

**Minutes  
HOUSING COMMISSION  
(UNAPPROVED)**

**DATE:** Tuesday, February 26, 2019

**TIME:** 4:00 p.m.

**PLACE:** Housing and Community Development Conference Room, Third Floor of the Historic Federal Building, 350 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 312, Dubuque, IA.

Vice Chair, Dorothy Schwendinger, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m., following staff assurance of compliance with Iowa Open Meeting Law.

**Commissioners Present:** Adam Babinat, Michelle Becwar, Nicole Borovic, Brad Cavanagh, Dorothy Schwendinger, Coralita Shumaker, Gail Weitz, Sam Wooden

Commissioners Absent: Janice Craddieth, Amy Eudaley

**Staff Present:** Alexis Steger, Teresa Bassler, Kris Neyen, Lisa Barton, Scott Koch

**Public Present:** Amanda Hohmann (ECIA), Kathy Sutton (NAACP), Allison Wong and Charles Grant (KCRG TV)

**Certification of Minutes**

Motion by Weitz to approve the November 27, 2018 meeting minutes as submitted. Seconded by Babinat. Motion carried 7-0.

*Commissioner Borovic arrived at 4:03 p.m.*

**Old Business**

The memorial plaque for Ann Michalski is ready. The Commission would like to present the plaque when they dedicate the Housing and Community Development Conference Room to Ann following the Housing Commission meeting scheduled for Tuesday, April 23, 2019. Refreshments and snacks will be provided.

Schwendinger reported the Commission previously wanted to complete an evaluation of their goals and would like the topic to be added to the agenda for March's meeting.

**New Business**

**Review of FY19 PHA Annual Plan Draft and Set Public Hearing**

Teresa Bassler, Assisted Housing Supervisor, explained that a new Public Housing Authority (PHA) Annual Plan is required annually. Bassler provided a draft and reported the plan must be submitted to Housing and Urban Development (HUD) by April 12<sup>th</sup> (75 days before the end of the fiscal year). Prior to this date, the plan needs to go before the Resident Advisory Board (RAB) for comments. The plan also requires a public hearing

and council approval. Bassler reported she is planning to present the plan to RAB on Wednesday, March 20<sup>th</sup> and will add any comments received. The Commission needs to set a public hearing for the March 26<sup>th</sup> Housing Commission meeting for public comment before submitting the plan for council approval.

Bassler asked Commissioners if there are any strategies or goals they would like to add. Alexis Steger, Housing and Community Development Director, explained the City is focusing on two important strategies: affordable housing - working on getting to rents that are reasonable for low-income population. Steger reported they are encouraging reasonable rents with Urban Revitalization which are guaranteed to be affordable; and secondly, awareness – being aware of the number of people in need and getting the word out there. Steger stated they are also looking to apply for small grant opportunities geared toward helping veterans and foster families.

Schwendinger reported the Commission did not receive the new Source of Income report that was previously promised due to the cancellation of December's meeting and not having quorum for January's meeting. Steger reported as soon as they knew they didn't have quorum in January, an email was sent out letting the Commission know the report was going to City Council that same night and stating if they had any questions to attend the meeting. In the future, Schwendinger would like all council items to come before the Commission earlier before being submitted to council for approval.

After discussion, motion by Babinat to receive the PHA Annual Plan and set a public hearing for Tuesday, March 26, 2019. Seconded by Becwar. Motion carried 8-0.

## **Reports**

### **Crime/Nuisance Property Report**

Corporal Scott Koch, Investigator, reported that due to a request from the Commission, the crime report on the Housing Choice Voucher Program was updated and is now in a more narrative manner. Schwendinger stated there appeared to be more voucher related arrests than normal and Koch responded that it is about average, running around 4.5%. Koch reported that monthly statistics showed 4.6% program related arrests in November 2018 and 5.03% in December 2018 which results in a .43% increase. Dubuque and Dubuque County had 326 arrests in November and 358 arrests in December.

Koch provided a Nuisance properties report. Koch explained that over the last several years the police department is looking at properties that have quality of life calls for service such as loud music complaints on the police side and trash complaints on the Public Works or Housing side. Koch reported the police department is looking for quality of life issues that cause problems for others and patterns, such as the number of calls received for a certain address. When complaints are received, Landlords are contacted first to see if the problems can be resolved.

All City Departments are now required to report complaints in the City's Web QA program as the City wants to capture all information and by doing so, it will help the communication among all departments.

## **Rehab Report**

Kris Neyen, Rehabilitation Program Supervisor, reported the rehabilitation of 2407 Queen Street is now underway and bids were received and contracts signed for 2320 Mineral Street.

Neyen explained that Community Housing Initiative (CHI) and True North properties are eligible to receive \$25,000 for homebuyer assistance. Neyen also reported that CHI and True North can receive up to \$30,000 per unit to help purchase and rehabilitate properties as part of their partnership with the City.

## **Assisted Housing Waiting List Statistical Summary**

Bassler reported the department has begun pulling from the Housing Choice Voucher waiting list heavily in February and will continue through March. Still waiting for the budget amount for this year, but anticipating the amount to be the same as last year, if not a little higher. Bassler reported applicants will be pulled from the current waiting list first. When the waiting list reaches 250 participants, Bassler reported they will consider opening the waiting list and accepting new applicants.

## **Housing Choice Voucher Participant Statistical Summary**

Bassler explained that the Waiting List Statistical Summary details all the applicants on the Housing Choice Voucher waiting list. Bassler reported there are approximately 806 participants on the waiting list for December; however, the December report was not available. Bassler stated there were quite a few participants that ported out to Cook County and City of Chicago Housing Authority. The Chicago Housing Authority absorbed City of Dubuque vouchers which took them off the City's program and placed them on their own. Due to the large number of portability applicants, the Housing Department will see a drop in the number of Housing Choice Voucher participants and this is the reason the department is currently pulling so heavily from the waiting list.

## **Continuum of Care Special Needs Assistance Program**

Amanda Hohmann, Regional Homeless Coordinator, with East Central Development Corporation (ECDC), presented information on the Continuum of Care Specials Needs Assistance Program. Hohmann reported that the numbers don't usually change much because people are known to stay on the program. Hohmann reported that participants with zero income has decreased.

Hohmann also discussed the Rapid Rehousing Program, a program to assist people to get set up in a rental unit. Hohmann reported that we can't fund anyone living in a subsidized unit; however, if it is not subsidized, then assistance could be provided. Hohmann reported when terminating assistance, we have to follow the Housing First model, so we can only terminate based on a lease violation.

Bassler reported we were awarded a Special Needs Assistance grant in January that will begin on July 1, 2019 in the amount of \$84,739, a slight increase from last year.

## Information Sharing

### **Denial/Termination Meeting Results**

Bassler provided a new "draft model" report of Denial and Termination Results to the Commission. Bassler explained as the Housing Department looks at our rules to deny or terminate an applicant, they have the caseworkers work with the Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) Coordinators to see if there is anything they can do before denying or terminating a participant. The information included in the report was tracked back to 2018. There are separate reports for applicants and participants. Steger explained they want the Commission to get familiar with the report and recommend any changes deemed necessary. This report was created to be sure we don't have a disparate impact on individuals/families that are denied or terminated. Reviewing the report, there is no disparate impact. We are looking to provide this information to the Board, who is comprised of individuals with different backgrounds, to provide input to make sure we continue to not have a disparate impact.

### **FSS Grant Announcement**

Bassler reported the City was awarded an FSS Grant for this calendar year in the amount of a little over \$133,000 for two coordinators. A new Self Sufficiency Coordinator will be hired to replace Ermina Soler's position.

### **Circles Initiative**

Cavanaugh requested an update on Circle Initiative. Steger gave an overview of the rebranding of the formerly known Circles Initiative and reported that National Circles didn't provide anything to our Initiative. We were only paying for the use of the name so a decision was made to put the money to a better use. Pieces of Circles will still exist, but we will be adding case management that we decided was missing. Circles is not going away, it is just being renamed to Gaining Opportunities, which will be performing at a higher level.

### **Housing Commission Goals**

Housing Commission's upcoming suggested goals will be added to March's agenda.

### **Adjournment**

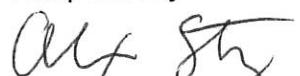
There being no further business, Becwar motioned to adjourn at 5:04 p.m. Seconded by Shumaker. Motion carried 8-0

Minutes transcribed by:



Lisa Barton  
Housing Financial Specialist

Respectfully submitted by:



Alexis Steger, Department Director