

Northfield Affordable Housing Task Force

MINUTES, December 6, 2016 Meeting

Attending: Dayna Norvold, Northfield HRA and Rice County Habitat for Humanity

Janine Atchison, City of Northfield

Sandi Gerdes, Laura Baker Services

Jim Blaha, Northfield Community Action Center

Carol Gengenbach, Northfield Community Action Center

Shelly Holden, Northfield Retirement Community

Richard Schulte, Northfield Planning Commission

Jonathan Davis, St. John's Lutheran Church

Kyle Nordine, Northfield Retirement Community

Chris Heineman, City of Northfield

Scott Tempel, City of Northfield

Jenny Larson, Three Rivers Community Action

Jayne Hager Dee, Northfield HRA and Northfield Community Action Center

Hosted by Laura Baker Services. Thank you.

Two tasks lay before the group to meet the goal of more affordable housing in Northfield: 1. The feasibility of redevelopment of Florella's and the feasibility of development in the Southbridge area and 2. Educating the broader Northfield community about these housing needs.

"Granny flats (GF)" – Have been through two rounds of Northfield Planning Commission. Ready to go to City Council. Is there a need? Should a door be opened to see if there's a need? Can we get creative? Allowing GF might solve a problem for retirement communities in Northfield. Current federal standards are that if there is a common wall between a nursing home and senior housing, then elderly waivers go away after a certain period of time. Must be placed in owner occupied domicile; must be accessible; must be temporary (6 mos. with option of one renewal); must be medical need. GF are an attempt to keep people with medical needs out of facilities where they could spend down their assets and be placed on assistance more quickly.

Emergency housing (EH) -- Needed to provide housing for individuals and families perhaps for more than a year, until they are stabilized emotionally, financially, socially and with employment. The people who might need this housing are seniors, workforce, drifters, etc. Is there a parcel of land to provide EH? Is there the possibility of bringing someone else in to own it, i.e. private investor, foundation, not-for-profit? Are there different sets of rules for each occupant group and/or each owner? Need to consider overall costs and efficiencies?

This brings us back to the concept of a continuous housing plan. Take recommendation to HRA. HRA is looking at the possibility of development of Southbridge (rental and ownership). That will likely come. But HRA has not worked with emergency or senior or disabled housing. What creative options are there to fill the gaps? Two questions need to be answered: 1. How can the City of Northfield assist with emergency housing? 2. What are the needs of larger employers in the community – both with clients and employees?

Three day stays in a local motel are provided; takes approximately two weeks to stabilize (typical time for a shelter stay). Need to provide a continuum of stable housing. HRA could help to provide affordable rental units to fill gaps. The issue isn't shelter only – it's also about services that need

to be provided. If we take a big picture view, this is intensive work. And will require many partners. The housing continuum would be:

EMERGENCY – 1 year to stabilize – TRANSITIONAL – 2-3 years -- PERMANENT

And what does the continuum look like at the extreme ends?

- There are currently 8 units of permanent supportive housing in Northfield with the Community Action Center. They are respectful models of homeless intervention.
- What about FEMA trailers (or the like) added to the Manger Inn site?
- CAC has a Housing Task Force focusing on emergency housing.
- Suburban Chicago model (Arlington Heights) where different churches open each evening to homeless during cold months. Provide dinner, breakfast, sack lunch, showers. JH Dee will get that information to all members.

There needs to be an accurate inventory of what currently exists at Florella's. Asking price is now under \$1 million. Valued by Rice County for taxes at about \$350 thousand. If government unit purchases, must pay for relocation of residents. Back of the envelope projection of costs of city utility hook up and paving would be \$280 thousand. That does not include: demolition costs (in the past \$6-8,000 per unit), gas and electricity costs (Jenny Larson will look into cost estimates), relocation of residents costs, street lights and sidewalks, etc. It is believed that there are 19 occupied units in the park.

Must be mindful of the educational component. Critical! State the problem; how can it be fixed? Could be carried out on Sundays at local churches. Many congregations have social justice as a priority for members.

Next meeting: Tuesday, January 3 at 4 pm. Laura Baker Services.

Submitted by: Jayne Hager Dee