

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 (7-1, Rhonda voting in opposition)

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.