

MINUTES OF HOUSING COMMISSION MEETING

DATE: April 28, 2015
TIME: 4:00 p.m.
PLACE: Housing and Community Development Department
350 W. 6th Street, Suite 312, Dubuque, IA 52001

Jim Holz, Chairperson, following staff assurance of compliance with Iowa Open Meeting Law, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Jim Holz Rick Baumhover
Bob McDonnell Lisa Eubanks
David Wall Anna Fernandes
Amy Eudaley (via telephone) Patricia Foster
Sister Dorothy Schwendinger

Commissioners Absent: Ricardo Woods

Staff Present: Erica Haugen Teresa Bassler
Janet Walker Alvin Nash
Scott Koch Kris Neyen
Jerelyn O'Connor Jessica Kieffer

Public Present: Doris Hintgen, Malcolm Stewart

Review and Certification of Minutes of March 31, 2015 Commission Meeting

Commissioner Fernandes proposed a change to the minutes from March 31, 2015. There is a spelling error on page 2, paragraph 4 in the minutes. The minutes should say "short fall" instead of "short full". A correction was requested. Commissioner Wall motioned to approve the amended minutes. Commissioner Baumhover seconded. Commissioner Schwendinger abstained. All others present in favor. Motion passed.

Correspondence/Public Input

None

Old Business

None

New Business

Closure of the Housing Choice Voucher Program Waiting List

Janet Walker explained that as discussed at the March 2015 Housing Commission meeting, the Housing Choice Voucher Program is operating under a budget shortfall for calendar year 2015. The program currently does not have enough HAP funds to increase our voucher numbers due to the shortfall therefore staff will not be pulling anyone from the waiting list for voucher issuance this calendar year. Staff is recommending the City of Dubuque Housing Choice Voucher waiting list close as of May 1, 2015. Janet explained the current Administrative Plan states the waiting list will be closed when there are not enough Section 8 subsidies to assist all the applicants in a reasonable period of time, such as one or two years. When the HA determines that additional applicants are needed, the waiting list will be reopened. Janet presented the Memo from Alvin Nash stating to keep the waiting list open and continue to take more applications when the wait is estimated at a 2-3 year wait could be giving false hope to applicants. Janet reported that staff has proposed the waiting list closure to HUD and they have approved. Staff is now requesting the Housing Commission's approval to close the waiting list. Commissioner Schwendinger asked if there was a time frame to reopen. Janet responded that there is not a projected time but with over 1500 applicants on the waiting list already, it could be quite some time before the list reopens. Commissioner McDonnell stated he didn't agree that the reason to close the waiting list is because it is giving applicants false hope. He feels that the lack of funding should be the reason stated for closure.

Malcolm Stewart asked staff how long can a person be on the program? Janet explained a household can remain on the Housing Choice Voucher program as long as they qualify. She also explained the Family Self Sufficiency Program and how it allows for personalized goal setting and guidance for participants to reach a level of income that allows them to become self-sufficient. She also discussed the Circles Initiative and the community support offered there to become self-sufficient. Commissioner Baumhover asked if the City Council needs to approve closing the waiting list. Alvin stated they did not. Commissioner Schwendinger expressed concern that we will no longer know what the demand for subsidized housing is in Dubuque if the waiting list is closed. Commissioner Foster asked if this will impact the money HUD gives to the program in the future. Alvin explained that he is requesting additional funding to lease up to the 1063 vouchers that we are allotted. Commissioner Schwendinger recommended the closure be amended to state that it is because of money, not false hope. Commissioner Eudaley motioned to approve the closing of the waiting list. Commissioner Wall seconded. Commissioner McDonnell voted no to close the waiting list. All others present in favor. Motion passed.

Application for 2015 Iowa Balance of State Continuum of Care (CoC) Renewal

Janet explained that staff has applied for the State balance of the CoC program which is a special needs program for homeless disabled persons/families. We are eligible to apply for the maximum amount of \$76,531.00 which staff applied for the whole amount. Commissioner Baumhover motioned to approve submission of the grant. Commissioner Eudaley seconded. All present in favor. Motion passed.

Proposed Changes to Section 8 Administrative Policy

Commissioners received a summary of the major proposed changes to the Administrative Policies. Commissioner Holz asked about our program outreach plan extending 200 miles. He was curious how we determined a 200 mile radius. Alvin explained it is in compliance with the Voluntary Compliance Agreement (VCA). Commissioner Eudaley questioned if Iowa Legal Aid has looked at the proposed changes. Staff stated Iowa Legal Aid has viewed the proposed changes and had the opportunity to provide comments. Commissioner Holz stated he is concerned to get rid of all preference points, he suggested we consider keeping disability preference points and veteran status. Janet explained that we have to show a need to HUD to have a preference, with approximately 15 veterans on the waiting list the City doesn't have the numbers to support that preference. Alvin stated that you are giving someone with a disability status a higher value if you remove all preference except for disability status. Commissioner Schwendinger expressed concern about the minimum rent policy of \$50.00. Janet explained that there are exceptions that can be requested and reviewed. Janet stated that the next step in this process to approve the Administrative Plan is to go to City Council for approval. Commissioner McDonnell motioned to approve the Administrative Plan. Commissioner Schwendinger seconded. Commissioner Holz voted no to approval of the Administrative Plan. All others present in favor. Motion Passed. The Commissioners did request to be notified when the plan goes to City Council for approval.

Crime Reports

Commissioners were provided a summary of Corporal Koch's crime reports.

Rehabilitation Reports

Kris shared that 1421 Elm Street has an interested potential buyer who will be going to their banker for pre-approval yet this week. She also shared 2521 Stafford have an accepted offer and staff is working with the lender. Kris is hopeful 2521 Stafford will go to City Council to set up the public hearing approval on May 4th, hopefully the public hearing will be on May 18th. She reminded the commissioners that staff is working on making some changes to the program to get revenue back to keep the program running as the money we are receiving is getting reduced each year. The Community Development and Housing Trust Fund Commissions will be reviewing these changes in upcoming months.

Neighborhood Services

Jerelyn O'Connor presented the Neighborhood Development update. She brought in some fliers about various activities going on Dubuque neighborhoods in upcoming months such as a May 16th hazardous waste collection, neighborhood cleanup dates. She also shared information about the Experience Steeple Square day to learn about the former St Mary's church campus and to celebrate the revitalization of the campus.

Information Sharing

Staff reminded commissioners about the upcoming Boards and Picnics on July 22, 2015 at 6:00pm.

Kris shared with the commissioners that Housing & CD Department staff volunteered for the Days of Caring event by siding a house off of Pennsylvania Avenue.

Adjournment

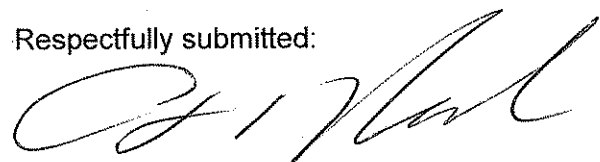
There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner McDonnell motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Baumhover seconded the motion. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 5:10 pm.

Minutes taken by:



Jessica Kieffer
Recording Secretary

Respectfully submitted:



Alvin Nash
Department Director

