



Housing Opportunities Commission Minutes
March 10, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.
Virtual Online – WebEx Meeting

Members Present: Betzig-Lundberg, Chaput, Crowell, Gomez, Gulbrandson, Moseley, Poser, Theisen

Members Absent: Filipczak, Rogers, Councilmember Xiong

Staff Present: Allen, Draxler, Graybehl, Johnathan

1. Call to Order by Chairperson Crowell at 5:02 p.m.
2. Roll Call – All attending members and staff were present virtually online.
3. Meeting Minutes – Minutes of February 10, 2021, were approved on a motion by Commissioner Betzig-Lundberg and seconded by Commissioner Moseley.
4. Open Public Comment Period – Dr. Susan Wolfgram, 550 Graham Ave., Co-Chair of JONAH Affordable Housing Task Force provided comments seeking the commission to review developments beyond a certain number of units and make recommendations to the Plan Commission and City Council. Hearings before the Housing Opportunities Commission can save time by decreasing the potential delay of projects. This would require a change to the ordinance that created the commission and is being suggested as a future agenda item or to be integrated into the commission’s work plan. Dr. Wolfgram submitted these comments separately via email and are attached hereto.
5. Public Discussions
 - A. 2021 Work Plan Review – Commissioners discussed a memo prepared by staff which summarized notes and observations raised at the February 23rd City Council Legislative Meeting. Chairperson Crowell noted the City Council’s comments on equity and sustainability as points of emphasis for the work plan and the Commission. Commissioner Betzig-Lundberg discussed the importance of including services in affordable housing projects as a criterion. Commissioner Moseley suggested to add tracking of the landlord support program. Commissioner Moseley expressed that it could be within the Commissions role to review housing projects under “Monitor Housing Inventory.” The Commission came to the consensus that the work plan should be adopted and that they will reach out to the additional potential partners as recommended by the Council. Commissioner Moseley recommended including the UWEC housing coordinator. Vice Chairperson Chaput recommended adding the groups identified by City Council under Policy Review.
 - B. Affordable Housing Fund Policy – Commissioners discussed feedback received by City Council from their February 23rd work session. Commissioner Moseley recommended adding energy efficiency as a criterion for potential projects, particularly net zero energy elements. Commissioner Betzig-Lundberg suggested sharing and referencing the City’s new [Net Zero Energy Guide](#). Associate Planner Graybehl also referenced Wisconsin state green building guidelines.
 - C. Annual Regional Housing Conference – Commissioners discussed if the Conference will be held in person or virtual as well as the focus and who will be invited. Commissioner Betzig-Lundberg stated a preference for a hybrid conference as it will permit the most amount of attendance as well as being most accessible, including being more cost-effective. Commissioner Poser shared a positive experience with a fully virtual conference and preference for a fully virtual to protect the vulnerable public’s health. Commissioner Moseley stated her preference for a virtual conference, to be held in early January and February, which made it easier to take in and record information. Commissioner Gulbrandson stated a preference for a hybrid version. Commissioners raised the concern of technical difficulties of a hybrid conference especially considering this will be the first event held by the Commission. Commissioners agreed to hold an all virtual conference. The Commission discussed

the target audience for the conference, including: general public; agencies; developers; people experiencing low income; people with disabilities. The Commission discussed conference topics and activities, including: roleplaying a day in the life of a person using food stamps or different individuals in the housing continuum; virtual resource hall to connect people with resources; tie in with other interconnected boards and commissions. The Commission agreed to compile all of these items for discussion at the next meeting and consider possible collaboration with agencies that work with target audiences.

Reach out to developers to hear what changes the City should make to incentivize development.

6. Other Business Agenda Items – Staff presented sample graphics outlining a continuum for communicating affordable housing strategies. The sample from the Twin Cities is attached herein.
7. Discussion and Direction
 - A. Future Agenda Items – The Commission suggested the following items for consideration at the next meeting: Annual Regional Housing Conference; Affordable Housing Fund policy; evictions right-to-counsel; monthly housing inventory report.
 - B. Announcements – Director Allen noted that Eau Claire has been selected as a community to receive an assessment of our zoning code for obstacles to affordable housing—a project led by the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) and the League of Wisconsin Municipalities. Commissioner Betzig-Lundberg thanked Chairperson Crowell and Director Allen for their leadership through the work plan and Affordable Housing Fund Policy work session with the City Council.
8. On a motion by Commissioner Poser and seconded by Commissioner Betzig-Lundberg, the meeting adjourned at 6:37 p.m.