

JOINT CITY-COUNTY OF LA CROSSE HOUSING TASK FORCE

July 12, 2011

Administrative Center Room B190

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Rick Staff, Steve Nicolai, Mathias Harter, Tara Johnson, Audrey Kader, Kathleen Enz Finken, Michael Richards, Jill Billings, Marvin Wanders, Tina Wehrs
MEMBERS EXCUSED:	Jay Hoeschler, Todd Mandel, Wayne Oliver
OTHERS PRESENT:	Brian Fukuda, Charlie Handy, Karl Green, Larry Kirch, Jason Dillaber, Andrew Londre, Liane Escott, Brianne Jones, Sara Sullivan, Nathan Patros, Deon Serano, Terri Pavlic

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 p.m.

Due to the City Council members of the Task Force not being officially appointed yet, Chair Staff suggested that we keep the meeting informal at this point and begin the 6 month time-frame designated for this committee, once they become official committee members.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment. Chair Staff would like this agenda item to be put at the beginning and at end of the meeting. Comments will be limited to 3 minutes per person.

ACCEPTANCE OF MEETING NOTES OF JUNE 28, 2011

MOTION by Kader/Wanders to approve minutes of the June 28, 2011 meeting of the Joint City-County of La Crosse Housing Task Force **carried unanimously**. (Hoeschler, Mandel & Oliver excused)

Brian Fukuda noted that in the future agendas, minutes, and meeting materials will be distributed via e-mail, rather than hard copy. If anyone would like hard copies mailed to them, please contact Brian to make arrangements for that.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH/PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Brianne Jones, an agent from Gerrard Hoeschler, distributed material entitled "*How to Create a Buzz - Achieving Greater Impact Through Creative Social Media*". An integral part of the success of this committee will be reaching out to the community via regular media outlets. The *La Crosse Tribune* has formalized their offer of having a committee member write an article as a guest writer on a monthly basis for publication. Brianne presented another outlet to piggyback on what's already out on the County's website, via Facebook and/or other social media. The sample site she referenced is called Global Kids. Since student housing is an important part of our work, this could be a good way to reach a student audience. Brianne will develop something more concrete for the next meeting to present to the task force.

TIF HOUSING USES

Brian Fukuda gave a Powerpoint presentation regarding Tax Incremental Financing (TIF). TIF is a mechanism for funding development and redevelopment projects. It allows all taxing jurisdictions benefiting from development to share in its cost. Cities and Villages may create a TIF if 50% or more of the proposed district area:

- Is blighted;
- Is in need of rehab or conservation work;
- Is suitable for industrial sites;
- Is suitable for mixed-use development.

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Upon creation, the value of the TIF is frozen for property tax distribution purposes. The full property tax collected from any new development is kept by the municipality to be spent on projects that will attract development to the district. Once the TIF closes, all taxing entities start to realize the benefits of the new value.

There are 2 ways that TIF can be used for housing projects:

1. Mixed-Use TIF – mixed-use developments may contain a combination of industrial, commercial, and residential uses. Newly-platted residential use may not exceed 35% of the area of the TIF & must have density of at least three units per acre, or be located in a conservation subdivision or located in a traditional neighborhood development
2. One Year Extension for Affordable Housing – in 2009 and amendment to TIF law allowed a municipality to extend the life of any district by one year for the purpose of improving housing stock

All project costs must directly relate to the purpose of the TIF. TIFS can be used for neighborhood revitalization through:

- Neighborhood Livability/appeal (park improvements, streetscaping, alleyway paving, community center development)
- Developer/Owner Incentives (cash grants with development agreement); enhanced public infrastructure
- Staffing Issues
- Other options

Since incremental revenues are delayed, municipalities must decide how to fund the improvements that lead to the creation of increment:

- Bonding:
- City-Lead Pay-As-You-Go
- Developer-Lead Pay-As-You-Go

DISCUSSION OF METRICS

Karl Green presented a staff report on proposed metrics to consider.

Metric #1 – Ratio of # homes >\$200,000 divided by # homes <\$100,000. This ratio is currently $455/7,886 = 0.0577$ or 5.77%. One issue with using this number is that this value will naturally increase as inflationary pressures increase the number of homes greater than \$200,000 and decreases the number of homes below \$100,000.

Metric #2 – Total residential value as a percentage of total assessed value = currently 52.7%. Of eight comparable municipalities, La Crosse has the lowest percentage. This percentage will help illustrate how much tax value we have in the City of La Crosse's residential assessment class. One potential issue with this value is that it will be affected by changes to any of the City's assessment classes.

Metric #3 – Total residential value/capita. This value is currently \$30,905.39/Capita. Of the eight comparable municipalities, La Crosse has the lowest residential value/capita. One potential issue with this value – increases to the City's population via increase # of housing units, or through annexations will increase the denominator, potentially lowering the value.

Metric #4 – Total Assessed Value is currently \$1,586,064,800 (1/1/11). Growth to the residential tax base will increase the total assessed value and hopefully reduce the City's overall mill rate. Potential issue: this value will naturally increase as inflationary pressures increase assessments. Growth in the commercial, manufacturing and personal property

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assessment classes will increase this number, even if increased residential growth does not occur.

Metric #5 – Total # new building permits – value is yet to be compiled, it was recommended by Audrey Kader to include the total value of the building permit to eliminate potential that smaller renovations such as garages and such may affect this value.

Metric #6 – Total # demolition projects/permits – value is yet to be compiled

Metric #7 (Related metric) – Free & reduced lunch: This value is reported on a school district basis, and neighborhood school basis; La Crosse School District % free & reduced lunch is 50%, however Hamilton school is 74%, Roosevelt School is 69%, State Road 35%. This is considered by staff as a better representation of poverty locally as it removes the potential college student population from the poverty levels. It was suggested that by the Committee chair that this be used as a “related metric” since economic conditions may affect this value, which is not in the control of this committee.

It was suggested that we add # of foreclosure rates, as a related metric. It was further suggested this value be qualified through per housing unit or per 1,000 people.

Poverty rates and arrest/crime stats were not taken into consideration. The Chief of Police will be attending one of the next Housing Task Force meetings so this can be addressed then.

MAPS – EMPLOYMENT CENTERS & NEIGHBORHOODS

Intern Andrew Londre gave a Powerpoint presentation on *Private Sector Spheres of Influence and Neighborhood (Re)development Opportunities in La Crosse*. As a starting point, the map illustrated mainly of the south side of La Crosse, but can be expanded. The Task Force had decided earlier that they need to start identifying some of these neighborhoods that may be in need of revitalization. Andrew identified several areas, such as Isle la Plume; Hood/Hamilton area; Swift Creek Grassland; “Cass to Jackson”; “4th & Jackson”, campus neighborhoods, etc. and listed neighborhood amenities, as well as travel times to downtown La Crosse. He then identified the major employers in these areas - Gundersen/Lutheran, Trane, Western TC, UW-La Crosse, Pepsi, LHI, Mayo Clinic, Viterbo, City Brewery, as these business could be key players in investing in their surrounding areas.

Andrew also distributed an article regarding the neighborhood of Phillips in Minneapolis. This neighborhood had been plagued by crime and disinvestment, but through strategic investment with several companies, along with the city and county, they are now prospering.

REPORT ON IMPACTS OF PUBLIC INVESTMENTS

Larry Kirch reported on some of the projects that the City has been involved in:

- The City has built approximately 34 houses and there are 31 projects that are in various stages (single family development).
- Have partnerships with Western Technical College and Workforce Connections.
- Started building their first house in 1996 on Loomis Street.
- Have built houses all over the city, really need to focus on where we can have a larger impact.
- Working on projects on the North side (Prospect/Wood/Harvey/ St. Andrew)
- Partnered with Coulee Cap and rebuilt two duplexes

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- On the South side 16 homes were built in Powell/Hamilton area, 3 of which were with Gundersen on the Habitat for Humanity project.

How can we show impact of these public investments? There have been a lot of projects that aren't just housing, but this has not attracted any middle income person to buy one of their houses. There have been investments to the parks and Hamilton Schools. At the next meeting, Larry will present data (back to 1999) showing what the 2 sales territories are for the assessors office; what the values were; they can show inside and outside the TIF what has happened with property values. Compare sales territories along with TIF data and compare this with other neighborhoods.

There are approximately 2200 parcels that have value below \$60,000. How can we begin to revitalize these areas? Just within the TIF the City has identified 100 homes that they could buy and bulldoze. There are @200 homes in the Hood Park neighborhood valued at less than \$60,000.

NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION IDEAS

Instead of just solely housing, it was felt that a broader development needs to be looked at (streetscaping; transportation, etc). This task force should draw the lines on the map with no regard to current voting districts or neighborhood districts.

It was agreed that this committee would like to have someone from the Phillips neighborhood to come to one of the next meetings. It would also be beneficial to have someone from Viterbo, the Brewery and Mayo System at these meetings.

A couple of areas that may be easier to solve issues are the areas of UW/L and WTC – create an educational housing district; and the area east of Myrick Park. (Look at regulatory revisions/building codes/occupancy ordinances)

Ideally the plan the committee drafts, within the next 6 months, will involve parts from all areas of the city and be driven by the private sector partners/leaders. Would it make sense to have WHEDA come and discuss first time loans and employer assisted housing?

Next Meeting:

- Phillips project
- Police dept
- Parks dept

NEXT MEETING DATE: July 26, 2011 at 1:00 in Room 3220 of the Administrative Center

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

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

Recorded by Terri Pavlic