

A regular meeting of the Leelanau County Housing Action Committee (HAC) was held on Monday, February 14 2022 at the Government Center.

CALL TO ORDER:

Meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm by Planning Director Trudy Galla.

ROLL CALL:

Members Present: L. Bahle, T. Lentych, F. Clements (3:05 pm), R. Foster, S. Oriel, M. Lautner, T. Wessell

Members Absent: C. Noonan, J. O'Neill, S Yoder (prior notice)

Staff Present: T. Galla

Public Present: Wendy Irvin, Clare Wood, Phil Hallstedt

Consideration of Agenda

It was moved by Lautner, seconded by Wessell, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried 6-0.

Organizational Items

Chairman: Galla opened the nominations.

It was moved by Foster, seconded by Bahle, to nominate Bahle as Chair. Nominations were closed and Bahle was elected Chair on a 6-0 vote.

Vice-Chair: Bahle opened the nominations.

It was moved by Bahle, seconded by Oriel to nominate Lautner as Vice-Chair. Nominations were closed and Lautner was elected Vice-Chair on a 6-0 vote.

Approve 2022 Meeting Schedule:

It was moved by Wessell, seconded by Foster, to approve the 2022 meeting schedule for every other month. Motion carried 6-0.

2022 Goals

(Clements present)

Members discussed the goals and suggested the following changes to the document:

Move Item #5 to the top, combine 2 and 9 into one goal with 2 parts, reword #4 to include farm/ag housing, workforce housing.

Phil Hallstedt (public) spoke on the need for seasonal and full-time and workforce housing. Models are needed for that type of housing. Item #4 will be reworded to address this.

It was moved by Wessell, seconded by Lautner, to approve the 2022 Goals as modified. Motion carried 7-0.

Clements commented on the communications tool from Housing North and how do we communicate what we are trying to do. How do we relate to Housing North now? He suggested talking with Yarrow Brown about communication and the articles she has been publishing, and then go back to the Leelanau Enterprise to see about getting our message out.

Public Comments

Wessell introduced Phil Hallstedt from Leelanau Township and stated he is interested in being involved with the HAC.

Hallstedt thanked the members for their work. He is a 1st generation farmer but tied to older names in the community. They are doing fresh produce cherry orchard. As farmers, they are priced out. They want to provide their own housing and are finding it tough to do that with the regulations in place. There needs to be new models for the type of housing they need, as well as for tourism. Hallstedt is familiar with the work of Habitat for Humanity, as well as others.

Wendy Irvin said their priority improvement programs offered by Habitat are increasing.

Clare Wood from Leelanau Conservancy introduced herself and stated that Kathy Birney was stepping down from the HAC and Tom Nelson would still like a Leelanau Conservancy representative on the HAC. Wood is interested and has dealt with housing issues in the past. Also, there is a perception that the Conservancy is taking away land for housing and there is a cost with that. She would like to be considered for the HAC.

Staff Comments

Galla noted that Kathy Birney contacted her and her schedule is too full for her to continue on the HAC. Anyone who is interested in being on the HAC should submit their name and the Leelanau County Planning Commission (LCPC) would consider them at an upcoming meeting. The HAC is a subcommittee of the LCPC and the LCPC appointed the members. Galla commented on the checklist and the housing webinar she participated in earlier in the day. One of the comments she made during the webinar referred to the checklist that Leelanau County had developed and is now being used in the region. The next step should include getting documents and suggested language out to communities so if they decide to modify their zoning ordinance or other documents, they have a starting point. Many of these communities do not have professional planners and the planning commission members are all volunteers are very busy. Having a starting point would be beneficial.

Wessell commented on the Housing North position and how it is needed to help these communities deal with the housing problems.

Lautner said she has been opposed to a position. Solon Township has already made some changes included reducing the minimum square footage to 400 square feet and their lot size is 5 acres. Builders and developers say that the amount of land they need is just too expensive.

Lentych felt that Housing North needed a couple staff members to help everyone.

Consideration of November 8, 2021 Minutes

It was moved by Foster, seconded by Clements, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried 7-0.

Old Business - None

Discussion / Action

Update: Housing North / Housing Ready Position

Bahle asked about the use of ARPA funds. Wessell said the hang-up on this is the 'position' and he suggested services be discussed. Counties do not want to add staff. Lautner agreed. Lautner added that ARPA funds have been designated for broadband and fiber. With fiber and good connectivity, she felt it would help families by keeping lower income families here and the wealthy are already coming in. Fiber will help by startup of businesses, and having one person working at home instead of driving to a job.

Lentych said there was still a role for the county to access state funded dollars. If we are not ready, we are going to be harmed. The work is not over once your direction on ARPA fund expenditures are done. The people lower on the list of ARPA requests need to have support in order to compete for dollars in Lansing.

Lautner commented on a 30-acre piece bought in Solon Township to build small homes; they think the biggest problem will be neighbors opposing the project.

Clements asked Lautner about her opposition to a position at Housing North. Lautner said she feels it will be a position we will have to fund in the future. She was not supportive of funding a position.

Lentych commented that we need to go back and look at the structure and how it was established. Charlevoix County model is up and running but there is no talk that it will ever be turned into a county position.

Clements said our early model was a technical group with planners with knowledge that communities could reach out to and get help. A fee could be paid to them. He asked Lautner if the model was different, would that work? Lautner replied she was more for contracted work, not for employees. Who does the contract?

Lentych suggested a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the county so Housing North raises funds and the county is not responsible.

Lautner commented that Long lake Township is building industrial and residential. They are building their tax base. There is a housing development going into Cedar and people are now wanting to stop it.

Wessell noted that Foster and Wessell are on the Leelanau Community Foundation and the foundation approved \$30,000 to Housing North for a 3-year term. They are very proud of that.

Bahle said we still need to encourage the use of some ARPA funds for housing.

Foster asked if the Housing North model included having the county house the person? Lentych replied that would be part of the contribution, if they did.

Members requested Galla have Brown available for the next meeting to talk about the list of duties for the position.

Lentych asked what the Foundation agreed to fund and Wessell said Brown came with the needs for the township and the county and we jumped on it to jumpstart it. It is providing a service for all of us. Oriel asked what services would we want provided to the county? Wessell felt that grant writing for funds was very important. Oriel noted that in Charlevoix, the person in this position has a planning background so he can speak the language with the communities.

Wessell suggested that township and village officials could be asked to attend the February 28 ARPA meeting and let the county board know what they need for assistance with housing.

HAC Future Framework Discussion

Clements commented that #2 and # on the agenda require Yarrow Brown for discussion. We need to get creative on the future framework. Housing North picked up on that and did it with Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) by putting information on the website for resources to communities. What is HAC doing? What is Housing North doing? We need to be consistent with communities.

Bahle felt that the housing position person could handle #2 and #3, as well as other work.

Oriel stated that our uniqueness is that we understand our county and Housing North can support that. If someone has done something that is worth sharing, I'm going to use that. She felt the role for HAC was to gather what our communities need.

ADU Discussion

Galla commented on some information she has been looking up on ADUs and noted that most communities allow ADUs in their residential districts but not elsewhere. Why not? Some language she has found allows ADUs anywhere a single-family unit is allowed, and in some cases where duplexes are allowed. If a farmer has a need for ADUs for workers, or for parents or a child graduated from college and looking for a place, why can't it be allowed? It's also extra money if it is rented, which helps the owner stay in their home. There are also JADUs – Junior ADUs which are smaller (about 500 square feet or less). Galla noted that Leelanau County was a leader with the checklist that is now being used in other counties; we can be a leader with this as well and try and get some education and information to our communities to reconsider ADUs. She felt this would be a faster way to get more housing options in our communities than waiting for new developments: allow ADUs, and encourage rehab of existing buildings for housing units such as above or in the back of businesses. We will not get ADUs everywhere as some subdivisions and condo developments may prevent them. Also, their use can be restricted so it is owner-occupied of the main home or the ADU, or a minimum rental time so it is not considered short term rentals. Leelanau County is unique and has a much greater problem than other areas and pricing just continues to go up.

Bahle commented on a property within the village that had an ADU and wanted to add a second one. Seems like it would have been appropriate.

Members requested Galla get more information on ADUs, look at Clements work on ADUs, and talk to Brown on what she is working on. This will be a discussion for April.

(Foster and Wessell left for another commitment.)

Clements commented on taxes for ADUs and what Frankfort did. Frankfort did away with carriage houses in 2016 and then brought it back and allowed it in every district in Frankfort. They have a formula for the taxes that they use, or there can be a fee for the ADU and then no taxes again but there are restrictions on how you rent it out.

Funding for Housing / ARPA Funds

Members noted this was already discussed.

Outreach Opportunities

HAC will continue to explore opportunities for articles in the paper and getting information out to the townships and villages.

Create / maintain project list

Bahle noted that Larry Mawby was very busy with Peninsula Housing but could not release any potential projects at this time. The HAC should continue to track upcoming projects.

Communication Items

County's Role in Housing

Lentych said that housing is not a naturally occurring activity for the county. We have gone far but it is up to us to demonstrate the needs. Bahle said she would not be here for the February 28 meeting on ARPA funds and encouraged other HAC members to attend.

Lentych noted that in most states, real estate transfer tax funds the affordable housing but not in Michigan. He felt we need to be intentional of what we want. Where should housing be? Letting it just happen is not a good policy. Go township by township and track it and what is needed.

Oriel commented on the ticker article which discussed ALICE (Asset Limited Income Constrained & Employed). Bring that information together with the presentation by Jonathon Oltersdorf on housing in the county and highlight it.

Public Comments

Wood thanked members for their work.

Hallstedt commented on ADUs and what he was told by the township planner. We need to talk about workforce housing and ADUs. There is an incentive to link workforce needs with our housing needs. He commented on an audit he did of 6 townships and he will send to Galla. Also, we should start thinking of noise as pollution. It effects your neighbors.

Staff Comments - None

Member Comments / Chair Comments

Galla was asked to follow up with Esther Greenhouse on a potential presentation for the county.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:25 pm