

WHITEFISH STRATEGIC HOUSING PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE AGENDA



Thursday, September 9, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.
City Hall - Whitefish City Council Conference Room

1. Call to Order
2. Communications from the Public
3. Approval of Minutes from August 12, 2021
4. Presentation from Whitefish Workforce Housing Project (Toby Scott)
5. Strategic Housing Plan Priorities Review and Recommended Next Priorities for 2021
6. Other Housing Updates
 - a. Whitefish Housing Authority
 - b. Chamber of Commerce
 - c. City
7. Next Committee Meeting
 - a. October 14, 2021
8. Adjourn

Committee Documents:

Click [here](#) to access the Workforce Housing Needs Assessment

Click [here](#) to access the 2017 Whitefish Strategic Housing Plan

WHITEFISH STRATEGIC HOUSING PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

MINUTES

August 12, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

1. Call to order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Ben Davis

Present: Lori Collins, Wendy Compton-Ring, Ben Davis, Rhonda Fitzgerald, Kevin Gartland, Bob Horne, Rebecca Norton (via phone), Dana Smith

Absent: John Muhlfeld

Others: Eight (8) people from the public were in attendance

2. Public Comments:

Dylan Boyle, WVCB, aka Explore Whitefish: commended the Committee on all the hard work; however, there seems to be a general lack of knowledge on what this Committee is doing? Dylan suggested talking points that he could share with members and put on the Explore Whitefish webpage. He suggested: what is the current work being doing now, what funding is available, where is funding needed and what can the businesses do to help?

Phillip Boland, 12 Green Place, running for City Council and wants to be more knowledgeable about what is going with affordable housing so is at this meeting to learn

Bob – suggested a mini speakers bureau that could go around to different groups to talk about what is going on in affordable housing

Dana – thinks Dylan's questions were good ones and we can help put the talking points together

Kevin – can help and thinks that some people think the affordable housing program is gone due to the state legislature invalidating mandatory housing

Rhonda – suggested inviting the Whitefish Pilot and the Flathead Beacon to visit about housing; a media discussion to get people more knowledgeable on the topic; could be part of a wholistic campaign

Lori – the Tap House group and the WHA met to talk about the Strategic Housing Plan and what their needs were; it was piece of the housing process

Rhonda – WF Community Foundation can build on our work

Dana – time for the Annual Report for the previous fiscal year; could also be a piece of public information

Mallory Phillips, Kalispell Avenue: thinks it's important to communicate what the future looks like and that this isn't just an issue for today that it will continue into the future; an important education piece

3. Approval of Minutes from the June 10, 2021 meetings:

Fitzgerald/Gartland moved to approve the June 10, 2021, meeting minutes. Passed unanimously.

4. Accessory Dwelling Unit Draft Language Revisions:

Staff reviewed the staff report and proposed amendments from the previous meeting and the design ideas for the ADUs.

- a. Draft Suggested 800 Square Feet for a Workforce ADU:** This would make it a better livable space for the workers with a full-size bedroom for the resident.

Public Comment:

Mallory Phillips commented on the WF Community Group page that we have to be part of the solution

Steven Ryder – new to the community but familiar with development; staff or design boards can review building design which can be a matter of art; thinks we are being too prescriptive and the City needs to just build units, it's low-hanging fruit. Bob – agreed, but we still need some standards, so builders/owners know how to develop units and we treat everyone the same.

Dana/Lori – adopt the 800 s.f. for the LWADU (6-2, Rhonda, Ben in opposition)

- b. ADUs Should Only be for Workforce:** The Committee discussed the value of only permitting ADUs for Workforce and not letting ADU be used for guest space or expanded personal home use

Dana – noted the urgency of just getting rentals; especially with those that already have an ADU; what can we do to get them to rent them now

Rebecca – is there a way for us to keep track of the ADUs so people know if there is an available rental.

Ben – there certainly are two sides; just provide the units and make sure what we get is for local people

No motion was made on this topic. Further discussion is likely.

- c. **After-the-Fact LWADU to Join the Program:** What can we do to encourage one to get an existing ADU into the LWADU program? Yes, we would like to do this. We can add a line for this in the regulations. All agreed this was a good idea.

Kevin – left the meeting

Public Comment:

Greg Jonason – minimum lot size standards; can meet all the other standards just doesn't meet the minimum lot size for the zoning district

- d. **Exempt from the Minimum Lot Size for LWADU:**

Dana/Bob: move the draft language to the Planning Board; (6-1, Rhonda voted in opposition)

- e. **Amend the LWADU Definition:** The definition states that it cannot be vacant for more than two months, but that is not what the Committee intended.

Dana/Wendy: move to change the definition to 'must be rented for ten months in a twelve-month period'. Passed unanimously.

- f. **Final Vote to Move this to Planning Board with Tonight's Amendments:**

Dana – the Committee is not well-known and the immediate need is now; time to get public comment and move this item forward

Rebecca – the City cannot take all the blame for the lack of housing; the planning jurisdiction was removed from the City; we need to coordinate with the County to solve the affordable housing issue; our potential for expansion should be outside the city limits

Rhonda – will be voting against this; the ADUs are a real blight in the neighborhoods – we haven't solved this problem; agrees with a lot of what we are proposing but is still concerned

Ben – would like to see the draft deed restriction along with this proposal.

Passed (6-1, Rhonda voting in opposition) – is this right or did Ben vote against too??

NEXT STEPS:

Staff will amend to include the changes and start the public hearing process.

5. Other Housing Updates

a. WHA – Snow Lot, etc.

The WHA has a construction manager for the Snow Lot and they interviewed architects/engineer; 5-6 months for design and finalize the budget; start construction summer of 2022

Rhonda – did they include the initial designs? Yes, that was their starting point

Lori – public involvement with the neighborhood will be part of their scope of work

The WHA held a 2-hour meeting with WF Community Foundation and their Circle of Giving – described the various affordable projects they are working on including the Alpenglow 2 and the Snow Lot; the local media was at the meeting

Rhonda – will Alpenglow 2 be for the local workforce?

Lori – depends on the funding; if it is a public-private partnership, maybe; LIHTC would be more income-based; 70% of Alpenglow residents are local workers

Rhonda- that information needs to get out to the community

b. City – Legacy Homes Program

Updated with voluntary program and the administrative procedures will be coming to the September 7th Council meeting

Attended the meeting at the MT Tap House – business owners, it's going to take everyone to solve this problem

Other ideas: Co-operative that a business would buy into to help develop a property; 2nd floor housing on top of commercial building

Dana – during the budget process, the Council was asked if they wanted to level the four (4) mills, but the Council wanted to see a plan for where the money would go

Bob – keep the inclusionary program and use the \$\$ toward impact fees; McCall offsets the fees

c. Chamber no update

6. Next Committee Meeting: September 9, 2021 – bring our ideas for the next items for this group to work on. Possibly consider the impact fee reimbursements program (Council direction to the staff). Staff could bring a list of priorities back to the next meeting.

7. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

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Date: September 3, 2021
 To: Strategic Housing Plan Steering Committee
 From: Dana Smith, City Manager
 Wendy Compton-Ring, AICP, Senior Planner
 Subject: Strategic Housing Plan Priority List

At the August 12th, the Steering Committee agreed to review the strategies in the 2017 Plan and determine which items the Committee would address next. Chair Ben Davis asked staff to bring an initial list of what we thought could be the next few strategies for the group to work on.

Proposed Strategies for 2021

The three strategies described below are topics that have recently come to the forefront of affordable housing, and we believe they are timely for the Committee to address in the near term. These strategies are employee housing options (zoning for affordability), impact fee reimbursement (developing a program) and annexation policy (for primary homes). The table notes our recommended priority list, a description of the strategy and where it is currently located in the Strategic Housing Plan.

A couple of items to note with these three items, 1) the City is the lead and implementer of these strategies and 2) this list does not include any of the strategies identified for the other affordable housing partners (Whitefish Housing Authority and the Chamber of Commerce). As part of developing the priority list for the upcoming year, we would suggest those partners also identify strategies for the Steering Committee to work on for the upcoming year and add them to this list.

City Staff's Recommended Next Priorities:	Strategy:	Previous Priority:
1.	<i>Zoning For Affordability</i> – The Plan identifies <i>Zoning for Affordability</i> as code revisions to align regulations with the desire to increase the supply and diversity of housing choices for the workforce This review of the zoning regulations is intended to remove unintentional barriers that may exist. The Committee has agreed this strategy is an on-going priority and, as items are identified, amendments will be brought forward.	4.

City Staff's Recommended Next Priorities:	Strategy:	Previous Priority:
	<p>One of the biggest issues we currently face is the immediate need for employee housing. Our zoning doesn't identify a place for it, development standards, or parking. This could include dormitory housing, temporary housing, on-site employee housing and tiny homes. Other development standards could include the permit requirements, design standards, parking standards, etc. This could also include the density standards in various zoning districts and permit requirements.</p>	
2.	<p><i>Impact Fee Reimbursement Program</i> – Fee reimbursement is identified as an incentive to develop affordable housing. Because impact fees cannot be waived, the fees must be paid but, if a source of funding is identified, the fees can be reimbursed. This topic was brought up as part of the ADU discussion to encourage the development of deed restricted workforce ADUs.</p> <p>The program will identify the source of funding, which impact fees are refunded, what types of projects will be eligible for a refund and repayment of fee associated with the reimbursement program if the project is no longer part of the program.</p>	Tier 3
3.	<p><i>Annexation Policy</i> – The purpose of the annexation policy is to address second homeownership by requiring annexed properties to reflect the ownership pattern of the community. At the time of the 2016 Housing Needs Assessment, approximately 70% of the homes were owned by local owners which was a 10% drop from the previous census data. The goal of the Strategic Housing Plan is to maintain and, if possible, increase primary ownership to 75-80%. As such, the implementation recommendation is to require a 'light' deed restriction to require the homes be sold to local residents for their primary home (no income or price limitation). The recommendation also included options to meet this standard with a real estate transfer assessment, off-site development.</p>	3.

Remaining Strategies/Status/Responsibility

Below are all the other strategies outlined in the 2017 Plan. From left to right, the table notes if items are done or what priority they are in the 2017 Plan, the strategy, who's responsible for the strategy and whether the item is complete and if it could be combined with an above-described strategy or blank for the group to fill in the priority number.

More details on each of the strategy is listed within the Strategic Housing Plan.

Current Priority	Strategy	Proposed Priority
Tier 1 Strategies:		

Current Priority	Strategy	Proposed Priority
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Snow Lot Partnership – WHA: in process	DONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Inclusionary Zoning – now a volunteer program	DONE
5.	Homebuyer Assistance & Rehabilitation – WHA	
6.	Voluntary Assessment – Chamber	
7.	Resort Tax (increase/reallocation) – City	MOVE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE LIST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	LIHTC apartments – WHA/City	DONE
Tier 2 Strategies:		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Accessory Dwelling Units	DONE
2.	Land Bank – City: this could be part of the overall finance program in #2 above	Add to #2
3.	Short Term Rental (conversion program) – staff visited with other communities trying this strategy and it wasn’t successful. Turned into a government payout with little return. Furthermore, the City is already working on short-term rental regulations and enforcement under the Sustainable Tourism Management Plan.	REMOVE
4.	Employer Assisted Housing – Chamber	
5.	Community Land Trust – WHA	
6.	Open Space Reduction in PUDs – City (20% open space when providing affordable housing)	Add to #1
7.	Commercial Linkage	MOVE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE LIST
8.	Residential Linkage	MOVE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE LIST
Tier 3 Strategies (not in any priority order)		
	Opportunities for Tiny Homes	Add to #1
	No-net Loss Policy	Add to #1
	Raising Funds Through Special Events – WHA	
	Acquisition for Market Units – WHA	
	Self-Help Build - Chamber	
	Fee Reimbursement – City: this could be part of the overall finance program in #2 above	#2
	Property Management – WHA/City	
	Habitat for Humanity – WHA/Chamber	
	Co-op or Co-Housing – Chamber/WHA/City	Add to #1
	Public Sector Development – WHA	
	Senior Housing – WHA	
	Section 8 Rent Subsidies – WHA	
	Taxes – City	
	Debt Financing with Favorable Terms – WHA/Chamber	
	Private Donations/Grants – WHA/Chamber	

Current Priority	Strategy	Proposed Priority
	Relocatable Housing – City/WHA/Chamber	Add to #1
	Impact Fees – state law doesn't permit impact fees for private housing	MONITOR

Next Steps

The Committee should come prepared to the next meeting to discuss the top three suggested strategies, strategies for other affordable housing partners and re-prioritize, if needed, the remaining strategies.