



Legislation Text

File #: HRA M2022-003, **Version:** 1

Meeting Date: September 27, 2022

To: Members of the Housing & Redevelopment Authority

From: Melissa Hanson, Housing Coordinator

HRA Introduction to the Mobile Home Rehabilitation Coordinator and Receive Update.

Action Requested:

HRA to meet the Mobile Home Rehabilitation Coordinator, Brian Kopack and hear about the needs and challenges in Northfield manufactured home communities.

Summary Report:

The City of Northfield Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) and Healthy Community Initiative (HCI) are members and supporters of the Northfield Racial and Ethnic Equity Collaborative (NREEC). The NREEC began in February 2021 as a community-led effort around racial equity and inclusion. It strives to help build our shared cultural competence, understand our biases, and carry out the work of systems change to begin shifting policies, practices, resources, and power structures.

Because of NREEC support, Growing Up Healthy, through Healthy Community Initiative (HCI), hired a Mobile Home Rehabilitation Coordinator. This position is designed to support the increased safety, health, and energy efficiency of mobile homes for residents in Northfield and Faribault by connecting them with local and regional rehabilitation programs and licensed/insured contractors to complete rehabilitation work. The person coordinates with contractors, homeowners, residents, and/or mobile home park managers to ensure compliance with safety, regulatory, contractual and code regulations, and assist residents and contractors with forms and verifications needed to access local rehabilitation and energy assistance programs.

The City of Northfield is home to two (2) manufactured home communities: Viking Terrace and Riverside Manufactured Home Park. According to the Rice County Assessor's office, there are 198 (178 in Viking Terrace, 20 in Riverside) manufactured homes in Northfield. The combined average age of these homes is 40 years old.

Staff has been in regular contact with Brian Kopack, Mobile Home Rehabilitation Coordinator. While he has not been in every single manufactured home in our manufactured home communities, the same issues and concerns keep coming up:

- Electrical issues;
- Water leaks/heavy usage driving costs in excess of the average expected water use;
- Lack of licensed/insured contractors and/or licensed/insured contractors declining to evaluate and perform work because due to liability concerns;
- Unpermitted accessory dwellings/construction appear to have led to potential health (water incursion,

- pests) and safety concerns (sleeping/living areas not up to code);
- Finding homes being sublet, without inspection/license.

In addition to the recently added position of Mobile Home Rehabilitation Coordinator, the Emergency Mobile Home Repair program is a collaborative effort by the Community Action Center (CAC), HCI, and NREEC and will be administered by the CAC. The funds from the Emergency Mobile Home Repair program are intended to prevent eviction proceedings and are accessible to tenants/participants through CAC as well as the HCI/ Growing Up Healthy Mobile Home Rehabilitation Coordinator.

Staff notes that all agencies and non-profits who try to locate licensed and insured contractors to do any repairs, emergent or otherwise, on aging and previously modified manufactured homes, has been close to impossible. Manufactured housing did not have a standard for construction prior to 1976 after Congress passed the “National Mobile Home Construction and Safety Standards Act.” While the law was enacted by president Gerald Ford on August 22nd, 1974, it was set to go into effect in 1976. Most of Northfield’s existing manufactured housing stock and related 60-100-amp electrical service, was constructed prior to the passage of the act and has outlasted the useful life, and may not sufficiently support today’s technology and related electrical and energy needs. Due to associated liabilities, and the nature of many repairs requiring permits and skilled tradespeople, local non-profits are limited in their ability to tap into their regular volunteers as many repairs are beyond their expertise.

Alternative Options:

N/A

Financial Impacts:

NA

Tentative Timelines:

N/A