

MINUTES FOR HOUSING COMMISSION MEETING

DATE: Tuesday, April 25, 2023
TIME: 4:00 p.m.
PLACE: Housing and Community Development Department
 350 West 6th Street; Dubuque, IA 52001

Chairperson Yindra Dixon called the meeting to order at 4:12 p.m. following staff assurance of compliance with Iowa Open Meeting Law.

Commissioners Present:	Rick Baumhover	Ross Janes	Renee Kehoe
	Yindra Dixon	Calvin Jones	Margie White
	Amy Eudaley	Rick Merfeld	Sam Wooden

Commissioners Absent: Cathy Dickens

Staff Present:	Alexis Steger	Hollie Ohnesorge
	Gina Hodgson	

Public Present: Jake Kurczek, Commissioner for Equity & Human Rights Commission

Oath of Office – Ross Janes

The Oath of Office was completed by Ross Janes.

Oath of Office – Calvin Jones

The Oath of Office was completed by Calvin Jones.

Certification of Minutes – January 31, 2023, Housing Commission Meeting

Commissioner Rick Merfeld moved to approve the Minutes for the January 31, 2023 Housing Commission Meeting. Commissioner Margie White seconded. Nine (9) in favor. Zero (0) not in favor. Zero (0) abstained. Motion passed.

Correspondence/Public Input

There was no correspondence nor public input.

New Business

a) Goal Setting

2022-2023 Successes

1. The Housing Commission set up subcommittees. The impact was the commissioners had an opportunity to engage with Housing leaders and they came up with plans and ideas for improvement and community engagement.
2. The Housing Department completed implementation of new software.
3. The number of housing inspectors on staff increased.
4. The Commission met and held all meetings over the past year. The current and new members have attended meetings, which has enabled work to be completed.
5. Tenant education remains as an important element. Although there was no forward movement, the staff kept tenant education on their priority list.
6. The public has been invited to the meetings for the Housing Commission.
7. Representatives from the Housing Commission have attended meetings for City Council and neighborhood associations.
8. The guests at the meetings are recognized when in attendance at the meetings; this enhances public participation, input, and education.
9. The providing of information to the Housing Commission on ordinances and HUD laws and being given access to Sharepoint for communication of important documents enabled the Commissioners to effectively perform duties.

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2023-2024 Goals

1. Increase attendance of Housing Commissioners at each of the four neighborhood association meetings.

It was determined that a copy of the schedule for the neighborhood associations would be added to Sharepoint. The following commissioners volunteered to attend the the meeting for the respective association:

Downtown Neighborhood Association – Rick Merfeld & Amy Eudaley

Point Neighborhood Association – Rick Baumhover

North End Neighborhood Association – Margie White & Ross Janes

Langworthy Neighborhood Association – Sam Wooden

2. Coordinate with the Office of Shared Prosperity & Neighborhood Support to obtain information from the neighborhood association meetings when Housing Commissioners are not available to attend.
3. Create a list of talking points after each Housing Commission Meeting that should be shared at the neighborhood association meetings
4. Increase landlord acceptance of Housing Choice Vouchers by 10 through enhancement of tenant education process
5. Increase lease-ups without creating a disparact impact
6. Increase public awareness to destigmatize public housing assistance for everyone in the community
7. Increase safe, affordable housing for low- and extremely low-income tenants in all under served populations
8. Continue to create community awareness of Housing Choice Voucher programs
9. Increase data from landlords on why the Housing Choice Voucher is accepted/not accepted through rental license application process

Commissioner Amy Eudaley moved to approve the 2022-2023 Successes and the 2023-2024 Goals. Commissioner Merfeld seconded. Nine (9) in favor. Zero (0) not in favor. Zero (0) abstained. Motion passed.

b) Discuss research, outcomes and marketing for preference point process

Commissioner Yindra Dixon reported it is imperative that the audience for marketing the preference point process is understood and the marketing plan is known. It was suggested that the outcomes be created and reported if the process is implemented. Also if the audience is not being reached or has limitations, a plan should be created for the Housing Commissioners to support the marketing plan.

c) Collaboration strategies with local utilities for program participants

Commissioner Dixon stated that currently landlords are asked to decrease rent because a tenant may need to use money from vouchers for payment of utilities. Alexis Steger, Department Director, explained tenants may receive assistance through other resources for utilities; the utilities may not be adjusted until the resource may be considered as income.

d) Security deposits and 13-month lease payments

Commissioner Dixon asked whether resources are available for security deposits and 13-month leases that include security deposits. Steger stated HUD does not provide for that with Section 8; the Department is looking to apply for funding at the state level through Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) to assist with providing deposits. There are some non-profit partners that provide for security deposits; the funding is usually depleted early in the year.

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Reports

a) Community Development Advisory Commission Report

Commissioner Renee Kehoe stated the Community Development Advisory Commission approved a \$135,000 grant for Catholic Charities to start on the installation of elevators at Ecumenical Towers.

b) Assisted Housing Waiting List Statistical Summary

Hollie Ohnesorge, Assisted Housing Coordinator, reported the Waiting List Summaries show were 150 applicants were randomly selected in January and February 2023. For March 2023, all 179 applicants who applied were placed on the waiting list; there was no random selection.

c) Housing Choice Voucher Participant Statistical Summary

Ohnesorge shared information on current voucher holders reported on the Housing Choice Voucher Participant Statistical Summary. There are 790 families being served; the report breaks down the information by demographics.

d) Denial/Termination Meeting Results

Ohnesorge stated there were no housing participants up for termination. Several applicants came up for denial of assistance due to criminal background; it was decided by the team that either the applicants could go on the program or had to reapply for the program at a later date.

Information Sharing

a) The next Housing Commission Meeting will be held in July 2023.

b) Shane Hoeper, Combination Inspector, was recognized for obtaining the certification of Master Code Professional.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Ross Janes moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner White seconded. Motion passed by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:



Gina Hodgson
Assisted Housing Supervisor