

MINUTES OF HOUSING COMMISSION MEETING

DATE: 23 February 2010
TIME: 4:00 PM
PLACE: Housing and Community Development Department
350 West 6th Street, Suite 312, Dubuque, IA 52001

Vice Chairperson Eddy, following staff assurance of compliance with Iowa Open Meeting Law, called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

Commissioners Present: Linda Frommelt Lynn Sutton
William Helling Char Eddy
Judie Root (via telephone)
Sister Dorothy Schwendinger, OSF

Commissioners Absent: Dorothy Culbertson David Kapler
Jim Holz

Staff Present: David Harris Janet Walker
Jessica Kieffer Cpl. Mike Kane
Aggie Tauke

Public Present: Terry Mozena

Review and Certification of Minutes of 26 January 2010 Commission Meeting

Commissioner Schwendinger moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Sutton seconded. Commissioner Helling abstained. All others present in favor. Motion passed.

Correspondence/Public Input

None

Old Business

Election of Vice Chair

Commissioner Helling nominated Commissioner Schwendinger for Vice Chair. Commissioner Schwendinger accepted the nomination. Commissioner Frommelt seconded. All present in favor. Motion approved.

New Business

FY2011-2015 Consolidated Plan and Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing

Aggie explained that the Consolidated Plan is required by HUD for communities receiving Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and certain other federal grants. It is a five year plan that is designed to be a collaborative process whereby a community establishes a unified vision for housing and community development actions. The Plan contains an analysis of housing and homeless needs, barriers to affordable housing, community development needs, special needs population, antipoverty strategy and other community needs. An outline of priorities, objectives and outcomes was attached to the Plan for review. Commissioner Schwendinger motioned to accept the Plan. Commissioner Helling seconded. Motion passed.

Commissioner Root joined the meeting via telephone at 4:10pm.

Aggie explained that the Analysis of Impediments (AI) to Fair Housing is required in conjunction with the Consolidated Plan to ensure that local communities are partners in affirmatively furthering fair housing. Alta Vista Research conducted an AI to identify the extent to which certain impediments continue to exist and to identify additional potential impediments. The study found several impediments to fair housing in Dubuque. These included a lack of diverse stock of accessible, affordable housing, a limited number of minority role models, the perception that Dubuque is not a welcoming and inclusive community for outsiders and particularly minorities, the failure of victims of housing discrimination to file complaints, the absence of a deterrent for subtle housing discrimination, and the limited amount of minority homeownership. The Commissioners received a list of the impediments as well as objectives and recommended actions to improve these issues. Commissioner Schwendinger motioned to approve the Analysis. Commissioner Helling seconded. All present in favor. Motion approved.

Discussion: Safe Community Task Force Enforcement Sub-Committee Minutes

David presented a response the January Safe Community Task Force Enforcement Sub-Committee minutes.

At 4:16pm Terry Mozena from the Safe Community Task Force Enforcement Sub-Committee joined the meeting.

Commissioner Root questioned why other government agencies that offer various public assistance programs are not under scrutiny as well. Why is it always Section 8? Mr. Mozena responded that the minutes of the meeting may only account for one person's opinion. Commissioner Schwendinger stated that there are ways to make the minutes more accurate. That perhaps they should be reviewed by several people before they are distributed to the public. She explained that the way the minutes currently read creates misunderstandings about what was discussed and it would be helpful if words like 'some people', 'one person' 'half the people' etc were added.

Mr. Mozena discussed that the perception of Section 8 is not correct and that the public needs to be better educated about the Section 8 Program. Commissioner Eddy commented that educating the public is an on-going effort and that the Taskforce could assist in that education.

Policy Approval: Closing the Waiting List to all applicants except those that qualify for local preference points for the City of Dubuque

Janet explained that the City Manager has recommended to reduce the number of Vouchers to serve 900 families (currently there are 1063 Vouchers) and that staff is also requesting approval for further closure of the waiting list in an ongoing effort to maintain a waiting list to ensure that vouchers are issued in a reasonable amount of time. The waiting list would be closed to all households except those providing verification of "City of Dubuque" local preference points for residency. Commissioner Frommelt motioned to approve the policy changes. Commissioner Helling seconded. All present in favor.

Discussion: New Article: "I'm off Section 8"

The commissioners received a memo outlining the facts of the case as staff had researched them. Janet discussed staff verified that for one month the electric bill for the unit was in the landlord's name. The remaining months that the landlord claimed were in another individual's name were verified by staff to be in an authorized household member's name. Commissioner Sutton commented that the landlord made allegations of stolen appliances and damages to the unit but did not file any charges or actions against the tenant, the landlord just went right to the Telegraph Herald and as of the date of the meeting, still had not filed any charges.

Additional FY2011 Program Proposals:

1. FSS Caseworker
2. Expansion of Getting Ahead Program

David shared that these items were presented at the City Council Budget Hearing for FY2011.

Amendments to Administrative Plan:

1. Additional requirements for Proof of Residence

Janet explained that staff is requesting a change in administrative policy that would require applicants to provide two verifications of proof of residency. These items could be a lease agreement, rent receipt or utility bill.

2. Requirements for transfer of drivers license and vehicle registration to maintain residence preference

Janet stated that this request is under review and may be requested for policy change at a later time.

3. Prohibition against use of assisted unit as a furlough address or residence for persons released from incarceration
4. Termination for additional drug-related activities

Janet explained that if a member of the household or guest engages or has engaged in any drug-related activity in the unit as evidenced by admissions to law enforcement, evidence of drug activity in the unit or on the person witnessed by police, or removal of children from the home for exposure to illegal drugs as documented by Department of Human Services, assisted household benefits will be terminated

Commissioner Schwendinger motioned to approve all of the amendments to the Administrative Plan. Commissioner Helling seconded. All present in favor.

Information Sharing

Opinion: Fixes for the Section 8 Program

For informational purposes only.

Complaints Received

David explained that staff has been recording every complaint that the Section 8 department receives and is keeping a spreadsheet. He discussed that complaints come from various sources such as tenants, landlords, anonymous callers, staff and the City of Dubuque website.

Commissioners received a summary of the number of complaints received, the outcomes of the complaints and the information pertaining to the complaints.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 5:16pm. All present in favor.

Minutes taken by:


Jessica Kieffer
Recording Secretary

Respectfully submitted by:


David Harris
Department Director