



Neighborhood Association
MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, June 9th, 2021 @ 7PM
ZOOM

Call to Order

7:05

20 people present

May Minutes Approved

Chair's Report

- Committee members had an accessory informational meeting about the Chippewa Valley Housing Recommendations.
- Sharon has written a draft letter requesting a meeting with city officials to discuss key points.

Treasurer's Report

- Sharon was not present to give an update

Election

- Jim Erickson elected to the steering committee

Approve By-Laws for the Eau Claire Neighborhood Association

- John Hibbard has made some corrections and edits
- Discussion of boundaries, and if Seymour should be included. They have an association but are outside the city limits
- Jackie, Kevin, and Sharon have been attending meetings
- Motion to accept a draft of the Bylaws of the Association of Associations, recognizing that modifications and addendums will be coming in the next month, at which time we will vote again to accept or reject them – motion passes.
- Motion to make Jackie our official representative at these meetings. Sharon will be the alternate, Kevin will be the second alternate. Motion passes.



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Discussion of Sharon's letter of requested inclusion (re: Chippewa Valley Housing Task Force)

- Discussion of whether the meetings held by this task force could be considered public.
- Jeremy: Nov 11, 2019, Eau Claire City Council received the report and accepted that the report was issued to the city from the task force. One member of the public -- Lee Hennick -- spoke in favor of the recommendations and the work that was done to create the report.

Conditional Use Permit, Wilcox (Update)

- Discussion of the possibility that the Smets have filed a lawsuit. Scott Allen says he is not aware of a lawsuit being filed. Property owner has retained an attorney.

Chippewa Valley Housing Recommendations

Scott Allen, Eau Claire Community Development Director and co-chair/author/facilitator of the document, in attendance for questions

- Kevin asks why neighborhood associations were not involved in something this important
- Scott Allen discusses history of the project
 - Kickoff: City of Altoona via Mayor Pratt
 - Mike Golat attends housing forum in New Richmond (2018): Big-picture discussion. Initiates a regional group
 - Scott joins in April 2018.
 - Group puts together key findings
 - A report, not a plan
 - Council resolution accepts the regional housing task force final report, including key findings, reports, plans, studies.
 - Council "formally receive(s) and accept" the 16 consensus statements, 45 recommendations, 45 pages of housing data and critical obstacles
 - The group put together a report with help of pro bono assistance, interns, no compensation from City of Eau Claire
 - Not a formal group. No members. But the core team in terms of those doing the bulk of gathering and facilitating: Cedar Corp, city planner of



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Chippewa, housing authority, executive director (?), planners from Eau Claire County

- After a number of drafts, they come to a consensus described as “informal and fluid”
- Josh says that a draft report that worked through at least three meetings was subject to an official voting process. That the draft had been available for several weeks, and everybody listed on the report had an opportunity to give feedback.
- The group met a total of five times
- The group did not vote on everything. They took a “consensus” approach, not unanimity on every point
- The Housing Opportunities Commission was born out of the recommendations. They are now working on affordable housing.
- Kevin asks who in the city staff is our champion and keeper of our zoning law. Mentions the parking pad on someone’s front lawn on State Street.
- City Council is responsible for zoning ordinances
- Kevin mentions that the Third Ward is the only neighborhood that has three historic districts in it. Houses that are of historical importance. It’s one of the reasons that makes EC special. Is there someone on city staff who is the person trying to keep the R1 zone enforced?
- Long answer from Scott Allen, where he identifies no one on City Staff, and says it’s the City Council’s job.
- Josh: there is no connection between Act 67 and how zoning is enforced. Act 67 says you must have substantial evidence pro or con a conditional use permit and connect that directly to the city’s zoning code. It puts cities on the spot, requiring them to put things in their code that they want to regulate. And state code pre-empts local code
- Susan: the report led to the conclusion that for the purposes of affordable housing, what was needed was more apartments. What about improving housing stock, and bolstering home ownership?
- Some virtual meetings of the task force were recorded. The others—there are notes but they are not publicly available
- Who was invited? The core team talked to others in the “housing ecosystem” and community services. It built from there, from the existing members asking each other who else needed to be there: people experiencing homelessness, public service agencies, employers for whom workers might be looking for housing but not finding what they were looking for.



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- Eileen: This started as an exploratory thing. Now that city council has accepted the report, this gives the report more teeth than it should have.
- Scott says this report will be used as one reference among many, and the older it gets, the less useful it gets
- The task force does still exist and is now focused on implementation
- Jackie: We are now at the implementation stage, but who is representing us? Who are we supposed to go to to say 'how do I protect my historical home?' Why is no one telling us what's going on until it's too late?
- Talk about supply and demand, density results in greater per-unit affordability, by controlling fixed costs (land, infrastructure)

Announcements/Open Forum

- Jacob Wrasse: Is moving into the welcome center tomorrow, soft opening in July, open house around August, for a Third Ward reception

Adjournment

Next Meeting

Wednesday, July 14th, 2021 @ 7pm TBA