

JOINT CITY-COUNTY OF LA CROSSE HOUSING TASK FORCE

August 9, 2011

City Hall – 3rd Floor Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Rick Staff, Steve Nicolai, Doug Farmer, Nancy Gerrard, Tara Johnson, Audrey Kader, Michael Richards, Sara Sullivan
MEMBERS EXCUSED:	Jill Billings, Kathleen Enz Finken, Mathias Harter, Jay Hoeshler, Todd Mandel, Wayne Oliver, Marvin Wanders, Tina Wehrs
OTHERS PRESENT:	Brian Fukuda, Charlie Handy, Karl Green, Larry Kirch, Amy Peterson, Jason Dillaber, Andrew Londre, Brianne Jones, Steve O'Malley, Steve Carlyon, Diane Schobert, Betsy Bloom, Terri Pavlic

Mike Richards distributed an article from the Wall Street Journal regarding rental investment. Larry Kirch distributed several articles entitled "*On Common Ground*" which discussed new norms in housing from the National Association of Realtors. Audrey discussed an article she had from Chicago where they reclaimed space planting rare apple trees.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:25 P.M.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ACCEPTANCE OF MEETING NOTES OF JULY 26, 2011

MOTION by Sullivan/Richards to approve minutes of the July 26, 2011 meeting of the Joint City-County of La Crosse Housing Task Force. **Motion carried unanimously.** (Billings, Enz Finken, Harter, Hoeshler, Mandel, Oliver, Wanders and Wehrs excused)

PARKS AS NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Steve Carlyon, Parks & Recreation Director from the City of La Crosse gave a presentation regarding the role parks play in housing. Studies show significant link between property values and proximity to green space. Really nice parks increase property values whereas really bad parks bring down property values. Mayor Michael Bloomberg's vision is to ensure that all New Yorkers from every neighborhood live within 10 min walk of a park. Mr. Carlyon believes that the three pillars of a community are: schools, parks, and neighborhoods. The success of a park investment:

- Long term strategic vision
- Effective on-going management
- Significant community involvement
- Willingness and readiness of community
- Local partners, not just tax based

Steve also distributed a study from Ernst & Young "*How Smart Parks Investment Pays its Way*" and also "*Retiree's Choice of Community: The Importance of Recreation and Parks*". He also had the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan adopted by the City Council and the Department of Natural Resources if anyone would like a copy.

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PRESENTATION OF CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES and NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION IDEAS (Powell-Hood-Hamilton/Washburn Neighborhood)

Charlie Handy presented a rough statistical analysis of properties in the corridor adjacent to 4th street from Hood to Jackson Streets. The chart showed the municipality, which were all in the City of La Crosse, tax parcel number, assessed value, number of units, value per unit, number of arrests in 2010, whether or not it was owner occupied, and the address. The chart also showed totals for multi-family and single family. Charlie also had an aerial map of the neighborhood and pointed out where there were areas of green space or only parking lots.

What can we do to improve?

- Wiegant Park and Hood Park are right in the middle of this area with nice development surrounding them. But would it be better to have green space along the corridor with curb appeal
- Different types of pavement
- Historical or period-type lighting
- Is there another model for multi-family development that provides an alternative to the 8-12 unit structures (which seem to have lesser value per unit)?

Charlie pointed out that some investments have already been made:

- Habitat for Humanity homes
- Southside Community Center
- Regional bike routes
- Local bike routes
- Trails
- Connectors

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jason Dillaber, landlord, questioned how we are defining "quality" parks, "quality" rentals as viable housing. He feels we need to start holding individuals accountable.

NEXT MEETING DATE: August 23, 2011 at 1:00 p.m. in County Administrative Center Room 3220.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. Present map that shows other half of the corridor and shows Viterbo, Mayo, LHI, Gundersen, with concepts for future zoning ideas (multi-use). Plus neighborhood map showing the entire area we are focusing on.
2. WHEDA Presentation – employer assisted housing
3. Look at vacancy rates at Gundersen Lofts and others.
4. Do a tour of neighborhoods prior to next meeting – RSVP to Terri or Brian

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:56 p.m.

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

Recorded by Terri Pavlic