

# JOINT CITY-COUNTY OF LA CROSSE HOUSING TASK FORCE

August 23, 2011

Administrative Center Room 3220

<b>MEMBERS PRESENT:</b>	Rick Staff, Steve Nicolai, Jill Billings, Kathleen Enz Finken, Doug Farmer, Mathias Harter, Audrey Kader, Todd Mandel, Wayne Oliver, Michael Richards, Sara Sullivan, Marvin Wanders
<b>MEMBERS EXCUSED:</b>	Jay Hoeshler, Tara Johnson, Tina Wehrs
<b>OTHERS PRESENT:</b>	Brian Fukuda, Charlie Handy, Karl Green, Larry Kirch, Amy Peterson, Jason Dillaber, Eric Dillaber, Brett Sawyer, David Olson, Andrew Londre, Brianne Jones, Steve O'Malley, Liana Escott, Betsey Bloom, Dick Milleto, Terri Pavlic

## CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:02 P.M.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

## APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF AUGUST 9, 2011

**MOTION** by Harter/Nicolai to approve minutes of the August 9, 2011 meeting of the Joint City-County of La Crosse Housing Task Force. **Motion carried unanimously.** (Hoeschler, Johnson & Wehrs excused)

## PRESENTATION OF CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES and NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION IDEAS

Charlie reviewed from the last meeting the data that indicated we had a mix of single family and multi family in the area we are focusing on. The largest portion of the multi-family is 6-12 unit buildings. He showed the assessed value per unit and the difference between the increased value in owner vs. tenant. The assessed value in the single family homes in this area is typically between \$55,000-\$85,000 per single family unit. The assessed value per unit in the multi-family unit was typically \$30,000-\$35,000 or lower. The arrest rate was significantly higher in the buildings with approximately 8 units (assessed typically at \$25,000) with large parking areas and little green space.

Larry Kirch referred back to all of the investments that the City has done with improvements to Powell Park/Hood Park/schools, etc. He indicated that 95% of the area has been rezoned back to single family. This area was the focus of the City's Neighborhood Renew Effort. How do we get to a larger scale – more than 2-3 homes a year? Even now they are having trouble selling the houses they do have for sale.

What's the tipping point to get investors to buy-in where there are enough incentives and opportunities for people wanting to invest in the neighborhood. Much discussion followed about what section of the City we should actually be focusing on. The corridor from Gundersen to downtown, various neighborhoods, campus area, Goosetown, etc. How do we find ways to draw people back into the City of La Crosse? In the end, we need to look at a wide array of projects and determine what we should focus on and prioritize them.

It was suggested that we need to create an Educational Housing District and create goals and policies related to this. This would be a collaborative effort between UWL/WTC/Viterbo and the community to re-develop these areas. The staff was asked to do some research on this.

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Some ideas on this are: having a safe, walkable district; regulations on parking, trash, furniture on lawns (need to enforce these things and hold renters/owners accountable). Possibly sell parking permits.

The committee felt that we should take a few weeks off from the regular meetings so staff can update current outlines, pull all of these ideas together, and bring some proposals to the committee. Brian assured the committee that staff has been working on developing these ideas and putting together proposals, but it isn't complete yet. At the next meeting, we will revisit what's in the La Crosse Housing Plan Outline goals originally set and the committee will prioritize them.

Marvin Wanders, along with other committee members and staff will meet outside of this committee to put together some information regarding an educational housing district. They will come back with a report to this committee in November with their findings.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Jason Dillaber, spoke regarding the university housing district issue, specifically the parking issues. He wants the committee to be certain that we aren't making things worse in certain cases. Also, regarding the issue of tax base, make sure this isn't going to make things worse – it could create the opposite effect. He feels we need to identify why kids are leaving the campus area.

Eric Dillaber – feels that some other neighborhoods are a lot worse than the UWL or Goosetown, and that these areas have never been nicer.

David Olson – spoke regarding the enforcement of the fire codes. He feels that most of the fires are from candles, incense, cigarettes, etc. and that the tenants should be fined - not the landlords. He also felt that more landlords should be included in these meetings.

Rick Staff indicated that he has been given the opportunity to meet with the Apartment Owners Association on Sept. 15, 2011, and will continue to encourage them to come to these meetings.

**NEXT MEETING DATE: September 6, 2011 at 1:00 in Room B190 of the Administrative Center**

### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- Employer Assisted Housing – Diane Schobert (WHEDA)
- Revisit the La Crosse Housing Plan Outline

### **ADJOURN**

There being no further business, **MOTION** by Sullivan/Nicolai to adjourn the meeting at 2:58 p.m. **MOTION carried unanimously.** (Hoeshler, Johnson, Wehrs excused)

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

**Recorded by Terri Pavlic**