

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES, IL
HOUSING COMMISSION
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2015
COUNCIL COMMITTEE ROOM**

Members Present: David Amundson, Rita Payleitner, Tim Kessler, Tom Hansen, Karrsten Goettel, John Hall Jr., John Glenn

Members Absent: Liz Eakins, Corinne Pierog

Others Present: Rita Tungare, Community & Economic Development Director
Matthew O'Rourke, Economic Development Division Manager
Ellen Johnson, Planner
Chris Sanchez, Recording Secretary

1. Call to Order

Chair Amundson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Ms. Johnson called roll with five members present. There was a quorum. Mr. Hall arrived at approximately 7:10 p.m. Mr. Glenn arrived at approximately 7:50 p.m.

3. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Ms. Payleitner and seconded by Mr. Hansen to approve the Agenda. Motion carried by a unanimous voice vote.

4. Approval of Minutes from the August 20, 2015 Meeting

Ms. Payleitner asked for clarification regarding the statement "Ms. Tungare said City Council has final say as to whether land or cash will be accepted" on page 3, paragraph 2. Ms. Tungare said the two sentences in that paragraph will be added to the previous paragraph to provide context to the statement.

Chair Amundson noted that the word "of" should be added after "in terms" on page 2, paragraph 1, and the word "income" should be changed to "size" on page 2, paragraph 8, second sentence. Chairman Amundson requested a clarifying statement be added to "the fee would be much higher" on page 3, paragraph 5, to identify the appropriate fee.

A motion was made by Ms. Payleitner and seconded by Mr. Hansen to approve the August 20, 2015 Housing Commission meeting minutes, as corrected. Motion carried by a unanimous voice vote.

5. Inclusionary Housing Ordinance Amendments Update

Ms. Johnson provided an update on the Plan Commission meeting held on September 22, 2015. She said the Plan Commission held a public hearing for an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to remove the Inclusionary Housing chapter from the Zoning Ordinance for the purpose of

placing the Inclusionary Housing provisions in a stand-alone Title of the City Code. Several Plan Commission members expressed concern that inclusionary housing components of development proposals and changes to the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance (IHO) would no longer be subject to a public hearing at the Plan Commission. The Plan Commission decided to continue the public hearing and requested to see the rest of the amendments discussed by the Housing Commission. The Plan Commission will continue this discussion at their October 20, 2015 meeting. All amendments will be discussed at that meeting.

Ms. Tungare said the intent of going before the Plan Commission was for an application to amend the Zoning Ordinance to pull the IHO out of the Zoning Ordinance. She explained the thought process behind this. Since the Housing Commission is charged with coming up with the amendments and doing the analysis, staff and the Housing Commission didn't see a need for two bodies to be going through the same process. However, since the Plan Commission expressed an interest, staff is going to provide them with all of the proposed amendments and information the Housing Commission went through over the past several months, to give them an understanding as to what the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance will look like in its amended form.

Mr. Kessler said the Plan Commission was instrumental in creating the IHO. He said when this first came before the Plan Commission they felt something didn't seem right. He noted that the Plan Commission was not aware of the discussions the Housing Commission had over the past year, and they were concerned that there would be no public hearing when a developer requests a variance. He said it could go directly from the Housing Commission to City Council without any public hearing. He said the Plan Commission discussed it further, but had no frame of reference to make a decision, so they decided to continue with the public hearing and requested to see the rest of the proposed amendments to the IHO.

Chair Amundson said he appreciated that the Plan Commission respected the process. He said they will continue to have meetings where the public is entitled to attend, but the Housing Commission is not forced by any ordinance to allow them to speak.

Ms. Johnson said the Open Meetings Act now requires that public attendees have the right to speak at any public meeting.

Mr. Kessler said the Plan Commission is mandated by the state to review developments and zoning issues that come before them, and to provide the public an opportunity through public hearings to weigh in on those issues. He noted that when a proposal comes before the Plan Commission stating those things are not going to happen any longer, they are going to take notice.

Chair Amundson suggested they move forward with pulling the IHO out of the Zoning Ordinance, but mandate that whenever there are any deviations that would have been heard in front of the Plan Commission, or when any amendments to the IHO are discussed, that the Housing Commission hold an official public hearing.

Mr. O'Rourke advised the group that there are criteria in place regarding deviations to the ordinance. Ms. Johnson said the Housing Commission would not address anything that complies

directly with the ordinance.

Mr. Hanson said he views the Housing Commission discussions as building a recommendation and the public does not need to be involved in formulating that. He feels the public will have an opportunity to be involved when the recommendation goes for approval at City Council.

Ms. Tungare said the Plan Commission operates in a quasi-judicial setting and they need to be mindful of that. She said public hearings are very structured and the Housing Commission's conversations would have to be limited during a public hearing.

Ms. Tungare said the Housing Commission spent many months formulating the amendments. She noted the Plan Commission is reacting to the finished product and are not able to see what went into the Housing Commission's recommendation.

Mr. Kessler said the Plan Commission just wanted more information.

Chair Amundson said he was not sure they would want an official public hearing every time the Housing Commission talks about a paragraph in the ordinance. He said perhaps they could do something that allows the Housing Commission to have discussions, and when it goes to vote before the City Council, then it would become more open to the public.

Ms. Tungare suggested the Housing Commission discusses and formulates a recommendation and when it goes to City Council, the public hearing could be held at that point.

6. Employer-Assisted Housing Event Recap

Ms. Johnson provided a recap of the event held on October 7, 2015. She stated there were approximately 30 attendees, with just a few employers in attendance. The Mayors of the four partner communities involved in the *Homes* project each spoke about their town's interest in housing. Robin Snyderman, from Brick Partners, and an expert on employer-assisted housing, gave a presentation and provided examples as to how the program works. Ms. Johnson said the next step is for the *Homes* group to hold a conference call to discuss how the four cities involved can assist employers in finding out more about the program.

Mr. Kessler asked who at the city would handle this. Ms. Johnson said that is something that will be discussed on the conference call.

Mr. Hall asked if there needs to be a minimum number of employees an employer must have in order to qualify.

Mr. O'Rourke noted larger employers may be the ones that participate, as they would get a tax credit for doing so. Mr. Kessler said he would like to see small businesses take this on. He said it is not that difficult to do.

Mr. Kessler felt this was a really good program and something the Housing Commission should back.

Ms. Tungare said the role of the City is to educate people about the program. There are companies that help with the implementation/administration end of it.

7. Community Land Trust Exploratory Process

Ms. Johnson stated that a recommendation that came out of the *Homes for a Changing Region* study was that the four communities involved in the study should look into the feasibility of creating a community land trust. CMAP has committed to providing two years of technical assistance in implementing the *Homes* recommendations. CMAP has been in contact with Betsy Lassar from BPI (Business and Professional People for the Public Interest). Betsy Lassar was instrumental in creating the Highland Park Community Land Trust. She is interested in working with the four communities as a consultant in conducting an “exploratory process”. The process would be for educational purposes to get familiar with what a land trust is, how it would work, how it would be funded and administered, and what the leadership structure would be. The exploratory process is expected to take approximately one year to complete. After that is done, the four partner communities will decide if they want to pursue establishment of a community land trust. A meeting will be held in November to determine if the four partners want to go forward with the exploratory process.

Chair Amundsen said he would not expect Geneva to give St. Charles funds to establish affordable housing in our community, as that would only serve St. Charles residents. However, he felt more people would buy into the idea if the land trust supported a senior/handicapped assisted living facility.

Mr. O’Rourke stated the other communities might be willing to partner in a community land trust as a way to address their affordable housing issue; Geneva is now non-exempt from the Affordable Housing Planning and Appeal Act.

Chair Amundson suggested leveraging this as we have experience, some knowledge, an ordinance, and space; and the other communities now have a need to provide more affordable housing, which they may solve with cash.

Mr. Hall disagreed. He felt Geneva should deal with its own issues. He was concerned St. Charles would become a dumping ground for other communities and said they should not take on someone else’s burden. He stated he was open to hearing about the program, but the affordable housing issue can be addressed without a land trust.

Mr. Kessler said his biggest concern is the length of time the exploratory process will take. He felt it was too long. He stated the Housing Commission needs to move forward with some sort of plan to implement affordable housing.

Mr. Hansen asked if the study would preempt the Housing Commission from developing a plan to utilize some of the Housing Trust Fund. Mr. Kessler suggested they tackle some smaller issues during the exploratory process.

Mr. Hall said people are not aware of all the great programs available to them due to a lack of marketing. Mr. Kessler suggested partnering with groups already offering these programs to people.

Mr. O’Rourke gave a brief description of the City’s Single-Family Rehab Program. He said

information on this program is included in the City Newsletter.

Mr. Hall said the informational/advertising material needs to be something that attracts people to the City's program. He suggested making a deal with local publications to include an ad with a link to the program information.

Mr. O'Rourke advised the Commission that advertising is not an eligible use of housing trust funds.

Mr. Hall suggested looking into the cost of adding something to the City's website. Mr. O'Rourke said information on the Single-Family Rehab Program is already on the City's website. Ms. Johnson noted that the information on the City's website is not particularly easy to find; someone would have to be looking for this information in order to come across it.

Mr. Hansen described the HAV (Housing Assistance Volunteers) organization. He said it is similar to Habitat for Humanity, but on a smaller scale. He stated the program is made up of volunteers who help elderly people who come out of nursing homes with improvements to their homes that they cannot afford to do themselves. For example, they might help build a ramp at an eligible person's home. He said the bank has donated money to this organization. Mr. Hansen was not sure how the people and organization find one another, but he said they obviously have a medium to connect with the people who need help.

The Commissioners asked if using funds to partner with this organization would be permitted. Ms. Johnson read one of the eligible activities for funds from the Housing Trust Fund code section that might apply: "Grants or loans to non-profit organizations that are actively engaged in addressing the needs of eligible households".

Mr. Glenn felt this was shirking their responsibility by accepting money to create affordable housing, but then pushing it off on another group.

Mr. Kessler said they cannot sit on this any longer and stressed that they must do some small things while still developing the big picture.

Mr. Glenn stated Lazarus Housing has a program that puts people in affordable rentals. Mr. O'Rourke informed the group that it was a policy question. He said the stance that has always been stated by the Housing Commission and City Council was that they did not want to do rental subsidies.

Chair Amundson stated the ultimate goal is to move the needle towards increasing our percentage of affordable housing, and get affordable units built. He said he wants to do something significant.

Mr. Kessler said the Housing Commission is trying to promote affordable housing and help eligible families, and not just meet the requirements of the state.

Mr. Glenn asked if they could give some funds to Habitat for Humanity. Chair Amundson said the only way that would work is with a land trust, if they gave Habitat a lot in St. Charles. Otherwise, there would be issues with Habitat's economic model due to the value of lots in St. Charles.

Chair Amundson suggested they talk to HAV. Ms. Tungare said they would devote some time to

researching this.

8. Additional Business

There was no additional business to discuss.

9. Future Meeting Dates

- a. Thursday, November 19, 2015
- b. Thursday, December 17, 2015

10. Adjournment

A motion was made by Mr. Kessler and seconded by Ms. Payleitner to adjourn at 8:13 p.m. Motion carried by a unanimous voice vote.