

City of Ashland - Housing Committee Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Ashland Housing Committee was held on **Wednesday, July 14 , 2021 at 8:00 a.m. via GoTo Meetings.**

Committee Members Present: Liz Franek, Kaas Baichtal, Anne Whiting and Megan McBride

Committee Members Absent: Kathy Beeksma, Sam Ray

Staff Present: Chris Luebben, Mayor Lewis

Citizens Present: Millie Rounsville

Mayor Lewis opened the meeting at 8:00 a.m.

Agenda

1) Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda by Sam Ray. Seconded by Kaas Baichtal. Passed unanimously.

2) a.) Approve minutes from the May 12, 2021 Housing Committee meeting

Motion to table approval of the minutes from May 12, 2021 Housing Committee meeting by Sam Ray, seconded by Kaas Baichtal. Passed unanimously.

3) Citizen Comments

None.

4) Old business

a) Updates on progress with CDBG, HIP, and property maintenance

HIP – Chris Luebben explained that there are three new projects, she received 5 applications. Three of the five projects have been approved. Two need to be discussed by the committee.

Property Maintenance – Chris Luebben noted that there are several cases that concern garbage and bush overgrowth that inhibits traffic views.

Liz Franek mentioned that a constituent came to her with a property maintenance issue regarding a fence, she said that they were unsure who to go to regarding fencing violations.

HIP – Megan noted that there is around \$20,000 worth of funds in the HIP account.

CDBG – Megan explained that a loan has been paid off and some projects that have closed out. Megan also sent out some flyers to advertise for this program, and to find contractors that fit the project timeframes.

b) Updates and discussion regarding Task Force to address homelessness

Deb Lewis noted that the task force has not met in a few weeks.

Millie Roundsville noted that there has been progress on the task forces goals. She also mentioned that they are moving forward with a purchase on a hotel to utilize as a homeless shelter and are one step closer to closing.

Deb noted that Millie has been working hard on the purchase process, and wants her to address community comments about the possibility of the shelter.

Millie said the current offer is on a hotel with 34 rooms, they have other individuals and organizations that are interested in helping with funding and making the hotel ADA compliant. She noted that some citizens are concerned that this shelter will attract more homeless to the area, and that her data suggests that is not true. She also noted that the shelter will not house sex offenders.

Anne Whiting asked if there are any ways to we address the stereotypes that homeless people face, including education materials.

Millie said that there are certain groups of homeless that are stigmatized and some that are easier to house, such as children or veterans. She noted that this hotel has enough space to accommodate several groups.

Deb asked to return to Anne's question and if there is any way we can get some accurate information about homeless into the community? She noted that there will be public forum for the conditional use permit, but that will not be enough to educate the community.

Mille answered that option is to just define homeless. She wondered if there is an intern that could work on informational materials.

Liz noted that there are people who are "couch surfing" that could also benefit from this program.

5) New Business

a) The Housing Improvement Program Approval Procedure and Program Structure.

Megan noted that Kaas seems to have exited the call and that the committee no longer meets quorum.

b) Discussion of the Beaser Development site.

Deb mentioned that this site used to be an old trucking area and that the site has been cleaned up via a grant for future builds to be possible.

Megan explained some offers that were made for the site including residential plans.

Millie mentioned P&R Properties as a possible developer that could move forward with the Beaser site.

Deb explained that a common issue that the site is only 5 acres and that is too small for larger contractors or developers.

Millie mentioned that P&R is working on properties that are on areas that are smaller than 5 acres.

Megan asked Millie if she could provide contact information for P&R. Megan said that she wants to bring this area up again because she has received calls from interested developers.

Deb asked if there is any news on the Timeless Timber site.

Megan explained that the contractor is working internally on the project and that a development agreement will come through the committee eventually.

Deb asked Megan about the process of a Conditional Use Permit for the possible homeless shelter.

Megan explained that the process and timeline could look different depending on what we want to do.

Deb mentioned that she would like to have a public forum for the homeless shelter so people could explain the issues they face finding housing in the area.

6) Announcements

None

7) Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by , seconded by . Passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:45 am. Minutes by Mandelyn Lyons.