

WHITEFISH STRATEGIC HOUSING PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

MINUTES

July 14, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

1. Call to order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Ben Davis

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

Absent: John Muhlfeld

Staff: Angela Jacobs, Riss Getts

Others: Four (4) people from the public were in attendance

2. Communications from the Public: none

Nathan Dugan, Shelter WF – it is important to look at our zoning regulations to provide housing. Nathan announced that Shelter WF was asked to join Gianforte’s Housing Advisory Council and he described today’s press release. There were about 30 people appointed including several elected officials along with other housing-related people.

Toby Scott – recapped a story he heard on NPR and the problems with zoning. We need to make sure our zoning accommodates additional housing.

3. Approval of Minutes from the May 20, 2022 and June 27, 2022 meetings:

Collins/Compton-Ring moved to approve the May 20, 2022, and June 27, 2022, meeting minutes. Passed unanimously.

4. Revisit Proposed Work Program to Provide Additional Workforce Housing Through Up-Zoning.

Ben provided a recap of where we were with the past discussion in May. At the previous meeting, the Committee discussed extensively how we can require a recipient of a zone change to develop affordable housing. After extensive discussion with the city attorney, he described that we cannot **require** it because it falls under the realm of contract zoning.

Angie – the city zoning regulations include Conditional Zoning, but it needs to be proposed by a property owner. But if the City approaches a property owner, it appears the City has pre-approved a project and there could be a perception of impropriety

Bob – Thinks we can use the Conditional Zoning. Suggests we still go through Steps 1-3 – similar to other Growth Policy-Zoning Amendments. But then approach the property owner with the possibility to up-zone. He understands there are concerns with the rezone appearing like a quid pro quo. The appearance of impropriety which has caused legal concerns.

Lori – couldn't someone else – not the City – approach a property owner

Angie – yes, then we could go through the process of a rezone

Wendy – seems like it could be a PR campaign with an educational component; for example, we are attempting to identifying properties and are looking for willing property owners to develop affordable housing

Rhonda – we have built a bunch of housing but none of it has been affordable

Addie – one of the tasks the Housing Whitefish is looking at is Land Banking

Committee had a further discussion about the work plan idea

Tasks 1-2 & 6-7 could be a public report (like a White Paper) then pass it off to the Housing Whitefish group or make it available other nonprofits to work with property owners

Ben – two separate tracks – maps and text amendments; what's the priority?

Dana – we have a lot of other items that need to be completed; the Committee needs to understand the priorities

Ben – wants to know the Committee's preference

Kevin – thinks Tasks 1-2 are the priority for Housing Whitefish – especially for the fundraising aspects and developing their strategic plan

Rhonda – concerned about loss of primary residences

Kevin – annexation policy could give us what we need

Bob – is recommending this is a condition of the zoning; amount of affordable housing – could read like a housing mitigation plan to be negotiated

Dana – what would be the difference between what the annexation policy and the up zoning idea

NEXT STEPS:

Recommend staff start with Tasks 1 and 2; then Tasks 6-7, secondary step

Bob – will re-draft to remove the City's approaching the property owners

Dana – this report will need to have a very clear purpose

5. Update on Affordable Housing Strategies in Progress.

a. City of Whitefish

Dana – provided an update on the Housing Needs Assessment and the next meetings

Riss – provided an update of the items she is working on; including the coordinating with the members of the public trying to build affordable housing and the users that need housing; she wants to include narratives about the people that need housing and not just data

Rhonda – these stories could be helpful for the Needs Assessment

Addie – make sure to reach out to property managers to see what is happening?
Described the dramatic increase in prices in rentals.

Riss – the consultants are contacting property mgmt

NEXT STEPS:

Plan on attending the next Housing Needs Assessment meeting on 8/11

b. Whitefish Housing Authority

The WHA and Housing Whitefish held their annual Strategic Housing Plan today. Dana and Riss also participated. It was facilitated by a person from FVCC. Big action plans for the two groups that also include actions for the City. It was a good a positive meeting.

WHA – a capital improvement plan is the biggest next step; it is important to maintain the Manor. It's a 55-year-old building and we use public housing money

They are working on a final proforma for the Snow Lot and getting ready to submit the application

Housing Whitefish – land banking is important and will be part of the Great Fish Challenge which is a big commitment. Housing WF has six applicants for the Executive Director, and they are working their way through the interview process by the end of August. Discussed other fund-raising opportunities including the 'round up' with Glacier Restaurant Group – it's paid quarterly and haven't seen anything yet.

CVB changed their donation – a certain amount will go to outreach (Glacier Media for the webpage) and reminder will go toward hiring an ED that has grant writing experience; the CVB MOU was updated

NEXT STEPS:

None

c. Chamber of Commerce

The voluntary business assessment is in a holding pattern; we need a Strategic Plan to know what we are raising funding for

Chamber is in a crazy summer-event time; more time in the Fall

MT Co-op – something that might be helpful for the business community

NEXT STEPS:

None

6. Update on Needs Assessment/Strategic Plan – upcoming meeting dates

August 11, 2022 – Refresh 2022 Update (5:30PM – 7PM) – via Teams

September 8, 2022 – Housing Steering Committee meeting (6-8PM)

September 13, 2022 – Refresh 2022 Update (2-5PM) – in-person

7. Next Committee Meeting:

August 11, 2022 – Housing Steering Committee meeting (7-8PM)

Rebecca – thanked Addie and Lori for all their work

8. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 7:41 p.m.