

Northfield Affordable Housing Task Force

MINUTES, February 7, 2017 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

Dave Berglund, Edina Realty

Richard Schulte, Northfield Planning Commission

Jonathan Davis, St. John's Lutheran Church

Scott Tempel, City of Northfield

Leah Hall, Three Rivers Community Action

Scott Wopata, Northfield Union of Youth

Jayne Hager Dee, Northfield HRA and Northfield Community Action Center

Thanks to Laura Baker Services for hosting this meeting.

Leah Hall was introduced as the new Community Development Director at Three Rivers Community Action and Scott Wopata was introduced as the Director of the Northfield Union of Youth (The Key). Welcome to both of them.

Dayna Norvold referred to the Housing Continuum.

Emergency housing. HRA's home at 517 Washington was shown to a committee from the Community Action Center. There are 2-2 bedroom units, one occupied (lease will expire this summer), one vacant. Renovations are currently being made to the unoccupied unit. CAC is considering leasing these units as emergency housing to replace 2 units at Northfield Extended Stay. Stays would be 2-3 months to stabilize the occupants. Three Rivers has been renting these apartments as transitional housing, with CAC providing services for occupants. Transitional funding has run out. CAC currently also leases a unit at the former Manger Inn for this purpose.

Richard Schulte asked what happened to the concept of FEMA-type trailers being used for emergency housing? Questions still exist: Are trailers available? What do they cost to buy or lease? Will the former Manger Inn allow them to be placed on the property (for ease of providing CAC services)? Will current Northfield city zoning laws allow this? Will the city allow sewer/water hook up? How easy will that be? What's the plan? Can HRA dollars be used? This committee is part of HRA. Is HRA required to follow recommendations of this group, since this group has no authority. What would the community support be for this? Is emergency housing a priority for this city council? Is this an effort that the Northfield faith community would support and help to fund?

Emergency housing for youth. Scott Wopata reported that the Northfield Union of Youth served 650 youth in 2016, ages 12-20 years old. They are open 365 days/year from 3-10 pm. Most of these youth are at-risk, nearly 20-25% are not living in their home [i.e. with their parent/parents]. Many have chemical and/or mental health issues; or their parents have chemical and/or mental health issues. What's the possibility of an emergency shelter for kids? So many have "issues" – can't touch it. 60% are under-18; 40% are 18-20 years. Liability issues make housing these youth almost impossible. The Key needs on-site staff to deal with these issues but staff is expensive. If they don't catch these kids, nobody in Northfield will. What are the partnerships in the community? Host home networks and social

support networks exist for parents and youth. Rice County social services and the school district are heavily involved. Greatest need for The Key is a non-formal case manager on staff.

There is a tremendous need to educate the Northfield community about the needs of both youth and adults who are homeless. Many in the room were surprised by this!

Scott Tempel reported that the city will have a student intern this spring who will be working with Comprehensive Plan data and land use/housing data. University of Minnesota-Humphrey Institute graduate students are planning a capstone project in Northfield.

Next steps.

- A sub-committee of Janine Atchison, Richard Schulte and Jim Blaha will investigate the possibility of FEMA-type trailers at the former Manger Inn site. They will attempt to answer the questions listed above under “Emergency housing”. They will report back at the next meeting.
- Florella’s property. Asking price is \$850,000 with minimum estimate to clean up and deliver utilities is \$600,000. The area will need to be redeveloped, not simply improved. At the next meeting, we will DREAM (not considering the multiple obstacles) about the possibilities presented by this property. Visioning work was done a few years ago around highway # 3. Jayne Hager Dee will contact Alice Thomas and Rick Estenson asking for a copy of their report so this committee has an idea of what redevelopment might look like.

Next meeting: March 7, 2017 at Laura Baker Services.

Submitted by: *Jayne Hager Dee*