

MINUTES FOR HOUSING COMMISSION MEETING

DATE: Tuesday, April 27, 2021
TIME: 4:00 p.m.
PLACE: Housing and Community Development Department
350 West 6th Street, Room 250; 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
Michelle Becwar
Janice Craddieth (*arrived 4:37 p.m.*)
Hilary Dalton
Amy Eudaley

Jeff Lenhart
Cynthia Washington
Gail Weitz
Margie White

Commissioners Absent: Sam Wooden

Staff Present: Alexis Steger
Gina Hodgson
Tonya England

Kris Neyen
Cate Richter

Public Present: Amanda Dupont

Oath of Office – Jeff Lenhart

Jeff Lenhart read the Oath of Office.

Oath of Office – Cynthia Washington

Cynthia Washington read the Oath of Office.

Oath of Office – Margie White

Margie White read the Oath of Office.

Introduction of Housing Commissioners

The Housing Commissioners introduced themselves.

Certification of Minutes – March 23, 2021 Housing Commission Meeting

Commissioner Hilary Dalton moved to approve the Minutes for the March 23, 2021 Housing Commission Meeting. Commissioner Michelle Becwar seconded. Roll call. Seven (7) in favor. Motion passed.

Commissioner Gail Weitz spoke to say that she was listening to the meeting; she did not indicate whether or not she was in favor of the certification of the Minutes.

Correspondence/Public Input

None

New Business

a. Input for City Council Goal Setting

Alexis Steger, Department Director, explained City Council is preparing for their Goal Setting Session in June 2021. City Council is looking for input from the Boards and Commissions on things they would like to see in the community. Items the Housing Commission recommended last year included Source of Income Ordinance and more affording housing units.

The Housing Commission suggested the following for the Board & Commission Successes (2020-2021):

MINUTES FOR HOUSING COMMISSION MEETING

1. The Housing Commission successfully acted on the additional requirements caused by the Cares Act to take care of pressing housing priorities of the community.
2. Approval of the landlord incentives for Section 8 housing
3. Approval of a new Administrative Plan for Housing Choice Voucher, which aided policies to get applicants housed quicker and helped remove barriers for landlords
4. Voted to take the Source of Income to the City Council
5. The staff have been phenomenal with dealing with the additional workload during the pandemic and with the expansion of the department by adding two new positions--an inspector and assistant director.
6. The Housing Commission came together as one voice even though there was a loss of 3 Commissioners. There were two (2) emergency meetings held with a quorum.

Commissioner Amy Eudaley moved to approve the Board & Commission Successes as stated. Commissioner Dalton seconded. Roll call. Eight (8) in favor. Motion passed.

The Housing Commission provided the following for the Board & Commission Initiatives (2021-2022):

1. Renter education
2. Safe, affordable, equitable housing stock for existing and new build
3. Focus on mental health
4. Using assistance to purchase homes
5. Landlord education about Housing Choice Voucher program
6. Focus on assistance on mobile home renters against predatory practices

Commissioner Amy Eudaley moved to approve the recommendations for the Board and Commission Initiatives for 2021-2022. Commissioner Gail Weitz seconded. Roll call. Nine (9) in favor. Motion passed.

b. Administrative Plan Revision: Repayment Agreements

Gina Hodgson, Assisted Housing Supervisor, explained the department looked at the chapters that spoke about repayment agreements this month. She highlighted proposed changes to Chapters 3 Eligibility and Chapter 16 Program Administration. *A copy of the Housing & Community Development Department Public Housing Authority Administrative Plan Amendment is attached.*

The Housing Commission recommended changing verbiage under 3-III.C. OTHER PERMITTED REASONS FOR DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE, second bullet from "The family has breached the terms of a repayment agreement entered into with a PHA, unless the family repays the full amount of the debt covered in the repayment agreement prior to being issued a voucher." to "The family has broken the terms of a repayment agreement entered into with a PHA, unless the family repays the full amount of the debt covered in the repayment agreement prior to being issued a voucher."

Commissioner Eudaley moved to approve the Administrative Plan Revision: Repayment Agreements with the recommended change. Commissioner Dalton seconded. Roll call. Eight (8) in favor. Motion passed.

Reports

a. Community Development Advisory Commission Report

MINUTES FOR HOUSING COMMISSION MEETING

Commissioner Dalton stated the Community Development Advisory Commission met on April 21, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. They reviewed a block grant application for Liberty Recovery Center--a 24-person facility for individuals recovering from substance abuse and related illnesses. The application requested a new roof, new air conditioning, new concrete in the front of the property. The grant application was approved.

They also worked on the successes and initiatives for City Council. Chris Lester is moving to a position in the Water Department.

b. Assisted Housing Waiting List Statistical Summary

Cate Richter, Assisted Housing Coordinator, stated the Waiting List for the Housing Choice Voucher opened in February. Due to funding, the Waiting List did not reopen in March and the applicants selected in February have not been pulled from the Waiting List.

There are currently three (3) waiting lists for Mod Rehab. She is working to move applicants from the Mod Rehab Waiting List to the new Mod Rehab One -Bedroom or Mod Rehab Two-Bedroom Waiting List.

c. Housing Choice Voucher Participant Statistical Summary

Richter reported the Housing Choice Voucher Participant Statistical Summary showed an increase in participants to 903 participants—as of March 2021. The Department has not had 900 participants on the program since 2011.

d. Denial/Termination Meeting Results

Richter explained the caseworkers, Family Self Sufficiency Coordinators, Gina Hodgson and her meet as a group to determine whether or not applicants and participants should be allowed onto or terminated from a program.

Hodgson stated they are working with HUD to determine whether or not there is funding available in the budget to continue lease ups.

e. Rehab Report

Kris Neyen, Rehabilitation Supervisor, reported four (4) properties have been sold since October—which is when they took over the properties from True North. She will send a copy of her report for the May Housing Commission Meeting.

The adult HEART Project will be bidding 2527 Washington Street. The student HEART Project will be bidding 821 Washington Street.

f. Continuum of Care Special Needs Assistance Program

Amanda Hohmann-Dupont, Regional Homeless Coordinator with East Central Development Corporation, explained the Housing Commission is the advisory board for the Continuum of Care Special Needs Assistance Program (CoC SNAP). CoC SNAP is a permanent supportive housing program for individuals who are chronically homeless who have a history of homelessness and have a physically disabling condition related to physical health, mental health, substance abuse, and/or HIV/AIDS.

MINUTES FOR HOUSING COMMISSION MEETING

Hohmann also discussed the Housing First Model. This model works first on assisting individuals who have been identified through the coordinated entry program with obtaining housing. The focus is then placed on the barriers that have prevented the individuals from maintaining stable housing and on connecting the individuals with resources to support other needs they have.

The program is currently supporting 15 households; one single individual and a family with children were recently added as participants. The number of households supported depends on the CoC SNAP budget.

Information Sharing

- a. The May Housing Commission Meeting will be held on May 11, 2021 at 4 p.m.; it is the public hearing for the PHA Annual Plan. A copy of the draft PHA Plan is currently posted on the website at <https://www.cityofdubuque.org/1484/Administrative-Plans>.
- b. Michaela Freiburger presented on energy efficiency in older buildings at the Convivium in Dubuque.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Eudaley moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Dalton seconded. Motion passed by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Minutes taken by:


Tonya England
Recording Secretary

Respectfully Submitted:


Gina Hodgson
Assisted Housing Supervisor



Housing & Community Development Department

Public Housing Authority

Administrative Plan Amendment

Proposed Changes – Chapter 3 ELIGIBILITY

3-III.C. OTHER PERMITTED REASONS FOR DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE

- **Previous Behavior in Assisted Housing [24 CFR 982.552(c)] (pg 3-27 to 3-28)**
 - Under PHA Policy (pg 3-27): Change wording to indicate that the PHA will deny assistance to an applicant family if the family owes rent or other amounts to any PHA in connection with Section 8 unless the family repays the full amount of the debt prior to being issued a voucher or enters into a repayment agreement and payments are current (pg 3-27). Note – previously stated prior to being selected from the waiting list.
 - Add language (pg 3-28): The family has breached the terms of a repayment agreement entered into with a PHA, unless the family repays the full amount of the debt covered in the repayment agreement prior to being issued a voucher. Failure to pay in full will result in removal from the waiting list.

The family owes the City of Dubuque more than \$1,000. The balance must be paid in full or brought down to \$1,000 to be eligible to enter a repayment agreement.

Proposed Changes – Chapter 16 PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

16-IV.B. REPAYMENT POLICY

- **Owner Debts to the PHA (pg 16-29):**
 - If the owner refuses to repay the debt, does not enter into a repayment agreement, or breaches a repayment agreement, the PHA will ban the owner from future participation in the program until it is paid. (Old language stated to pursue other modes of collection)
- **Family Debts to the PHA (pg 16-29):**

- Remove language that states family needs to pay within 30 days and just add option to enter into Repayment Agreement from the start.
- **General Repayment Agreement Guidelines for Families (pg 16-29):**
 - Remove down payment requirement. Just allow family to enter into repayment agreement and begin making payments on it – no down payment required.
- **Payment Thresholds (pg 16-30):**
 - PHA Policy
The PHA has established the following thresholds for repayment of debts:
Amounts between \$1,000 and the Small Claims Court Maximum in Iowa must be repaid within 48 months.
Amounts below \$1,000 require a minimum payment of \$25 per month unless the family can provide evidence of an undue hardship as stated below.
If applicant is not a current participant and owes a PHA more than \$1,000, the balance must be brought below \$1,000 in order to reapply.

*Removed Federal or State threshold for criminal prosecution because it is an arbitrary # that is never defined. Removed the FSS budgeting meeting requirement as well.

- **Execution of the Agreement (pg 16-30):**
 - Add: The agreement must be notarized.
- **Due Dates (pg 16-30):**
 - Change due date from 15th of month to the last business day of the month.
- **Late or Missed Payments (pg 16-32):**
 - Change language to indicate that if a family misses another payment after they have received a delinquency notice for late payment without prior approval, the repayment agreement will be in default and PHA will terminate assistance in accordance with policy. *Old language gave them 3 delinquency notices before proposed termination.
- **No Offer of Repayment Agreement (pg 16-32):**
 - Add when the amount owed by the family exceeds the state threshold for Small Claims Court (previously stated Fed or State threshold for criminal prosecution.)