

## JOINT CITY-COUNTY OF LA CROSSE HOUSING TASK FORCE

June 14, 2011

Administrative Center Room 3220

<b>MEMBERS PRESENT:</b>	Jill Billings (arr. 1:30), Kathleen Enz Finken, Mathias Harter, Nancy Gerrard, Tara Johnson, Audrey Kader, Todd Mandel, Steve Nicolai, Wayne Oliver, Michael Richards, Rick Staff, Tina Wehrs
<b>MEMBERS EXCUSED:</b>	Jay Hoeschler Marvin Wanders
<b>OTHERS PRESENT:</b>	Brian Fukuda, Charlie Handy, Karl Green, Larry Kirch, Amy Peterson, Charles Clarkin, Jason Dillaber, Maureen McCollum, Deon Serano, Andrew Londre, Terri Pavlic

### CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

### INTRODUCTION OF TASK FORCE MEMBERS & STAFF

Introductions were made of the Task Force Members and other staff. The two City Council vacancies will be filled by Doug Farmer and Sara Sullivan. This task force has a timeline of six months to complete their work.

### ELECTION OF TASK FORCE CHAIR

**MOTION** by Johnson/Oliver to nominate Rick Staff as Chair of the Joint City-County of La Crosse Housing Task Force. **MOTION** carried unanimously. (Hoeschler & Wanders excused)

### HISTORY – 1989 ZONING/HOUSING STUDY COMMITTEE – LARRY KIRCH

Larry Kirch gave a Powerpoint presentation of the 1989 Housing & Zoning Study Committee Recommendations. Rick Staff had previously sent out an e-mail of this study. The report included several recommendations, which were broken down into various topics including Enforcement of City Ordinances; Parking; Housing Inspection; Housing Maintenance; Administration and Zoning. Larry also distributed a report from Building Inspections that goes to City Council every month. Less than half of their housing is rental but they spend a large percentage of their time fixing problems, such as repairing buildings; garbage & refuse; open storage; miscellaneous – sign repair/removal.

### PRESENTATION OF CHALLENGING HOUSING TRENDS REPORT – KARL GREEN

Karl Green gave a presentation of challenging housing trends. Karl illustrated some of the impacts low housing values have on the City of La Crosse and the City's tax base. The County has seen significant development outside of the City of La Crosse, ultimately leading to increasing county service costs. The City of La Crosse has developed concentrations of poverty that are starting to effect the way that civil services are provided in the City and are costing residents money (higher arrests, fire statistics). Karl showed comparisons of neighboring communities or similar size communities in the state. Our mill rate is currently \$12.36, which is basically what the City funds via the levy divided by the City's total assessed value. The City's total assessed value is lower than it should be. There are four main tax classifications. When compared to communities of similar size in Wisconsin, Karl's

study indicates the City of La Crosse's residential housing represents the smallest portion of total tax assessed value. Comparisons of similar sized communities helps reduce the impact of the number of tax exempt properties that affect our tax base. From 1990 – 2009, the City of La Crosse, had the lowest total residential value per capita (total res. value/total population) when compared to other similar sized communities in the state. This indicates this issue isn't new and has been affecting the tax rate for a long time.

During the 1940's and early 1950's, the City of La Crosse had the highest residential equalized per capita in the County. During the 1950's, the Town of Shelby bypassed the City of La Crosse, along with the City of Onalaska, the Village of Holmen, and several other municipalities. The equalized value per capita began to decline. When residential development goes, commercial tends to follow.

The most important graphic shows the proportion of low valued residential properties (under 100,000 improvement value – 7,883 parcels) to high valued residential property (455 homes > 200,000 improvement value). As a comparison, the City of Onalaska has around 1,100 properties with an improvement value greater than 200,000.

#### **REVIEW OF CHARGE FOR TASK FORCE**

The Task Force's recommendations will need to focus on what will change the Percentage of Major Assessment Classes (Karl's graph), including personal, manufacturing, commercial (this includes rental over 4 families), and residential. There will need to be more facts on this and make sure everyone is educated on these points. What are the most cost effective recommendations to reverse this trend? We will need to identify how we got to this point. Staff will obtain examples from other communities; demographics/economic data. What do we want to look like? What is our strategy on neighborhoods? Staff to research shared revenue models. Other things that staff will need to address are: zoning & regulatory options, student district zoning, occupancy limits, practices to stimulate private investment such as best uses for tax increment financing, history of code enforcement priorities, capital priorities that best contribute to reinvestment and redevelopment.

Brian Fukuda distributed a La Crosse Housing Plan Outline that was generated by the previous workgroup, which includes Situation Analysis, Guiding Principles & Plan Objectives, Goals & Strategies and Timeline. Staff will work together to combine all of the information.

#### **FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE**

Terri Pavlic will be the point of contact for agendas & minutes. Make sure she has your up to date contact information. Brian Fukuda will be the data/collection contact. Rick Staff, as the chair, will be the one to decide what is to go on the agenda. All information will be posted electronically to the County website, and staff will try to have the information to Task Force Members in advance.

**NEXT MEETING DATE: June 28, 2011 at 1:00 in Room 3220 of the Administrative Center**

#### **ADJOURN**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:12 p.m.

The above minutes may be approved, amended or corrected at the next Council meeting.

**Recorded by Terri Pavlic**