



*** All present are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with our City's Core Values ***

OFFICIAL NOTICE AND AGENDA

of a meeting of a City Board, Commission, Department, Committee, Agency, Corporation, Quasi-Municipal Corporation, or sub-unit thereof.

Meeting: Affordable Housing Task Force
Date/Time: Friday, January 26, 2024 at **10:15 a.m.**
Location: City Hall, 2nd Floor Board Room
Members: Sarah Watson (C), Diane Sennholz (Co-Chair), Tom Holster, Juli Birkenmeier, Kristin Slonski, Ben Lee

AGENDA ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

(All items listed may be acted upon)

1. Approval of Minutes from 12/1/23
2. Update and discussion on potential ARPA housing proposals
3. Discussion and possible action on proposing a YIMBY (Yes In My Backyard) movement
4. Schedule next meeting date

Adjourn.

It is likely that members of, and a quorum of the Council and/or members of other committees of the Common Council of the City of Wausau will be in attendance at the above-mentioned meeting to gather information. **No action will be taken by any such groups.**

This Notice was posted at City Hall and emailed to the Media on 1/25/24

Any person wishing to offer public comment who does not appear in person to do so, may email tammy.stratz@ci.wausau.wi.us with "AHTF public comment" in the subject line by 8:00 a.m. on the meeting day. All public comments received, either by email or in person, if agendaized, will be limited to items on the agenda only. Messages related to agenda items received by 8:00 a.m. on the meeting day will be provided to the Committee Chair.

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the City of Wausau will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs or activities. If you need assistance or reasonable accommodations in participating in this meeting or event due to a disability as defined under the ADA, please call the ADA Coordinator at (715) 261-6590 or ADAServices@ci.wausau.wi.us to discuss your accessibility needs. We ask your request be provided a minimum of 72 hours before the scheduled event or meeting. If a request is made less than 72 hours before the event, the City of Wausau will make a good faith effort to accommodate your request.

Other Distribution: Media, Alderpersons, Mayor, City Departments

MINUTES

Affordable Housing Task Force Committee Meeting

Date | time Friday, December 1, 2023, at 10:30 A.M. | *Meeting called to order by* Sarah Watson at 10:00 A.M.

In Attendance

Members Present: Sarah Watson (C), Ben Lee, Kristin Slonski, Juli Birkenmeier, Tom Holster, Diane Sennholz
Others Present: Tammy Stratz, Shannon Graff, Liz Brodek, Vicki Harness (Executive Director—community outreach task force), Patrick Peckham, Alder Tom Kilian, Alder Gary Gisselman, Mayor Rosenberg

In accordance with Chapter 19, Wisc. Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and sent to the Daily Herald in the proper manner.

Agenda Item 1 | Approval of minutes from 10/21/22

Item removed from agenda.

Agenda Item 2 | Discussion and possible TID 6 extension, subtraction or termination for affordable housing and lead service line replacement.

Initially Agenda Item #4 but moved to #2. Brodek provided an update on the TID 6 extension. She noted on December 5, 2023, the Economic Development and Finance Committees each unanimously approved a recommendation that a year of TID 6 increment (“Affordable Housing extension”) be utilized for affordable housing projects. There are four affordable housing projects in various stages of development that, if all come to fruition, could necessitate \$5.3 million of assistance. The increment generated by the extension would be approximately \$4 million. Brodek provided a prioritization of current projects as listed below.

1. Thomas Street affordable infill housing: This project is priority #1 because it utilizes ARPA funds for construction. ARPA funds must be committed by contract, not just budgeted, by December 31, 2024. Additionally, these parcels do not need to be rezoned.

- ◊ Awaiting DNR WAM grant approval for site assessment.
- ◊ The 2nd round of neighborhood meetings for additional input is scheduled for 12/6 and 12/11, both at Riverside Park Shelter.
- ◊ Working with Habitat for Humanity to construct mix of 2- and 3-bedroom (1 and 2 bath) homes interspersed in city-led development (Habitat has certain design parameters that don’t conform with all lots so the city will step in to construct complementary homes).
- ◊ 13 parcels could yield up to 9 homes as combination of City- and Habitat-constructed homes.
- ◊ Project is part of \$1M ARPA award for Affordable Housing Infill developments.
- ◊ City-built homes will cost approx. \$250k to build, plan to sell for \$90-100k, so gap on approx. 5 homes (\$150k/house) =
→ **Approx. \$1.25M in eligible construction costs and \$750k in post-sale eligible Affordable Housing extension costs.**

2. Sherman Street multifamily (proposal for Wyatt Street replacement): This project is priority #2 because it utilizes ARPA funds that must be committed by contract by December 31, 2024. However, these parcels need to be rezoned, which has been an impediment to affordable housing in the past.

- ◊ Staff working on appraisal of parcels, CDBG to pay for acquisition if negotiated price meets appraisal.
- ◊ Site could be home to a multi-unit residential development like what was proposed on Wyatt Street (6-8 units)
- ◊ Construction financed through ARPA (\$500,000 less \$16,000 already spent on architectural, and advertising fees) HOME (\$500,000), CDBG, and Affordable Housing Extension. A shortfall of \$300,000 - \$500,000 was anticipated with Wyatt Properties but cannot anticipate shortfall at new site until a plan is produced.
→ **Approximate Affordable Housing Extension eligible costs up to \$500,000.**

3. 415 S. 1st Ave./West Side Battery/Riverview Lofts (Developer - Gorman & Co.): This project is priority #3 because any public assistance will not be needed until a conversion to permanent financing, likely to happen in 2025 or 2026. The amount of assistance needed is also unknown until conversion to permanent financing in one to two years.

- ◊ Planning option and two amendments granted for a project consisting of 56 units of affordable housing.
- ◊ LIHTC credits awarded.
- ◊ Development Agreement in negotiations.
- ◊ \$1.75M Neighborhood Investment Fund Grant awarded.
- ◊ Construction expected to begin in Spring/Summer 2024.
- ◊ Any City-sourced gap financing would not be needed until conversion to a permanent mortgage in 2025 or 2026.
→ **Approximately \$550,000 Affordable Housing extension eligible costs.**

4. 700 Grand Ave. (Developer – Commonwealth): This project is priority #4 because, although it has the greatest need for assistance, it has the least certain timeline.

- ◊ Commonwealth awarded Planning Option and extension for 50 units of affordable housing.
 - ◊ Commonwealth will apply for LIHTC credits in December 2023.
 - ◊ Regardless of developer and project, 110-year-old storm sewer runs through site and must be moved for any development that would construct basement or underground parking.
 - ◊ The cost to move storm sewer (large scale project) is approximately \$1M.
 - ◊ The expected gap on project costs, excluding storm sewer movement, is approx. \$2M.
- **Likely total eligible Affordable Housing Extension costs are up to \$3M.**

**** TOTAL APPROXIMATE ELIGIBLE AFFORDABLE HOUSING EXTENSION COSTS: UP TO \$5.3M. ****

Other Potential Projects

The TID affordable housing extension allows for 75% of increment to be used for affordable housing and 25% for housing in general which includes lead service line replacement. The city recently identified replacement of all lead service water lines as a priority. The extension funds could assist with the replacement costs in low/moderate income areas.

Additionally, Staff receive frequent inquiries about affordable housing developments throughout the city, but many areas are not in a TID nor likely to be in a TID, which means there would not be a local source of potential public assistance. If any of the priority listed projects do not come to fruition, the extension can still be used to develop affordable housing in the city. The extension expenditures do not need to be used in a TID, nor is there an expiration on its use. If the city's population continues to grow as projected, there will be an ongoing need for affordable housing for the foreseeable future.

Agenda Item 3 | Update on ARPA Affordable Housing requests

This update was encompassed in the TID 6 extension agenda. See #2 on the priority list.

Slonski asked if the pushback on the rezone of Wyatt Street a result of residents saying they don't want "those people", traffic or something else. Stratz responded it was a multitude of concerns including traffic, noise, environmental issues, etc.

Lee noted people don't typically come right out and say they don't want "those people" in their neighborhood. He recognized residents are protective of their neighborhoods and worry about what type of people will come around with certain types of developments but emphasized the importance of affordable housing being scattered throughout a community to make people feel assimilated into their community which is key to stabilizing their lives.

Birkenmeier commented that most people don't even know which sites in their neighborhood are owned by the housing authority which house low-moderate income people. She said just because someone has low/moderate income doesn't mean they're deviant.

Alder Kilian said residents forwarded him information from HUD saying the environmental review on Wyatt Street was deficient, and funds would not be dispersed for the project. He noted when issues like that arise any project should be "dead on arrival" and hopes future processes can be tightened up to avoid apprehension from the neighborhood. Kilian also noted the Thomas Street project has become a positive development by addressing known environmental concerns, leveraging federal dollars to construct affordable housing, gathering neighborhood input, and ensuring information is inclusive and is an example of how to do things right.

Slonski asked what is involved in HUD's Environmental Review process. Stratz replied that whenever Federal funds are used, an Environmental Review is required but it is not like a review that would be done with a company like REI and contamination. She said HUD's environmental review is more about whether a proposed development is going to benefit or hinder an area which requires a review of noise, historic preservation, water, transportation, etc. Once completed the review is published for public comment and then the review and any public comment is sent to HUD for their public comment period and then it's typically approved. Stratz noted it was already known Wyatt was in a flood zone and what was needed to bring it out of it, but HUD wanted the complaints about the flood zone addressed before they'd disperse funds. She clarified that HUD did not deny the Environmental Review

Lee noted the community has a history of advocating against developments even if there aren't environmental concerns yet when the projects are completed, they are beautiful and successful and provide a convenient and affordable place for low/moderate income people to live. Lee said it's important to have a solid message to the community about affordable housing developments being a good thing and fight against the Not in My Backyard mentality.

Agenda Item 3 | Roundtable updates from housing providers on any new or changing programs.

Discussion occurred regarding rent prices in the area. Holster noted there hasn't been a huge decrease in supply and demand in the market and rent is still high but slightly more stabilized. Lee and Sennholz both stated they have seen an increase in requests for assistance due to the high rent in the city. Lee said United Way has increased their Emergency Housing funds from \$180k to \$200k because of the increased need. Lee and Sennholz also commented that funds with flexible guidelines are used

up quickly and will likely be gone mid-year and other programs with more stringent guidelines make it difficult for some people to qualify.

Agenda Item 5 – Discussion of direction and potential projects of task force.

Discussion ensued between committee members on being voices and advocates in the community to explain what Affordable Housing means as far as the demographic of the individuals and families who reside in affordable units, the level of income necessary to qualify for affordable housing and the benefit of integrating affordable housing throughout the community, among numerous other talking points. It was discussed that Affordable Housing may be the wrong term to use because it has too much stigma attached to it. Alternative terminology was discussed with no concrete determination. It was emphasized that the most important thing was to educate continually and consistently to prevent apprehension when projects are proposed.

Discussion occurred regarding how to assist landlords on how to finance necessary repairs to ensure the units they provide are decent, safe, and sanitary. A program funded by ARPA was proposed to Finance at one point but was tabled and has not been brought back. Community Development does offer a rental rehab program but in order to participate the landlord needs to agree to keep rent affordable for a certain period of time and many do not want to do that. It was suggested to approach Finance again to reconsider the Landlord Rehab program through ARPA, but Stratz indicated at this point it may be difficult to commit the money by the deadline.

A suggestion was made to develop a rental assistance program for undocumented immigrants because they don't qualify for any assistance.

Overall it was determined the mission of the task force needs to be to push the movement Yes In My Backyard (YIMBY) so the community is educated and less fearful about affordable housing. Discussion on what that could look like included the possibility of having people who have lived or do live in affordable housing share their experience and/or possible success from having the opportunity to reside in affordable housing. It was noted that often people who receive any type of assistance usually do not want to talk about it in front of people due to stigma attached to it, but the people with the ability to assist also don't want to hear from the advocates of the low/moderate income households because they're not relatable.

Adjourn



More Neighbors — yes, please!

Neighbors for More Neighbors stands up for secure, abundant homes for everyone in the Twin Cities.

We envision a future where we all find secure, affordable homes in neighborhoods we choose. Those neighborhoods may include great transit, a community where family and friends are neighbors, or complete neighborhoods with walkable errands and jobs. As we move through our lives, we find smaller and larger homes as our needs change, while staying in communities we love. We imagine a day where this is true for everyone: owners and renters, and people of all ethnicities and income levels.

We organize to

1. Address our Housing Crisis,
2. Create Complete Neighborhoods, and
3. Slow Climate Change

Our successes

While N4MN started out as art, [distributing buttons like these](#), today Neighbors for More Neighbors stands up for secure, abundant homes for everyone in the Twin Cities. We've been up to some cool things the past couple of years. Read about them here:

December 7, 2018

[The Minneapolis 2040 Comp Plan](#)

Our volunteers turned it out. Volunteers organized ward walks with their council members, hosted public comment parties, reviewed, and critiqued policy proposals, and showed up to hearings en masse. We then made national headlines.

Minneapolis, Tackling Housing Crisis and Inequity, Votes to End Single-Family Zoning — NYT

How Minneapolis's radical zoning plan becomes policy — NYT

Minneapolis, Tackling Housing Crisis and Inequity, Votes to End Single-Family Zoning — NYT

January 18, 2018

[Sons of Norway](#)

A large amount of polarizing, and largely anti-change media coverage stirred up a large amount of housing opposition, as well as a post-card campaign aimed at driving up the cost of housing Uptown.

October 22, 2017



[Funding for Peris](#)

Peris is an affordable housing project that was proposed in Lowry Hill East. It provides homes to young adults aging out of foster care. Despite scoring high enough on a rubric to receive funding from the city's Affordable Housing Trust Fund, the project was not recommended for funding.

We've been making some news lately, here's what we've been up to.

What Is YIMBY? The ‘Yes In My Back Yard’ Movement, Explained

By [Erin Flaherty](#)

Feb 21, 2022

<https://www.realtor.com/advice/buy/what-is-yimby-yes-in-my-back-yard-movement-explained/>

You’ve probably heard of the [NIMBY](#) movement, which stands for “Not In My Back Yard” and describes an organized group of residents who oppose new construction in their neighborhood.

But are you familiar with the phenomenon’s younger, perhaps more progressive cousin, YIMBY, or “Yes In My Back Yard.” This community advocacy movement heartily *supports* new developments, especially ones that promote affordability or diversity.

Here’s a closer look at YIMBY and what to expect if there are supporters living near you.

A brief history of YIMBY

YIMBY is a relatively new term, coined in the 2010s. It rose from a movement in the San Francisco Bay Area among younger millennials and aspiring first-time homebuyers. Unable to afford the local housing market, they believed NIMBY baby boomers were to blame. It wasn’t just that these older homeowners had snapped up properties long ago. They had also, some believed, successfully stalled new developments that could have fed the area’s hunger for well-priced housing.

“Essentially, it was all these young people saying, ‘We can’t afford to live here’ and ‘We understand that you oppose [development], but we want housing options,’” explains **David Reiss**, professor of law and research director at the Center for Urban Business Entrepreneurship in New York City.

[California YIMBY](#) is a major force in the movement. It’s a housing advocacy organization with 80,000 members and 20 volunteer teams across the state. According to the group’s website, members are reacting to a “lose-lose situation,” where “cities enforce a severe shortage of affordable homes through laws that restrict home building.” This in turn, they say, “forces Californians to compete with each other for sparse, and increasingly expensive, housing.”

Similar groups such as [Seattle for Everyone](#) and the [New York YIMBY](#) blog tend to pop up in large urban areas around the country where the younger generation feels shut out of housing that won’t bankrupt them.

Unfortunately for YIMBYs, “NIMBY homeowners tend to have the upper hand,” Reiss notes. “They have more resources, and they are the local establishment.”

“There’s a lot of hatred of development out there,” **Nikolai Fedak**, the founder of New York YIMBY, told the [New York Times](#). Yet in his mind, anti-development NIMBYs are widely reviled as well, often accused of acting out of pure self-interest rather than what’s good for the community.

His opinion of NIMBYs’ motivation? “Generally it comes from selfish people who don’t want to lose their views” of the city skyline if new buildings go up.

How YIMBYs can shape better cities

Sure, affordable housing is a driving force for YIMBYs, but they also champion sustainable development.

For example, the Colorado YIMBY group [Better Boulder](#) says it's all about "well-designed infill [housing]" and revitalizing vacant buildings. It hopes to "reduce our impact on the climate, encourage less driving, and keep our community welcoming and economically thriving." In particular, it has opposed Boulder's outdated street parking regulations that make neighborhoods less walkable.

"Some would argue YIMBY groups are calling for too much development in urban cores, clogging streets with traffic, and overcrowding areas," says **Al Maiorino**, president of Public Strategy Group, a public affairs firm in Boston. "They may also feel YIMBY groups are only in search of more affordable housing. The reality is, they care for economic development and bringing affordable and other housing to urban areas. They have successfully changed zoning laws in cities to allow for more residential development."

What's next for YIMBYs?

In 2016, YIMBYs celebrated a pivotal win against NIMBYs when the Obama administration released a "toolkit" to help local communities reform overly restrictive land-use regulations strangling the U.S. housing market. In it, YIMBY-friendly initiatives were plentiful, including changes in zoning laws to pave the way toward allowing the construction of more "high-density and multifamily" housing and [accessory dwelling units](#).

The report marked the first time in several decades that the White House elevated local zoning and land-use regulations to a national level. Indeed, **President Barack Obama** announced at the time, "We can work together to break down rules that stand in the way of [building new housing](#) and that keep families from moving to growing, dynamic cities."

Since then, the tide of public sentiment seems to have turned in favor of YIMBYs—and while concrete progress in the form of actual houses has been spotty and slow to build, the Biden administration seems poised to push a similar agenda ahead.

The [Unlocking Possibilities Program](#) within the American Jobs Plan is a \$5 billion competitive grant program that helps reform exclusionary zoning, aimed to support more affordable housing along with new land-use and zoning policies that will contribute to this goal.

So while YIMBY as a movement may be younger and smaller than NIMBY, it seems to be turning into a fairer fight by the day.