechant asked what the plan is for neighborhoods in the next few years. Stewart said a goal is to have the older neighborhoods become self-sufficient without staff assistance. Gleason said there needs to be someone to be a backbone to keep it all going and if too many neighborhoods are added, it may be difficult to keep them all going. Dechant wants to see this process continue and become more self-sufficient as well.

b. Hutchinson Land Bank – 2020 Annual Report

Hvitløk reviewed the Land Bank Annual Report. This group is supported by the City, but is a separate entity from the City. In 2020 there were no new properties acquired or sold. The Land Bank pays to have the properties mowed twice a month unless the property has been given a Right of First Refusal. The East Ave A application was denied the request to purchase the property to expand the yard as this was not the best use for this location and an additional lot adjacent to this lot was donated, making the options of developing the lots even better. Harvey Street has an interested buyer. There are 13 properties currently owned by the Land Bank. Expenses were mowing fees and officer's insurance. The group may look at more advertising of the lots this year and possibly acquiring lots with structures.

c. Update on CDBG Grant for Creekside

Hvitløk reported Creekside walk-throughs have been completed and doors and windows have been the hardest to obtain. Another walk-through is planned for a second group of homes. A new planner is scheduled to be hired within 4 to 6 weeks and this person will help with this grant.

d. Update on COVID and Housing

Hvitløk said unemployment is still high in Hutchinson. We went from 120 to 1500 unemployed in Reno County. Gleason said United Way is working with those who cannot pay rent or mortgages but funds are almost out. Trying to help with the problem and not the symptom is the plan to get recipients off assistance and rebound to independence.

Westphal said KHRC has a new program, KERA, (Kansas Emergency Rental Assistance) with \$168 to \$185 million dollars for Kansas available from March to September for past and future rent payments for up to a year to 15 months of assistance. A new computer system is being created to give the status of each account as this is from the Federal Treasury and needs more documentation which must show the need is COVID related and is to be used for housing instability. This will create additional workload on SCKEDD staff to administer the new programs. She should have some numbers soon on how much funding Hutchinson has received to date. Lanham said parents staying home with kids for on-line school has also contributed to job loss.

The SCKEDD community resurgence program is a new program to rehab housing that has been donated.

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SCKEDD is also partnering with Kansas Gas. This funding can be added to the weatherization funds.

7. OPEN COMMENTS

a. None.

8. OTHER

a. The next Housing Commission meeting is scheduled for February 24 at 3:30 p.m.

10. ADJOURNMENT – The meeting adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Charlene Mosier, Planning Technician

Approved this 24th day of February, 2021.



Secretary

Ryan Hvitlök, AICP, CFM

Director of Planning & Development