

## **Northfield Affordable Housing Task Force**

### MINUTES, April 4, 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

Richard Schulte, Northfield Planning Commission

Leah Hall, Three Rivers Community Action

Scott Wopata, Northfield Union of Youth

Carol Gengenbach, Northfield Community Action Center

Shelley Holden, Northfield Retirement Community

Allan Cox, Human Capital Development Foundation

Mar Valdecantos, Northfield Human Rights Commission

Patrice Ciernia, Three Links Care Center

Jayne Hager Dee, Northfield HRA and Northfield Community Action Center

Thank you again to Laura Baker Services for their hospitality.

Mar Valdecantos reported, as a member of the Northfield Human Rights Commission, on a partnership with the city of Faribault: Rice County Neighbors United. Take Action Minnesota is the fiscal agent as they apply for grants. They are currently communicating with the community and highlighting community event so that minority groups can participate. They hope to become a commission of/for refugees and immigrants.

Patty Ciernia reported on the efforts of Age Friendly Northfield, which grew out of Northfield ACT on Alzheimer's. This is an AARP/World Health Organization program with Northfield being sanctioned in August 2016. Currently they are working on a community survey.

Jim Blaha reported that the Community Action Center is renting 2 units from HRA for homeless people with the goal of stabilizing their lives. One unit was rented April 1; the other will be rented July 1.

The group reviewed the document from the Priority Planning Session conducted by Three Rivers Community Action at the March meeting.

Dayna Norvold asked if the group wanted to continue as a committee of the HRA. After much discussion, it was decided to remain as a sub-committee. The HRA gives the Affordable Housing Task Force legitimacy.

Discussion was held about Southbridge II. This group would like to see transitional housing units included (i.e. with CAC and/or Ruth's House) and work force housing, possibly in collaboration with local employers. Transportation in that location is an issue but it was determined that Hiawathaland can adjust its routes when the development is built. Affordable housing is an issue in Northfield regardless who lives in them or where the units are located.

The Northfield Comprehensive Plan will likely be redone in 2018. Affordable housing will need to be an issue in the plan. The current plan includes: no annexation, "we like the community the way it is", no

*mansions*, focus on redevelopment, Division Street is the center of the community and is sacred ground. Currently there are only 40-50 lots in the city available for residential housing.

The next planning process will need to consider: needs of disabled, young families and elderly; workforce housing (employers want employees to live in community); transportation; new jobs that are being developed need to be close to downtown where affordable housing is and transportation runs; accessibility of housing; the possibility of intergenerational living and affordability of housing. Consideration also needs to include infrastructure needs. Streets, sewer and water infrastructure are aging. If the city moves out (i.e. possible annexation), these same infrastructure needs will exist.

Next meeting: Tuesday, May 2 at 4:00 at Laura Baker Services.

*Submitted by: Jayne Hager Dee*