

JOINT CITY-COUNTY OF LA CROSSE HOUSING TASK FORCE

June 28, 2011

Administrative Center Room 3220

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Jill Billings, Kathleen Enz Finken, Mathias Harter, Jay Hoeschler, Nancy Gerrard, Audrey Kader, Todd Mandel, Steve Nicolai, Wayne Oliver, Michael Richards, Rick Staff, Marvin Wanders, Tina Wehrs (arr. 1:25)
MEMBERS EXCUSED:	Tara Johnson
OTHERS PRESENT:	Brian Fukuda, Charlie Handy, Karl Green, Larry Kirch, Doug Farmer, Amy Peterson, Jason Dillaber, Andrew Londre, David Olson, Mark VonRuden, Liane Escott, Briann Jones, Terri Pavlic

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ACCEPTANCE OF MEETING NOTES OF JUNE 14, 2011

MOTION by Gerrard/Kader to approve minutes of the June 14, 2011 meeting of the Joint City-County of La Crosse Housing Task Force **carried unanimously**. (Johnson, Wehrs excused)

ELECTION OF TASK FORCE VICE CHAIR

MOTION by Wanders/Kader to nominate Steve Nicolai as Vice Chair of the Joint City-County of La Crosse Housing Task Force. **MOTION** carried unanimously. (Johnson, Wehrs excused)

DISCUSSION OF ROOT CAUSES OF HOUSING ISSUES

Larry Kirch presented information regarding Urban Decline & Poverty in La Crosse. There is no single root cause, but the following factors may contribute: taxes, housing, ethnicity changes, transportation, crime & gangs, low wages, national trends, city zoning & regulations, schools.

DISCUSSION OF GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Per the authorizing resolution, the Housing Task Force is charged with the following:

- Reversing current trends of declining housing stock
- Reversing neighborhood deterioration
- Reducing property tax burden
- Improving economic health of the City, County and the entire region

The solutions this Task Force should offer will be for a variety of stakeholders and all of the different pieces of the equation – single family homes, rental properties, condos, the elderly, assisted living options. Also the group needs to take into consideration the availability of transportation; concentrations of poverty (better to have dispersions); enforcement of current ordinances; traffic issues.

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DISCUSSION OF METRICS

Karl Green presented metrics to gauge success in housing. Following are three methods:

1. Demolish/redevelop – focus on bottom end of property values
2. Improve/rehabilitation – focus on middle & upper level properties
3. New construction – existing empty lots, Park Plaza, Mobil Oil, etc.

The current mill rate is 12.28. Karl gave a breakdown between residential, commercial, manufacturing and personal property with total municipal assessed value at just under \$3 billion. Keeping everything constant, if we increased our residential by 10%, assuming levy didn't change, our projected mill rate drops to 11.66. If we increased residential value by 25% the mill rate would drop to 10.85; a 50% increase would be 9.7.

The City's housing stock may improve by:

Demolition - targeting homes with improvement value under \$100,000 with the greatest emphasis on the lowest value or replacement with new housing valued at \$125,000 or greater.

Rehabilitation - targeting homes less than \$80,000 as well as high rehab amount

New construction – targeting homes improvement value greater >\$150,000

Karl distributed a spreadsheet with various improvement value ranges, looking out at a 10 year goal, with the estimated number of replacements of demolition, rehabilitation and new construction.

DISCUSSION OF STRATEGIES

Charlie Handy discussed how we can drive demand. Breaking it down into demolition, rehabs, new development, as Karl discussed, how many of each of these should be in our goal? The numbers and goals we set during this process in each of these categories, have a difficulty level, but also there is a risk and award. Following are strategies that Charlie has identified:

1. Effective program examples from other communities that have met similar challenges to address deteriorating housing stock, aging housing stock, neighborhood deterioration, housing rehabilitation, new housing replacement.
2. Existing City of La Crosse Programs
3. Zoning & regulatory options, such as student district zoning and occupancy limits
4. Practices to stimulate private investment, such as the best uses for Tax Increment Financing
5. Inspection code enforcement priorities to enhance the highest property values
6. Capital priorities that best contribute to reinvestment and redevelopment

NEXT MEETING:

- Overview of what's allowable regarding TIFs as it relates to residential and new 1 year extension law

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- Identify where most potential development project areas are and lowest cost properties are
- Review City Master Plan
- Private Investment Options – what's been successful
- Enforcement of ordinances and laws re: rental properties (law enforcement to attend?)
- Staff to work with proposals a little more "real world"

NEXT MEETING DATE: July 12, 2011 at 1:00 in Room B190 of the Administrative Center

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

The above minutes may be approved, amended or corrected at the next Council meeting.

Recorded by Terri Pavlic