

MINUTES OF HOUSING COMMISSION MEETING

DATE: 23 June 2009
TIME: 4:00 PM
PLACE: Housing and Community Development Department
350 West 6th Street, Suite 312, Dubuque, IA 52001

Chairperson Kapler, following staff assurance of compliance with Iowa Open Meeting Law, called the meeting to order at 4:04 pm.

Commissioners Present:	William Helling Judie Root Linda Frommelt	Lynn Sutton David Kapler
Commissioners Absent:	Dorothy Culbertson Char Eddy	Dorothy Schwendinger, OSF Jim Holz
Staff Present:	David Harris Joleen Patterson	Janet Walker Cpl. Mike Kane
Public Present:	None	

Review and Certification of Minutes of 26 May 2009 Commission Meeting

Commissioner Helling moved to approve the minutes. All present in favor. Motion passed.

Correspondence/Public Input

Commissioner Root brought up the issue of hearings and appeals and suggested that each month a commission member attend the hearings to get the experience of the appeals process and to continue to have the face to face contact with the clients. She suggested that the commissioners rotate monthly to attend the hearings. David stated that the commissioners are more than welcome to attend. Commissioner Helling mentioned that Mr. O'Brien previously had a list of procedures for the conduct of hearings and appeals and suggested that these documents be provided to the commissioners prior to attending a hearing. Commissioner Frommelt suggested that each commissioner attend one hearing every six months, if they are available to attend more than they have the option. She would like to see this as more of an expectation instead of a requirement. Commissioner Kapler recommended that the staff update the document that outlines the expectations of a commissioner to include that each commissioner is requested to attend one hearing every six months and present the updated document at the next Housing Commission meeting.

Old Business

David shared that the City Council approved the elimination of the use of the governing board that was discussed at last month's Housing Commission meeting.

New Business

Administrative Plan Change – Section II – Family Definitions

Janet explained that the proposed change to the Single Member Household definition will result in single persons being provided assistance only after all elderly, disabled or single displaced persons are removed or pulled from the waiting list.

Administrative Plan Change – Section X – Subsidy Standards

Janet explained the proposed change will result in a single person household being issued a zero bedroom Voucher size. The bedroom size of the Voucher is directly related to the assisted housing payment or rent subsidy that will be paid on behalf of the family. The family selects its own unit.

Administrative Plan Change – Section XII – Unit Selection and Approval

Subsection B - Portability

Janet explained that Portability is the ability of a family issued a Voucher, to move anywhere within the State of Iowa or anywhere in the United States where a tenant-based program is administered. HUD has issued a notice to define the receiving PHA's timeline to notify the Initial PHA if a Voucher is being absorbed into a program or is being billed to the Initial PHA. The HUD Notice allows for billing notices to be sent up to 60 days after expiration of the voucher term. The proposed change will result in the City of Dubuque to be notified on a timelier basis or within 120 days. The current admin plan allows for six months to pass before being notified of the billing from the Receiving PHA.

Commissioner Root motioned to approve the Administrative Plan Changes. Commissioner Helling seconded. All present in favor.

Change to Washington Neighborhood Rehab – Loan Program Policies

Joleen explained that the rehab staff has been meeting with David to discuss ways to change the program to have the ability to help more families in the Washington Neighborhood. They have had to turn down some projects due to marginal credit history or turn projects down due to the rehab cost being greater than what can be afforded. The proposed changes include evaluating applicants with poor credit histories differently. Currently loans to persons with poor credit are not approved. Under the proposed guidelines, these persons will be referred for credit counseling. They will be required to re-affirm with their creditors. Upon satisfactory completion of credit counseling, they will be reconsidered for a loan.

The proposed guidelines will also include housekeeping. If housekeeping is an issue, applicants will be required to receive instruction/advice from a service agency or cleaning business for approximately one to two months. Costs will be included in the loan. Commission members felt that applicants may feel insulted to be critiqued on their housekeeping skills. Commissioner Frommelt suggested that for every new loan, all applicants participate in the housekeeping piece; she feels the educational piece is vital. David commented that we have a fiduciary responsibility to be certain the home is being maintained in good condition. Too many loans have been turned down due to housekeeping skills and to turn the Washington neighborhood around, more loans must be given. Commissioner Kapler suggested that a "standards" ranking system be established to evaluate each home on the housekeeping skills.

The proposed changes also include allowing an additional \$35,000 loan as needed. The additional money will be made as a 10-year forgivable loan, forgiven at 10% per year. Funds will also be made available for exterior repair or repainting of detached garages.

Commissioner Holz submitted an email comment that he would like to see loans be available for demolition/reconstruction of garages as well. Some structures aren't worth repairing and need to be removed. Joleen informed the Commissioners that the CDBG regulations do not allow the rebuild of accessory buildings. Commissioner Frommelt suggested that Joleen contact local churches that may have service projects for groups to assist with the garage painting.

The final policy change at this time is to eliminate the Operation Up-Keep Program because of the goal to complete all interior/exterior rehab. If all interior/exterior cannot be completed, then the exterior will be completed as well as all interior code life-safety violations. Commissioner Root motioned to approve the policy changes. Commissioner Helling seconded. All present in favor.

Housing Trust Fund Committee Report: 28 May 09

Joleen explained that the Community Foundation will not be able to guarantee the Step by Step project as was previously agreed. The Trust Fund was requested by Step by Step to increase the original tax credit guarantee by \$75,000 making the total guarantee \$150,000. This was approved by the Trust Fund Committee at its 28 May meeting. The funds must be expended within two years and each year, 20% of the guaranteed amount will be reduced, which will be used to provide loans to moderate income families in the Washington neighborhood.

Joleen discussed that the Housing Trust Fund has remaining funds from for the 2007 Housing Trust Fund Program Award. \$50,000 of the award will be put towards kitchen improvements and other remodeling at the Maria House, which is located in the Washington Neighborhood.

Commissioner Terms of Office

Commissioner Holz, Commissioner Kapler and Commissioner Culbertson's terms will expire in August 2010. Commissioner Holz has committed to renewing his term.

Information Sharing

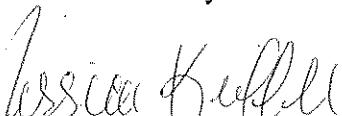
Video "Diverse Dubuque"

David shared a video distributed by the Human Rights Department.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Root moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:19PM. All present in favor.

Minutes taken by:



Jessica Kieffer
Recording Secretary

Respectfully submitted by:



David Harris
Department Director