

A regular meeting of the Leelanau County Housing Action Committee (HAC) was held on Monday, October 10, 2022 at the Leelanau County Government Center.

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 3:05 pm by Chair Lois Bahle.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: L. Bahle, F. Clements, R. Foster, P. Hallstedt, M. Lautner, T. Lentych, J. O’Neill, S. Oriel

Members Absent: T. Wessell, C. Noonan, S. Yoder, C. Wood

Staff Present: J. Herman

Public Present: Y. Brown, Z. Hillyer, W. Irvin, L. Mawby, K. Wizinsky

Bahle asked each member to give a brief introduction of themselves. Members of the public also participated in introductions.

CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA

Clements asked Lentych about an article on 600 units going in Traverse City. Lentych said he would look into it and bring it for discussion next meeting. Hallstedt added Farm Stay as Item #4 in Discussion/Action. Bahle added Michigan House Bill 4722 as Item #5 in Discussion/Action.

It was moved by Foster, seconded by Clements to accept the agenda as amended. Motion carried 8-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – None

STAFF COMMENTS – None

CONSIDERATION OF AUGUST 8, 2022 MINUTES

The minutes were accepted by consensus, as presented.

OLD BUSINESS – None

Discussion / Action

1. Introduction: Zachary Hillyer, Leelanau County Housing Ready Program Director at Housing North
Brown introduced Hillyer and mentioned his first day was September 19 and he has been going over his work plan. Hillyer thanked HAC for the invitation, support, and creation of the position. He is originally from Ohio and has worked in various housing capacities throughout his career. He worked in fair housing, legal aid and most recently in public housing agency in Toledo. Hillyer has many skillsets to address housing needs in Leelanau County. He appreciates those who have reached out and helped him get familiar with the area.

Brown asked if each HAC member represents each township in the county. Bahle replied that most townships are covered but they are missing a few townships to represent and would like to get more

members. Brown thought the introductions at the beginning of the meeting was beneficial and suggested if members could introduce Hillyer at their township meetings. Bahle agreed.

Hallstedt asked Hillyer about his passion and interest for housing. Hillyer said he has been passionate about working in affordable housing space and housing opportunities for everyone. He was drawn to this position because it is in housing and he can have an impact in the community. He now has the opportunity to meet people and address the pressing need. Hallstedt asked Hillyer what are overarching hurdles he sees in each area and how can he help? Hillyer said they have opportunities with township zoning updates that can help with the housing stock market. There are also a number of strategies to ensure that certain houses can remain as long-term rentals year-round. He understands that short term rentals (STR) are a part of the economy, but there needs to be a balance of both.

Brown said that Hillyer's goal is to be guided by the goals of Leelanau County for housing. They do not have a specific template for this program as this is the first time they are bringing this to Leelanau County.

(Oriel left the meeting at 3:30pm)

Clements would encourage everyone to host Hillyer at their township. He took Hillyer to Empire Township and toured various parts of the area so he can get a lay of the land. Bahle looks forward to showing Hillyer the Suttons Bay Township and Village area.

2. Discussion: Goals / recommendations for Housing Ready Program Director and how HAC can interact. Lentych revisited Clement's suggestion from earlier to visit each township in the county. He said he didn't want some areas to be ignored because there isn't a member associated with each township. Bahle suggested they reach out to township planning commissions for new members.
3. Update: Homestretch – Marek Rd/Suttons Bay
Jon Stimson was unable to attend the meeting. Via text to Brown, he said he still has a gap of \$125,000.00 and is hoping to get funds from MEDC. There is no deadline at this time to raise funds.
4. Farm Stay
Hallstedt explained how farm stay can relate to housing. It is a way to keep workers here so they can live here and send their kids to school. One issue he runs into is that farmers can't rent out the housing they hold for seasonal employees. If they were to build to code, they could rent it when seasonal employees are not present. Another issue is that the state of Michigan allows up to four campsites but is currently not passed in Leelanau Township. Farm Stay is allowed in Cleveland Township as a working farm and he would love to talk about this topic to any township that may be interested. Bahle asked if this was a work stay situation? Hallstedt replied no, this is a temporary solution for up to 30 days such as "glamping".

Lautner asked why there was a limit of four campsites? Is there a scale depending on how many acres of land? Hallstedt said that according to the state of Michigan five or more sites is considered a campground. For a working farm, the owner must live on the parcel and will need to provide five years of taxes to qualify.

Bahle asked Brown if farm stay would qualify as a tool? Brown said she would have to bring it forward to her board. However, their focus is for year-round housing in year-round climate. It could be something she can look into. Hallstedt said work force housing is one way to address seasonal housing. Brown suggested Sleeping Bear Gateways Council would be a really good partner as that is their main focus.

Lautner likes the idea of utilizing unoccupied seasonal housing. It could be beneficial for a teacher from September-May and it is income for the farmer. Her biggest issue would be getting the tenants out in time for the seasonal workers. There has to be some legislative language to protect the farmer.

Clements asked if the state of Michigan would weigh in and interfere with farm stay? Hallstedt replied that it is a local township matter. Lentych said it is a tough battle with township zoning and Hallstedt said it has been done throughout the country.

5. Michigan House Bill 4722

Bahle gave a brief explanation on the legislative bill on STR's. Lentych said this is a controversial topic as realtors really want this because money will be flowing in for them. O'Neill said there are over 1,000 STR's in Grand Traverse County and about 600 in Leelanau County plus hundreds more in surrounding counties. We lose around 2,000 housing units to STR's.

Brown gave an update where the house bill currently stands. It is sitting on the Senate floor until after the election around Thanksgiving. Housing North is watching this house bill closely. One concern they see is that this will take it out of commercial use into residential use. The biggest concern they will face here is how they will be regulated within the communities. Thirty percent is a high volume in Suttons Bay. They are still encouraging units of government and municipalities to think about how they are going to regulate them based on accurate numbers of STR's and year-round rentals.

Brown adds that they will soon also have a report on seasonal work force population study from Networks North West. This report will be shared at the Housing Summit and according to the data, Leelanau County has the highest number of STR's in the ten-county region. Brown will share copies of the report to members.

Bahle asked Brown if she has any language to help HAC draft a response? Brown said she will share talking points and a letter that she has sent in the past with the members.

Lentych said all Airbnb's are investments as in some are used for retirement but also rent out to make profits. Hallstedt said housing is such a personal part and they need to have some control. O'Neill said this is a matter of economic justice.

Discussion ensued.

Motion by O'Neill, seconded by Lentych, to have Bahle work on language with the help of Brown's talking points to create a letter to the Senator. Motion carried 6-1.

COMMUNICATION ITEMS – Housing Summit Oct 27-28.

The Housing North Housing Summit will be held October 27-28 at the Great Wolf Lodge.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mawby said Peninsula Housing closed on a three-bedroom home in Suttons Bay today. They hope to do some renovation and retain the land so they can sell the home at an affordable cost within the next six months.

STAFF COMMENT – None.

MEMBER COMMENTS/CHAIR COMMENTS

O'Neill gave an update on Home Sweet Home. He said they have now identified as a non-profit organization. They are working with a national group at which he will have more information later. They are looking for buyers who have been approved for mortgages but can't touch anything in the market. He has met with an attorney to help create a deed restriction.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned by consensus at 4:22 p.m.