



**Housing Opportunities Commission
Minutes
June 12, 2024**

Members Present: Thrun, Betzig-Lundberg, Chaput, Klingbeil, Filipczak, Rogers, Mosley, Poser, Lindaas, Schoen

Members Absent: N. White

Staff Present: Hufford, Jagodzinski, Hulberg, A. White

1. Call to Order by Chairperson Moseley at 5:11pm
2. **Roll Call:** Members and staff were present in Virtual Council Chambers (via Webex).
3. Meeting minutes of April 10, 2024 approved: Motion to approve by Commissioner Poser and seconded by Commissioner Chaput.
4. **Open Public Comment Period:** One member of the public commented.

Mary Partlow spoke to Commissioners looking for help from a sub-committee to help with the planning of the plots for a tiny home community. Ms. Hufford said she would check with legal and happy to give her a call. Commissioner Moseley pointed out that Housing Opportunity Commission does not have a large amount of discretion for funds. They make recommendations, but don't have the ability to specially allocate funds.

5. Introduction of New Members
 - Commissioner Schoen
 - Two staff members: Jagodzinski and Hulberg
6. Election of Officers
 - Chair: Commissioner Poser nominates Commissioner Mosely. Passed unanimously.
 - Vice Chair: Commissioner Thrun nominates Commissioner Chaput. Passed unanimously.
 - Call for other officers: None

Public Discussions:

7. Review of By-laws and General Information for Boards, Commissions, and Committees
 - A. Ms. Hufford reviewed that they look at by-laws yearly in May when they have elected new members or have a mini review if members join mid-year.
 - a. The Housing Opportunities Commission consists of 11 members: 10 resident members and 1 City Council member. Terms are three years, up to two three-year terms. If someone took over a term from somebody, that would not count as a full-three-year term.
 - b. Purpose:
 - i. Recommend and review ordinances and other policies of general application that best ensures the availability of affordable housing in the city of Eau Claire.
 - ii. Facilitate access to programs and funding groups, including but not limited to, developers, builders, and residents that contribute to Eau Claire's affordable housing, and especially to reduce costs for those who face the greatest need.
 - iii. Promote public-private partnerships that stimulate the development and revitalization of local housing units, expands the diversity of housing types, and improves housing affordability.

- iv. Review civic strategies that increase home ownership opportunities in the city of Eau Claire.
- v. Regularly, but no less than annually, convene a regional meeting of industry and community stakeholders to share the Commission's progress and direction on strategies for affordable housing and to receive feedback that may be incorporated into their work and recommendations to the City Council, staff and wider community.
- vi. Support goals of the City Council Strategic Plan, the Comprehensive Plan, and the city manager's work plan related to affordable housing.
- vii. Review civic strategies that provide recommendations and comments to the Plan commission and City Council.
- viii. Recommend any affordable housing program eligibility criteria to City Council.
- ix. Initiate and recommend guidelines for development of Eau Claire affordable housing policy, including expanded home ownership and transitional housing opportunities in the city.
- x. Annually propose to City Council for its review and adoption affordable housing goals and commission work plan based upon documented community need consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, Strategic Plan, and Regional Housing Task Force recommendations.
- xi. Provide advocacy for establishing and maintaining a diversity of housing types and opportunities in the city.
- xii. Promote a greater community understanding and acceptance of affordable housing through public education and public events.
- xiii. Review and advise the City Council on affordable housing priorities in the capital improvement plan for the city.

c. Bylaw Amendments:

- i. Remote advance-standing rules **(see full amendment below)**.
- ii. Code of Conduct **(see full amendment below)**

8. General Information for Boards, Commissions, and Committees

- A. Committee Code of Conduct **(see below for full document)**
- B. Vision, Mission, and Values **(see below for full document)**
- C. Purchasing Policy **(see below for full document)**
- D. City of Eau Claire Handbook for Public Officials **(see below for full document)**

9. 2023 Work Plan

a. Regional Housing Conference – 2024

- i. Ms. Hufford and staff waiting on WHEDA. Meeting set with parties interested in bringing WHEDA to area for larger education piece on recent legislation. More information next month.
- ii. Theme
- iii. Workgroup (Moseley, Betzig-Lundberg, Christopherson, Thrun)

b. Work Plan Review

- Ms. Hufford explained the workplan is done yearly and will stay within goals of comprehensive plan. Workplan explanation as follows:
 - **Monitor Housing Inventory:** They will share, as able, permit data. Permit data does not always go through completion. They are trying to breakdown data better to see where projects are at different stages. Further information will be shared next month.
 - **Ordinance and Policy Review:** Keep looking for places to do an update. Anything in policy or anything they want to bring to policy, they can work on. Looking at innovative ideas like a Community Land Trust. The primary thing right now is the zoning code update. It has tremendous impact on affordable housing.
 - **Housing Plan:** Housing study was done. There are conversations about rolling it out. Could be part of the conference this year? Used to inform zoning code updates and Comprehensive Plan updates.

- **Funding Affordable Housing:** The Commission did recommend funding that went to Council last year. Suggestion to Council to change some funds. Combining affordable housing fund with energy efficiency navigator funding to create a larger pot of money that creates more impact. Combining gives flexibility to spend money in different ways. HOC would put together criteria for that money and how staff could utilize it. Only over a certain amount could need RFP. The Council has not passed the budget, so they are still unsure what this looks like.
- **Regional Housing Conference:** Codified that they must hold a Housing Conference every year. Half-day conference every other year and a smaller event every year on years without conference.
- **Promote Home Ownership:** Community struggling with affordable home ownership. Costs have risen naturally as prices of buildings have increased. Looking at Community Land Trust. RFP is ready to go out but will discuss more next month.
 - **Housing Development Fund:** Initial conversation, but more information next month.
 - **Housing Resource Workshop:** Programs discussion. The conference will help share existing resources and how they can utilize them.
- **Questions, Comments, and Revisions:**
 - Commissioner Rogers had a comment on affordable housing. Staff has made a recommendation to combine two funds for the 2025 budget. Budget will be approved later this fall. He questioned how much has been recommended to those funds. Ms. Hufford indicated they recommended \$450,000 to combine those two funds. When a tax increment district is closed, the community can decide to keep it open for an additional year and use proceeds for affordable housing. Could be good to review what TIFS are coming up. Altoona has a TIF that will have substantial amount of money available for affordable housing. Previously, talked with finance director to be able to look at TIFS and TIDS to have extra year language. If extra year language not included, Ms. Hufford indicated that they could see if they can go back and add language.
 - Commissioner Mosley commented that the Relators Association of Northwestern Wisconsin has been working on a new program to help first time home buyers. In 2025, there will be additional funds people can apply for through their lenders.
 - Commissioner Betzig-Lundberg questioned if Ms. Hufford could redefine what it means to combine affordability and energy/sustainability funds. Does this put both of those priorities in competition with each other? Ms. Hufford explained that it does allow for funding for larger items or split. Fund is malleable with Council approval. In summary, provides flexibility compared to an RFP.
 - Commissioner Schoen elaborated on flexible funds of the combined affordability and energy sustainability funds. The intent is to make it more flexible and adaptable. For clarification, she explained it is \$450,000 every year for the next five years. However, all subject to change until budget is passed.
 - Commissioner Betzig-Lundberg had a question, but Commissioner Schoen answered it.
 - Commissioner Mosley highlighted her content of Prairie Heights Development that they recommended to be funded two years ago. She was impressed that they built energy efficiency/LEED standards into their housing which helps create affordability for their tenants.
- Staff updates:
 - 2024 Housing Development Permits
 - Ms. Hufford explained they are working on permit information.

- Housing project updates
 - No new updates. New projects coming soon to approval process. There are a handful of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) looking in the City of Eau Claire.
- Day Resource Center
 - Listening session meeting next Tuesday at 5:30 for community feedback. Western Dairyland and Hope Gospel Mission will be lead. The primary purpose is to get feedback from the community and discuss location on city owned lots.
 - Commissioner Betzig-Lundberg asked about the status update from Prairie Heights. Ms. Hufford said she will reach out and see if there are other updates.
 - ARPA Updates (Community Land Trust, Community Development Corporation)
 - Coming with more information next month
 - Ms. Hufford updated that the Affordable Housing fund could not come to an agreement with Home for Good.
 - Plan for funding to be taken to Council next meeting.
- **Questions/Comments:**
 - i. Commissioner Poser asked to clarify what it means to not come to an agreement with Home for Good. Ms. Hufford explained that Habitat for Humanity and Home for Good applied for affordable housing dollars but did not want affordable housing longevity language in the contract. Additionally, the contract would require that they may have to pay that money back if a project does not proceed as contracted which could financially hurt them as a nonprofit.
 - ii. Commissioner Poser then asked, what happens to that money. Ms. Hufford explained that the money could be rolled over to next year, but ARPA has to be contracted by end of year, they could do another RFP, or there was another applicant that requested the full amount, so they could award them the remaining amount.
 - iii. Commissioner Rogers asked why it wasn't brought back to the Commission this month. Ms. Hufford explained that they did not finish negotiations until last week. The Commission already recommended both projects.
 - iv. Commissioner Betzig-Lundberg asked if Ms. Hufford was insinuating that the remainder of the money goes to the other applicant. Ms. Hufford said yes, and that is the plan recommended to Council.
 - v. Commissioner Schoen noted that the other applicant that presented a plan was Hmong Mutual Assistance Association. Their plan used the entire budget of \$275,000. She reiterated that the Hmong Mutual Assistance Association was presented to the Council.
 - vi. Commissioner Betzig-Lundberg inquired to make sure what was presented to Council was detailed and whether it comes back to HOC for recommendations. Ms. Hufford said she would send the Commissioners what was presented to the Council. No plan to bring it back to HOC, as they already did recommendations. The only differentiating recommendation was the amount of money allocated.
 - vii. Commissioner Betzig-Lundberg commented that she did not remember what was in that second proposal. The first proposal requested a position to be funded. HOC had strong feelings about that as a recommendation. Ms. Hufford would send the budget to Commissioners and explained that there is always money going to administrative costs.
 - viii. Commissioner Poser commented to the group that if they make a recommendation in future, they should put a contingency on it. She said she was comfortable with Hmong Mutual Assistance Association allocated money, but a backup plan should be made if a recommendation does not pass. Ms. Hufford agreed and explained that if it wasn't ARPA funding, they could roll the money over to the next year, but the time sensitivity of it being in a contract by the end of the year was limiting.
 - ix. Commissioner Poser added that when they put out future RFP's they should highlight affordable housing as part of the application. Staff will be looking to put more requirements in future proposals.

- x. Commissioner Moseley asked if Ms. Hufford is still doing a monthly evictions report. Ms. Hufford answered yes, but not a completed report yet. She shared that in the county so far (January-May), there have been 82 evictions. In 2023, there were 181.
- xi. Commissioner Mosely also asked if there is still a homeless week on campus. Ms. Hufford answered yes and offered to learn more about it in the future. Commissioner Lindaas explained homeless week, as a week in between the end of a lease and finals/commencement where many students have to move their things temporarily. Unique to Eau Claire due to the start times of many of the leases.

10. Discussion and Direction A. Future Agenda Items

- a. ARPA Updates as needed
- b. AARP Community for All Ages
- c. TIFs, CIP, and other Housing Initiatives: Finance Director, Kitzie Winters
- d. Zoning Update
- e. Mobile Home and Tiny Home Communities
 - 1 **Updates:** Public comment earlier about tiny home communities. Commissioner Filipczak commented they did clear the lot. They are currently working with the city to run water into the development to make it public instead of private. Although it will cost more money, it will be better for the community. They are also finalizing pricing. As far as timing, they will start dropping homes in September or October. The marketing for homes will be happening soon within the next weeks to a month.
- f. Housing Bills
- g. Possible partnerships with County and neighboring municipalities
- h. Housing study community outreach
- i. Inclusive Housing Presentation

B. Announcements

- a. July 17 Home for Everyone Conference (<https://ahomeforeveryone.events/>)
 - Commissioner Poser commented that Eric Tars is coming to conference
 - Open RFP for \$100,000
 - Western Dairyland will no longer be a system navigator recipient, so a Letter of Interest for \$50,000 is out on the table.
 - HAP has \$400,000 out for housing and services for people experiencing homelessness, deadline July 8th

Commissioner Mosely called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Lindaas expressed motion to adjourn. Commissioner Poser seconded. Passed unanimously.

11. Adjournment