

JOINT CITY-COUNTY OF LA CROSSE HOUSING TASK FORCE

January 31, 2012

Administrative Center Room 3220

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Rick Staff, Steve Nicolai, Matt Harter, Tara Johnson, Nancy Gerrard, Audrey Kader, Todd Mandel (exc. 2:07), Wayne Oliver, Michael Richards (arr. 1:37), Sara Sullivan, Marvin Wanders
MEMBERS EXCUSED:	Jill Billings, Doug Farmer, Tina Wehrs
OTHERS PRESENT:	Pat Kerrigan, Charles Weeth, Nathan Patros, Steve O'Malley, Brian Fukuda, Jason Dillaber, Andrew Londre, Amy Peterson, Joan Mueller, Betsy Bloom, Maureen McCaulum, Terri Pavlic

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:06 P.M.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 10, 2012

MOTION by Oliver/Nicolai to approve minutes of the January 10, 2012 meeting of the Joint City-County of La Crosse Housing Task Force. **Motion carried unanimously.** (Billings, Farmer, Richards, Wehrs excused)

REVIEW COMPLETE DRAFT OF HOUSING TASK FORCE REPORT

Comments from the last meeting were incorporated into the report so that staff could finish drafting the Implementation Section of the Report. This was distributed via e-mail and the full document was posted on the internet. The staff also added an Introduction and Executive Summary. Brian asked the committee for any final comments. Once the final report is prepared, it will be handed over to the County Board, City Council and to the La Crosse Neighborhood Revitalization Commission.

Steve O'Malley commented on the section regarding capital expenditures and infrastructure. He stressed the importance of professional staff giving more leadership and guidance to elected officials in how we invest in capital expenditures. The City and County both set arbitrary limits on what we use debt for as far as reinvesting, unrelated to the actual needs of the community. Because of the rapid cost of just replacing infrastructure, Steve feels that it would be beneficial for us to revisit how much ground we are losing in just replacement of infrastructure. Since 2003, inflationary pressures on highway and roadway construction costs have risen by 70% just over that period of time. In the report, several recommendations are made regarding this.

There was some discussion on the negative tone of the report. It was decided that the essence of what we were trying to get across is clear and there is no need to portray it differently.

Landlord licensing and registration was discussed. There were several different viewpoints on this, but in the end, this is just a "Policy Option" that we are considering, and was high on the list amongst committee members on the survey.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Jason Dillaber – feels that landlord licensing would weed out some of the "bad" landlords.

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Jason also had comments on the Student Overlay Districts. He felt that this meant that the Common Council would be bypassed in obtaining permits, etc. but instead would get approval from the DRC. Brian Fukuda clarified that these acceptable things would have already been determined by the Council. Again, this is a policy option – not necessarily a recommendation.

Rick Staff commented on the “Realtor Incentives” section. He said that the industry doesn’t work that way and this sentence should be restated to say that the City/County should work with realtor associations and private realty companies to educate and enhance the ability of those realtors that practice effectively in these targeted neighborhoods is the most likely way to get more interest and support. Rick will send Brian some language to reflect this.

Rick also felt that it should be stated in this report is that we should be building alliances with agencies such as HUD and WHEDA and the City and the County and using these resources in the most integrated fashion as we can.

Rick Staff addressed the section regarding the Born Transit Consulting Report and following the recommendations in this plan. Larry Kirch described for the committee what these consultants recommended in their report and he will put this on the website.

The HTF Task Force had talked about 3 global neighborhood issues-

- Powell-Hood-Hamilton/Washburn
- Goosetown/Campus Area
- Northside

Staff and the task force felt that the Powell-Hood-Hamilton/Washburn would probably be the first priority, as it has the greatest opportunity.

Brian Fukuda indicated that a recommendation was added to the Report that the County should have a policy regarding TIF/Economic Development priorities, as well as the City of La Crosse.

FINAL ACTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE HOUSING TASK FORCE

MOTION by Oliver/Wanders to approve final plan subject to the revisions incorporated into report from suggestions/comments made from today’s meeting. County and City Staff, along with Chair Staff and Co-Chair Nicolai are authorized to make such revisions and distribute final copy to members of the HTF for review. Once this is done, copies will be distributed to La Crosse City Council, La Crosse County Board, and to the La Crosse Neighborhood Revitalization Commission. **Motion carried unanimously.** (Billings, Farmer, Mandel, Wehrs excused)

Larry Kirch distributed “*Bad News From the Census Bureau*”. Larry also distributed a report titled UW Cities: Percentage of Owner vs. Renter, and also the City of La Crosse Department of Building & Inspections Annual Report. Discussion followed on costs to inspection department due to enforcement. Larry suggested that a more systems-based improvement to solid waste collection would help remedy prevalence of waste in City streets/alleys thereby allowing building inspectors more time to enforce building codes not garbage

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related issues. Larry pointed out the number of maintenance inspection violations issued by inspectors went up 38% from 2010 to 2011.

UPDATE ON THE CITY OF LA CROSSE NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION COMISSION

Sara Sullivan is the chair of the City of La Crosse Revitalization Commission. She reported that they have met once and it was a very energizing, positive meeting. She would like to build coalitions to build on public private partnerships. One of the first things that they want to do is brainstorm about what might be included in the upcoming capital budget for the city – there are some infrastructure issues that they need to focus on creating public awareness. She would like to continue to consider this group as an Advisory Task Force, and attend meetings as they can, as they move forward. Anyone who would like to be included in their e-mail distribution list, please let Sara know.

ADJOURN: There being no further business **MOTION** by Oliver/Nicolai to adjourn the meeting at 2:44 p.m. **Motion carried unanimously.** (Billings, Farmer, Mandel, Wehrs excused) This was the final meeting of the Joint City-County of La Crosse Housing Task Force.

Recorded by Terri Pavlic