



Housing Opportunities Commission Minutes  
July 13, 2022 at 5:00 p.m.

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Members Present: Betzig-Lundberg, Chaput, Moseley, Poser, Rogers, Ross

Members Absent: Carruthers, Filipczak, Peterson, Theisen, Councilmember Werthmann

Staff Present: Allen, Kragness, Hirsch, Johnathan (Left at 6:45), Hufford (Arrived at 5:30)

1. Call to Order by Chairperson Moseley at 5:00 p.m.
2. Roll Call – Members and staff were present in Council Chambers.
3. Meeting minutes of June 8, 2022, were approved on a motion by Commissioner Betzig-Lundberg and seconded by Vice-Chair Chaput with B. Regional Housing Conference, ii. Summary of meeting with Momentum West, Questions/Comments amended from “Will the conference be hybrid or taped? We can consider recording or depending on where we are may be live for viewing at library. Recording would allow to be **exclusive**.” to “Will the conference be hybrid or taped? We can consider recording or depending on where we are may be live for viewing at library. Recording would allow to be **inclusive**.”
4. Open Public Comment Period –  
None
5. Public Discussions
  - A. 2022 Work Plan
    - i. Ordinance & Policy Review – Mr. Allen requested guidance from the Commission on Policy Review and Zoning and Subdivision processes including Platting and Planned Developments. Mr. Allen shared Council approval of funding for Zoning Code update. Mr. Allen shared that the Plan Commission was open to moving appropriate items previously discussed in HOC to a Consent Agenda.

Questions/Comments

- Noted [adding State steps/process to the Major Subdivision flowchart](#) from previous presentation and creating General Development Plan flow chart.
- Request to [hear from developers regarding ordinance and policy obstacles in relation to building affordable housing](#) including in-person conversations and developing a survey to send to developers. Mr. Allen shared that Chippewa Valley Homebuilders Association (CVHBA) shared survey results focused on inspections/permitting vs code and ordinances. CVHBA could distribute survey.
- [Review of Landlord Registry](#). Ms. Kragness shared an update to the Rental Registration program will occur in the fall. Commission would like a presentation how the program currently works in order to suggest changes. Request to include landlords in discussions of any changes to the registration program.
- [Request for UWEC students to share housing concerns/obstacles and provide input on zoning/process updates](#). Possible new position of Housing Program Manager that could join future meetings.
- [What ordinances and policies do we currently have impacting housing?](#)

- ii. Regional Housing Study—Mr. Allen shared Council approval of funding for a Housing Needs Assessment/Regional Housing Study that would include Eau Claire County and Altoona and conversations continue with Chippewa County on involvement. [Staff will share Housing Study for Sun Prairie, WI](#) as an example of a recent study with ours expected to be a deeper dive. Expecting RFP before next HOC meeting.

Questions/Comments

- What is the timeframe to complete the Study? Expectation is six to nine months after RFP process (90 days). May be dependent on what communities are involved as final partners.
- Request for Chippewa County information to be included in the study as region is one broader housing market.
- Will City of Chippewa Falls be included? Will explore partnership.

- iii. Regional Housing Conference –

Mr. Allen explained that Momentum West is looking to launch a series of workshops at the end of October and the benefits of collaboration with MW. Staff and Commission discussed potential dates and tentatively chose October 27<sup>th</sup>.

Conference can be geographically focused or general housing with sub-topics. Topics already discussed were missing middle, housing types, rental landscape, state issues, data updates, ARPA, transportation and housing relationship. The transportation and housing relationship was a strong contender discussed as a topic. Conference can be partial day.

Mr. Allen noted the Take Root Wisconsin presentation shared in the agenda packet and a similar concept to what we are planning.

Questions/Comments

How often is Momentum West thinking for each meeting in the series? Twice a month and a total of 3-4 meetings.

6. Other Business Agenda Items

A. Rental Assistance Discrimination Ordinance follow-up (Dane County)

Ms. Hufford shared that the State housing discrimination process includes the use of Housing Vouchers and LGBTQ as protected classes. Questions for proceeding with a City ordinance include:

- Would a City ordinance go above State enforcement processes?
- Would adding another layer prolong the State process
- Would the City implement a process to identify where issues may be (testing)?
  - Would a testing process need to be a regional effort to be effective?
  - How would it be funded?
- Is passing an ordinance an important symbolic step that reiterates the State discrimination process?
- Would an ordinance be important to prevent classes no longer being protected if the State process would change in the future?
  - Would a City ordinance be allowed to protect classes the State does not?

Questions/Comments

- This might be a beneficial discussion when Rental Registration is discussed, adding a mechanism for complaints to be lodged with the registry program. Some of our

organizations might also be a good resource for lodging complaints if they are seeing landlords turning down vouchers.

- Discussion on the reasons landlords may not allow vouchers tend to be more about the different program requirements and paperwork versus the voucher or who may be using it. Other barriers include the inspections required and that vary between the three different voucher programs available in the community. Many of the inspection items can be up to the discretion of the inspector. Inspector inexperience can also present problems for landlords.
- Discussed importance of involving landlords in any process or ordinance.
- Different agencies with vouchers have different rules, different standards, and different incentives. Some units may qualify under one program, but not another.
- Education about the different programs is an important need to help landlords know the differences.
- Analyze where the different programs can be streamlined and work better, where process problems can be fixed.
- Symbolism of an ordinance is important to show that we care about protected classes and value landlords.
- What kind of support for landlords can come from this?
- Can there be a contingency in the ordinance to waive inspections or make the program easier? Vouchers have specific guidelines from Federal, State, who the funding source is making this difficult/impossible.
- *Next steps*: get feedback from landlords, decide if an ordinance is right path, review ordinances from other WI communities. A necessary first step would be understanding the barriers to housing for the community and what steps are necessary to address those barriers. Understanding what the barriers are specifically for those that would rent to someone with a voucher and why some landlords would not even consider a voucher.
- Is it possible to determine the weight of the barriers from landlords? What factors make a landlord choose someone?
- Important to emphasize vouchers are guaranteed rent when talking with landlords.
- What are the differences between Health Department inspections and voucher checklists? *Ms. Kragness will share inspection report*. Commissioner Poser will compare inspections.

B. Mobile Home Inspections initiatives, policies, programs

Mr. Allen presented information on [Wisconsin Housing Alliance](#), a statewide organization that assists with mobile home advocacy. WHA has quite a bit of resources for member organizations. Training is offered through the organization. Discussed baseline data that is available. Would like *presentation from Ms. Kragness on current mobile home inspection process and baseline data on mobile homes*. Majority of mobile home parks are outside of the City limits.

Questions/Comments

- Terminology has changed and helps remove stigma.
- Commissioner Filipczak might have insight as just purchased small mobile home park.
- *Would like to hear about what variations of factory-built housing other areas are using and how it is being used.*
- Discussed Oshkosh that development of permanent tiny home community that includes service structure. Commissioner Poser will share PowerPoint of program.
- Explanation that there are different categories of manufactured homes based on frame type built on.

C. Staff Updates –

a. Affordable Housing Fund / American Rescue Plan Act

Mr. Allen presented information that was shared with City Council and explained the two-phase approach for ARPA funds. Ms. Hirsch presented on the Housing Project Manager funding and that the scope of the position is still being determined. Will have an administrative role including finding new sources of funding to continue their work and the work of HOC. Ms. Hirsch discussed the importance of Housing Need Assessment and Zoning overhaul to help drive conversations about where further ARPA funds should be focused and help understand where capacity to add housing is leading to create net new growth (the only way a WI community can generate new revenue). TID/TIF funding to create money for affordable housing at the end of the lifetime of the TID/TIF.

Mr. Allen discussed phase two ARPA funding and affordable housing fund and discussions occurring about detailed items.

Questions/Comments

- More details on zoning overhaul? Mr. Allen discussed general process and needs for overhaul. Zoning would be a full rewrite connected to the Housing Needs Assessment and Comprehensive Plan update. Ms. Hirsch discussed the in-depth community outreach that would be needed with the overhaul.
- How will gentrification be addressed with net new growth? Process with zoning overhaul would allow more housing types and will explore different tools that help preserve affordability and prevent gentrification.
- Concerns raised about existing housing at the lower level of affordable being removed for new structures. Mr. Allen discussed NOAH energy efficiency program with Elevate that will include energy efficiency updates. THE NOAH program is included in ARPA Phase Two recommendations. Ms. Hirsch presented possible solutions of deed restricted housing (land trusts) to help maintain income integration in neighborhoods and affordability.
- The rapidly diminishing stock of low-income affordable housing is a concern.
- How soon will Housing Manager Position be posted? Ms. Hirsch shared that it will be a new position requiring a job description, where the role will live in the organization, and the various roles the manager may have. Hiring is expected to occur soon.
- How soon will EDI Coordinator be hired? Position already has a job description and can occur quickly. Will the County hire a full-time position also? Question will need to be directed to the County.
- Comments about lack of mentions of people with disabilities and students in the descriptions of ARPA funding and importance of inclusion of all individuals.
- Discussed 1 and 2-person households being the largest gap in affordable housing types and importance of inclusion criteria previously developed.
- Question about covenants put on properties by developers. Mr. Allen explained the City does not enforce covenants. [Can zoning overhaul get around the covenants?](#)
- Where did money for cooling center come from? Moved from phase 2.
- Warming center ARPA funding is for 3 years, cooling center is currently for this summer, but contract is being negotiated.
- Can covenants be restricted/forbid in zoning? Typically, state or federal dictates what can be done (i.e. not allowing exclusionary zoning), but zoning trumps a covenant. Question about project on Jeffers Road with a covenant to keep housing affordable (discussed in next agenda item).

- ARPA funding has affordable housing in Phase 2 that the Housing Manager can assist with and details items will be worked out through the process.
- What happens next with ARPA? ARPA Coordinator will work with the community on Phase 2. Housing Manager can help in the process working with HOC. Feedback that community involvement in conversations is important and will determine where the money is spent. Money has to be dedicated by the end of 2024 and spent by the end of 2026.
- Fund for Services for People Experiencing Homelessness needs to include engaging people experiencing homelessness. Will need to find different ways to engage them.
- How much money is in the fund for affordable housing fund currently? ARPA Phase 2 is unknown. Already designated CIP dollars is at \$0 for this year. Mr. Allen explained money being front-loaded making this year a gap year.
- Will there be money from the recently closed TIF for the affordable housing fund?  
*Staff will follow up.*

b. Affordable housing project updates

Mr. Allen reviewed the Oxford Avenue project phase one is being constructed. Phase two looking to start soon. Prairie Heights residences looking to start soon also. Property at Andy Lane and Jeffers Road is partly owned by the City. Discussed context of property and discussion with neighborhood regarding possible development. The City is currently looking at what options for lots can be added to the area with keeping the concerns raised by residents in the area in mind. Property would probably have a deed restriction guaranteeing affordability for a designated amount of time.

Questions/Comments

Prairie Heights received a \$2M grant.

Is developer still interested in developing School District Administration building? Yes, but funding is currently a concern.

Is adaptive reuse of an existing building considered in the net new building? Yes

7. Discussion and Direction

A. Future Agenda Items

*See comments throughout minutes*

B. Announcements

Next meeting is Wednesday, August 10<sup>th</sup>.

Application submitted to HUD for supportive services for youth. Letter of interest went out for system navigator today. Navigator would coordinate system level services for youth. Eligible entities are City or non-profits can apply to be the employer of record. Due August 5<sup>th</sup>.

9. On a motion by Vice-Chairperson Chaput and seconded by Commissioner Betzig-Lundberg the meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.