

MINUTES FOR HOUSING COMMISSION MEETING

DATE: Tuesday, February 22, 2022
TIME: 4:00 p.m.
PLACE: Housing and Community Development Department
350 West 6th Street; Dubuque, IA 52001

Chairperson Rick Baumhover called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. following staff assurance of compliance with Iowa Open Meeting Law.

Commissioners Present: Rick Baumhover Gail Weitz
Hilary Dalton Margie White
Amy Eudaley Sam Wooden

Commissioners Absent: Janice Craddieth

Staff Present: Alexis Steger Tonya England
Gina Hodgson

Public Present: *None*

Certification of Minutes – December 14, 2021, Housing Commission Meeting

Commissioner Hilary Dalton moved to approve the Minutes for the December 14, 2021 Housing Commission Meeting. Commissioner Amy Eudaley seconded. Roll call. Six (6) in favor. Motion passed.

Correspondence/Public Input

None

New Business

- a. Set Public Hearing for Annual Plan Review to take place April 12, 2022 – moving up the next regularly scheduled Housing Commission meeting in order to take Annual Plan to City Council on 4/18/22 and in time to send to HUD by the 4/30/22 deadline.

Gina Hodgson, Assisted Housing Supervisor, stated the Annual Plan has to be posted for review at least 45 days prior to the Public Hearing. The Housing Department would like to request for the Public Hearing to be set for Tuesday, April 12, 2022 so that there will be time to submit the Plan to City Council for approval. It will be due to Housing and Urban Development (HUD) by April 30, 2022.

Commissioner Eudaley moved to approve the Minutes for the December 14, 2021 Housing Commission Meeting. Commissioner Gail Weitz seconded. Roll call. Six (6) in favor. Motion passed.

b. Local Preference for HCV Program

Alexis Steger, Department Director, explained HUD's Office of Fair Housing was sent a request to institute preference points. The amount of port-out payments increased from \$40,000 annually to approximately \$433,000 this past year. HUD suggested that local preferences be instituted as a solution to reduce the amount of port-outs.

The Voluntary Compliance Agreement (VCA) stated the issue with the preference points was in the way they were implemented, which caused a disparate impact. The Department is looking to propose one (1) preference point if the person is living in the city of Dubuque and one (1) preference point if the a person is on the coordinated entry list for homelessness.

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Steger also stated the Department is waiting for a new software to be implemented so the demographics may be tracked. A plan will be submitted to City Council in April for approval and, if approved, implemented in May. Individuals will show proof of residing in Dubuque through leases, bills, and/or utilities.

c. Resignation of Janice Craddieth

Hodgson announced Commissioner Janice Craddieth called and verbally provided her resignation from the Housing Commission due to her moving to another area.

Reports

a. Continuum of Care Special Needs Assistance Program

There was no report.

b. Community Development Advisory Commission Report

Commissioner Hilary Dalton spoke about the Community Development Advisory Commission meeting that was held on January 19, 2022. The Commission was asked to review/approve funds for an elderly person that were in excess of \$5,000 for the homeowner accessibility program; a bathroom renovation was going to cost close to \$13,000. Secondly, the Commission reviewed the Consolidation Annual Performance and Evaluation Report report for the Public Hearing.

c. Rehab Report

Karla Escobar, Financial Specialist, spoke about the properties that are currently being rehabilitated. She highlighted 2407 Queen Street and 2414 Windsor, which are anticipated to be completed in March/April.

d. Assisted Housing Waiting List Statistical Summary

Hodgson stated there were 443 applicants that applied for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program on February 8, 2022. Two hundred fifty (250) applicants were randomly selected to be placed on the waiting list. In April 2021, nine hundred twelve (912) households were being served; this number has decreased to eight hundred six (806) households due to HUD ceasing the issuance of vouchers to prevent overspending.

Information Sharing

a. Happy Pro HCV Software Update

Hodgson reported a new software, Happy Pro, is in process of being implemented. The data conversion will take place at the end of March 2022. Staff will be training with Happy Software in April. The contract with Emphasys will remain in effect for one additional year.

b. FSS Grant Awarded for CY2022

Hodgson spoke about the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program, which was awarded a FSS Grant for \$133,507 for calendar year 2022 in January. LaMetra Murdock, the new FSS Coordinator, is working to rebrand the program; it will be called the Next Level Savings Program.

c. Waiting List Status Update

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Hodgson explained it will be at least May 2022 before the waiting list is reopened with the new software, Happy Pro.

d. CoC/SNAP Grant Application Status

Hodgson stated the Department applied for a grant to fund the CoC SNAP program for the upcoming year, which starts in July. The City of Dubuque is the grantee and Community Solutions of Eastern Iowa (CSEI) manages the casework. The City of Dubuque has sent a letter to CSEI to notify them of the intention to not reapply for the grant for July 2023. The program has only had one family to move to the Housing Choice Voucher program since its inception in 2016. The current clients on the program will be issued tenant protection vouchers.

e. Moderate Rehabilitation Grant Status

Steger stated the Moderate Rehabilitation (Mod Rehab) program contract will not be renewed. Although HUD dropped the program twenty (20) years ago, HUD allowed the participants to remain in the program. The two (2) landlords who have units in the Mod Rehab program are not situated well to convert to the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program offered by HUD. Tenants who are on the Mod Rehab program when the contract terminates will be issued tenant protection vouchers. The landlords may market the units to anyone including Section 8 participants.

f. Steger will be presenting the budget for Housing & Community Development Department to the City Council on March 9, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Dalton moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Weitz seconded. Motion passed by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 5:14 p.m.

Minutes taken by:



Tonya England
Recording Secretary

Respectfully Submitted:



Gina Hodgson
Assisted Housing Supervisor