

JOINT CITY-COUNTY OF LA CROSSE HOUSING TASK FORCE

July 26, 2011

Administrative Center Room 3220

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Rick Staff, Steve Nicolai, Doug Farmer, Mathias Harter, Nancy Gerrard, Audrey Kader, Todd Mandel, Wayne Oliver, Michael Richards, Sara Sullivan; Tina Wehrs (arr. 2:00/exc. 2:50)
MEMBERS EXCUSED:	Jill Billings, Kathleen Enz Finken, Tara Johnson, Jay Hoeschler, Marvin Wanders
OTHERS PRESENT:	Brian Fukuda, Charlie Handy, Karl Green, Larry Kirch, Amy Peterson, Jason Dillaber, Eric Dillaber, Andrew Londre, David Olson, Nathan Patros, Liana Escott, Brianne Jones, Gregg Cleveland, Vicki Burke, Chief Kondracki, Bob Lawrence, Terri Pavlic

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:04 P.M.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ACCEPTANCE OF MEETING NOTES OF JULY 12, 2011

MOTION by Kader/Nicolai to approve minutes of the July 12, 2011 meeting of the Joint City-County of La Crosse Housing Task Force **carried unanimously**. (Billings, Enz Finken, Hoeschler, Johnson, Wanders, Wehrs excused)

COMMUNITY OUTREACH/PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Brianne Jones distributed a sample Facebook page that she created for the La Crosse Housing Task Force. This would link to the La Crosse County web site, but is just a different type of media to get our information out to the community. **MOTION** by Oliver/Gerrard to approve and move forward with the new Facebook page. **MOTION carried unanimously**. (Billings, Enz Finken, Hoeschler, Johnson, Wanders, Wehrs excused)

SUMMARY OF EXISTING CITY PROGRAMS & IMPACTS

Larry Kirch presented examples of the City of La Crosse's Investment Projects and Return on these Investments (many of these were done through block grant monies):

- South-side Neighborhood Center (6th & Hood) - this had been an old dance hall
Investment: \$540,000; now has a rain garden; The City Park and Rec runs it and has several programs and activities in the Center. Received \$90,000 from a weed & seed grant and \$40,000 from Gundersen Lutheran Medical Foundation
- Hood Park Shelter – playground equipment; roof improvements
- Powell Park lighting
- 7th and Farnam – put in basketball hoops and lighting; tennis court and landscaping improvements
- WHEDA Paint and Fix-up programs – received \$30,000 in two different funding cycles which helped fix and paint 60 homes - leveraged \$150,00 - \$200,00 in owner funded repairs. The City is supposed to be receiving another \$10,000 from WHEDA.
- Hamilton School Improvements – playground equipment/bike racks
- Southside community garden – The City gives \$10,000/yr. to support this effort.

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Housing Replacement Program

- Three houses were built through Habitat Partnership – the City donated lots and architectural services; Gundersen Lutheran and Habitat provided materials and labor.
- Since 1997 the City has completed and sold 9 homes
- The total assessed value at purchase for these homes was \$237,934
- The 2011 assessed value of these properties is \$1,171,600
- Based on the 2010 mill rate, there has been an increase of \$27,319 in the amount of taxes generated annually.

Larry discussed the unrecovered investment on each of the properties for the Housing Replacement Program.

TIF 14 – value of residential portion of TIF14 - Increase of over a \$1,000,00 of value since its creation - but we lost ground in 2010 and 2011.

Larry invited everyone to attend the Family & Childrens Summit on August 16th which is a collaborative all-day event between the City, County and School District of La Crosse.

LAW ENFORCEMENT ISSUES IN NEIGHBORHOOD

Chief Kondracki attended and discussed some of the La Crosse Police Department's policies. Chief Kondracki has done some research on places such as Rhode Island and Minneapolis, who have formed Mega Problem Solving Groups. They have gotten together with community developers and law enforcement and using a problem solving model were able to address some underlying causes of disorder and crime in neighborhoods. The La Crosse Police Department is a Community Policing Agency – which means that they are interested in forming partnerships with the community that can make a difference in getting to root causes. They currently use the SARA (scanning, analysis, response, and assessment) model.

One thing that the LPD is looking at and actively pursuing is a Nuisance Ordinance, which Janesville now has. This looks at troublesome locations and if there have been four police actions in one spot in a given year, the owners of the property can be cited under this ordinance. The LPD is willing to work with this committee to address underlying causes of neighborhood deterioration.

There is also another program called "Safe Streets Now", which the LPD is also looking into. This is an opportunity to empower neighborhood groups to take their own action.

NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION IDEAS

Brian Fukuda distributed a handout of strategies- starting with the Powell – Hood – Hamilton and Washburn neighborhoods – that might work to revitalize these challenging neighborhoods. Brian broke the categories down into

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- Encouraging Home Ownership
- Empowering Neighborhood Residents
- Encouraging Home Rehab Projects
- Protect Investments
- Creating Development Opportunities

And then broken down by:

- Public Programs
- Partnerships
- Private Programs

Brian showed a map with the major employers in these areas. Some comments/suggestions made were as follows:

- Add churches – and the faith based groups to the map
- Seems to be isolated and doesn't seem to be connected
- Need access to nice lighted walkways and bike paths
- Maximize the waterways
- Include the area back behind Gundersen Lutheran (Miller Street)
- Include 4th & Jackson area
- Incentives for neighborhood clean-up and motivation for investing in property
- How do we get pride back in the neighborhoods and get motivated – stimulus program? moratorium on taxes?
- Work with Habitat for Humanity – (Neighborhood Revitalization Project)
- Specialized senior-only housing
- What are the tipping points?
- New market tax credits
- Defer tax assessments on improvements
- Renovation Design Assistance
- Better inspection
- Better policing
- Private investment

The Task Force agreed that one goal would be to create a corridor from the south side to downtown that is attractive, safe and welcoming. (Need to find out what the plan is for the north/south corridor)

NEXT MEETING:

- At the first meeting, Brian Fukuda handed out a housing plan with background data, organized goals/strategies. Brian will e-mail this out again and asked that everyone review it again and give suggestions/ideas on what they feel the end product should be.
- Outline the tools we've discussed in regard to the corridor and areas that were discussed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jason Dillaber, Landlord, would like to respond to some of the issues:

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- Need to focus on single family neighborhoods – prevent these from going to rentals
- How do we solve economic diversity?
- Rents in this area are very depressed compared to other cities – get the rents assessed higher - solidify a soft rental market

Eric Dillaber, Landlord, also commented as follows:

- Commented regarding getting people excited –people need to feel assured when they make an investment. Enforce laws that exist and create new laws to help this issue.

NEXT MEETING DATE: August 9, 2011 at 1:30 in Room B190 of the Administrative Center

ADJOURN

There being no further business, **MOTION** by Farmer/Nicolai motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:20 **carried unanimously** (Billings, Enz Finken, Hoeschler, Johnson, Wanders, Wehrs excused)

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

Recorded by Terri Pavlic