

City of Oxford Housing Advisory Commission
Minutes of the August 19, 2019 Meeting
Oxford Municipal Building – First Floor Conference Room

HAC members in attendance: Sherry Lind, David Prytherch, Nicola Rodrigues, Shana Rosenberg, and Steve Schnabl. Excused was Scott Straker. No guest attendees were present.

Staff members in attendance: Sam Perry and Zach Moore.

Meeting was called to order at 1:30 pm.

Steve moved to approve the agenda, Glenn seconded. All voted in favor.

Shana moved to approve the agenda, Steve seconded, all voted in favor. Glenn abstained due to absence during July meeting.

Zach provided an update on the State of Housing Affordability Report. Staff is working with the consultant to refine the report for the September meeting. The key question is “what is the current demand for affordable housing, and how short are we?” A draft has been prepared, staff has proposed certain critical edits, and the consultant is refining. When approved by staff, it will be provided to the HAC prior to the September meeting.

Sam provided an update on current thinking about Comprehensive Plan revision, including a focus on housing. Staff is considering a budget request to first perform a housing study and needs analysis in 2020, providing data critical to understanding housing conditions and setting goals through the full comprehensive plan process (perhaps in 2021). Sherry expressed hope for close collaboration with Miami to ensure high quality data and planning. David inquired whether this was more analytical (about understanding local conditions) or policy-making (recommending actions), Sam suggested it was more the former. Steve made a motion that HAC express its support for the Community Development Department’s potential request to undertake a housing study and needs analysis, Glenn seconded, and all voted in favor. David expressed the hope that any investment in consultant housing analysis be targeted to meaningfully support policy action.

Zach then re-introduced the topic of the Housing Trust Fund to the group, offering commission members the opportunity to express any updates on continued research into the history of the fund and its relationship to the Oxford Community Foundation, in order to determine how best the fund might be managed in the future. The HAC continues to support its June motion that the Housing Trust Fund be maintained separate from the general fund (while putting in place a revenue fund to collect donations), and policies developed for the best use of the fund. Glenn suggested potential future use of funds as part of a revolving loan program to support local housing goals.

The Commission then discussed “takeaways” from the visit with Desmond Maaytah of the Butler County Development Department and Lori DiStaola of Neighborhood Housing

Services. Members expressed excitement by the eagerness of these agencies to work with Oxford, the fact Oxford apparently would score highly, and the opportunities this presents to take meaningful action. It appears funding is available, but the question is how best to apply and use such money. There were various ideas, but not all developed in enough detail to meet an upcoming September deadline. The Commission discussed some of those projects, including perhaps the 'tiny house' transitional housing development or support the development of a housing study. Sam provided some of the HUD criteria. Shana expressed the strong belief that the tiny home project should be a high priority: it has a strong advocate, has been fleshed out, etc. Shana moved that City staff prepare a CDBG application with Community Development Professionals (CDP) for a cottage home community, or alternatively a housing study, and was seconded by Steve. Glenn made a friendly amendment that the motion be more general, but there was no second. All voted in favor of Shana's original motion, none opposed.

Shana raised the question of whether we can lower the cost of housing in private developments by partnering with an organization like Neighborhood Housing Services, perhaps in a manner similar to two affordable houses previously built by NHS on Harvest Court in the Muskopf Farms subdivision. There was good agreement this could be a great idea, and worth considering in the future.

Zach and Sam provided an overview of movement on the Western Knolls Property, with plans to conduct a design charrette in November as part of World Town Planning Day, which would involve engaging stakeholders and neighbors in order to develop a vision for the site. The plan is for the charrette to be facilitated by Miami educational leadership students. Visioning exercises as part of a charrette could help build some consensus around the goals for the property, which could then inform a Request for Proposal (RFP) to attract a developer to the table (if this is the direction Council decides). David expressed excitement about this direction.

In other business, Glenn proposed the list of "approved rentals" on the Community Development web page better distinguish between those properties that have had a full voluntary inspection and those that only have had an "external only" inspection, possibly by having two separate lists on the website. Zach expressed this was something staff had contemplated doing in the past, though he wasn't sure why it had not yet been done. Steve seconded that motion, on the belief that renters should know how willing their potential landlords are to have their properties fully inspected. All voted in favor, none opposed.

Glenn moved to adjourn at 2:47 pm, Shana seconded, all voted in favor. None opposed.