MEETING MINUTES

AFFORDABLE HOUSING STEERING COMMITTEE

Wednesday, January 15, 2019, 7:00 P.M.
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, Parasol Room

Present: Chair Michael Roane, Corina Boeckeler, Ald. Eleanor Revelle, Stephanie Murray, Christopher Rothwell

Absent: Ellen Cushing, Sarah Delgado, Stephanie Gerberding, Rodney Orr, Timothy Stroh, Uri Pachter

Staff: Sarah Flax, Housing and Grants Manager, Marion Johnson, Housing Intern, Quentin Crane, VISTA Housing Associate

Guest speakers: Tom Lenz and Wendy Siegel, Millennia Consulting

Call to Order
Chair Roane called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM without a quorum present.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: November 13th, 2019
Minutes were not approved due to lack of quorum and will be approved at a future meeting.

Community Outreach & Engagement Planning
Chair Roane opened by welcoming everyone to the meeting. Tom Lentz, Millennia Consulting started with reviewing the outreach schedule for 2020.

The group agreed on completing all individual and group meetings by February 15th. City staff mentioned the creation of a digital survey that should go live around February 1 and will cover the same themes and questions as the discussion guide used in the interviews. Millennia Consulting shared they are targeting March 1st to identify key themes and findings from the data gathered during the interviews.

It was agreed that March 5th would be the date for the affordable housing public workshop, after consulting with Larry Donoghue, Chair of the Housing and Homelessness Commission (HHC) who was present at the meeting. March 5 would be appropriate, as there are no items requiring action by the HHC on that date, so HHC members would be able to attend the public workshop on affordable housing, as well. The format and content for the public workshop will be discussed at the next committee meeting in February. Staff will share and gather feedback on the key dates of this schedule with committee members who were not able to join today’s meeting before finalizing.
Tom Lentz, Millennia Consulting, recapped the community engagement outreach work completed by Millennia and the committee members to date. Approximately 125 people had been interviewed so far, with additional meetings already scheduled before February 15. Committee members also shared information about additional meetings scheduled and interview data that they still needed to enter in the Survey Monkey system.

Mr. Lentz and Ms. Siegel shared Millenia’s insights from their individual interviews and small group discussions to date, including that most of the Evanston teachers interviewed do not live in Evanston but wished they could, with some commuting a long distance, and parking around schools was also mentioned by teachers as a potential concern in regards to increased residential density. Another focus group suggested a strong need for lower-cost rentals and a service to match potential roommates to share housing and help with affordability.

Committee members shared their experiences with their interviews and highlighted some of the input received. Property tax was a topic that came up frequently in the conversation relating to affordability. The lack of availability of housing for people with disabilities or senior-friendly housing was also mentioned. Corina Boeckeler shared a creative housing solution in Palatine, IL that combined shared living and an accessory dwelling. The parents of a disabled adult moved to an accessory dwelling (ADU) and repurposed their main home as a shared home with in-house care for their disabled son and roommates in the main home to reduce the cost of housing and care.

Committee members reported feedback on the difficulties that some homeowners were having with maintaining their homes, with costly repairs and affordability issues, and concern about residents’ ability to age in place in the community. Interviewees shared issues with the lack of maintenance of rentals in Evanston as well as difficulties finding larger units to rent. Rent costs were also a major concern cited with many moving to Rogers Park for rent or other suburban communities when looking to buy.

Committee members agreed that they heard strong interest and support from the interviewees for the majority of the solutions discussed, but also some pushback when it came to implementing solutions in the interviewees’ immediate neighborhoods.

Mr. Lenz thanked committee members for their participation in the interview efforts.

**Public Comment**

Sue Loellbach from Connections for the Homeless/Joining Forces shared that her organization was also gathering feedback on similar topics and will be sharing her information with the city shortly. Ms. Loellbach said that she is not getting pushback on the affordable housing solutions concepts, but that NIMBYism (Not In My Backyard) is still a challenge. She suggested asking “what would work in your neighborhood?” to engage the community on the topic. Ms. Loellbach also shared that the reparations sub-committee was likely to start discussing housing affordability issues as well and that
connecting both committee’s efforts could help strengthen their impact and help with the process.

Sarah Vanderwicken from Joining Forces commented that coming up with clear goals, actions, and accountability in ways to assess progress made to address the goals of the affordable housing plan would be critical to the success of this effort. She also shared that asking what other things have not been including in the plan would be an important step.

Doreen Price commented on the urgent need for helping residents stay in the community, particularly through home rehabbing programs. She shared that rehabbing homes and helping residents stay in their homes could help the community overall through preserving neighborhoods but also job creation. Ms. Price shared a concern with the impact of taxes on housing affordability. Ms. Price suggested including Betty Ester in the interview process.

**New/Old Business**
February 12 at 7 PM was confirmed as the next meeting date.

City staff noted that discussion of a moratorium on condo deconversions was not needed at this time, following City Council’s vote not to proceed with the moratorium at its January 13 meeting

**Adjournment**
There being no further business before the committee, Chair Roane adjourned the meeting at 8:11 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah K. Flax, Housing and Grants Manager