



\*\*\* 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, August 30, 2024 at 10:00-11:30 pm  
**Location:** City Hall, 1st Floor Maple Room  
**Members:** Sarah Watson (C), Diane Sennholz (Co-Chair), Tom Holster, Juli Birkenmeier, Kristin Slonski, Ben Lee

### AGENDA ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

**\*\*AMENDED\*\***

*(All items listed may be acted upon)*

1. Approval of Minutes from 3/22/24. **\*\*ADDED\*\***
2. Approval of Minutes from 6/28/24.
3. Updates on affordable housing projects (ARPA, infill).
4. Discussion on potential education regarding Affordable housing definition.
5. Discussion on task force three priorities and action forward.
6. Update from United Way Task Force.
7. Discussion and potential action on recommending inclusionary zoning to be presented to relevant committees for consideration and adoption.
8. Discussion on recent state law changes that encourage developers to include affordable housing in their projects.
9. Schedule next meeting

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 8/23/24**

Any person wishing to offer public comment who does not appear in person to do so, may email [tammy.stratz@ci.wausau.wi.us](mailto: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 agendized, 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](mailto: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, City Council, Mayor, City Departments

# MINUTES

## Affordable Housing Task Force Committee Meeting

*Date | time* Friday, March 22, 2024, at 10:00 A.M. | *Meeting called to order by* Sarah Watson at 10:08 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, Alders Tom Kilian, Doug Diny, Andy Lynch and Gary Gisselman

*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 1/26/2024

*Sennholz motioned to approve minutes, seconded by Holster. Minutes Approved 6-0*

### Agenda Item 2 | Discussion regarding tasks and objectives assigned to the Wausau Affordable Housing Regional Task Force through Resolution #21-0541.

Discussion #1 on what is affordable housing. HUD definition is less than 30% of income. According to the Marathon County United Way, 40% of all residents are paying more than 30%. Transit plays a large role in housing options.

Transit, item #6 has been a futile discussion with other municipalities. An attempt was made to work with Walmart to try to effect some change; there has been no reply yet. It was suggested that a transit agreement might be made playing hardball and withholding other things; Lynch suggested that this might not be a good idea due to the citizen opinions during the previous discussions when there was service there. Lynch suggested that the Metro Ride offerings would need to be improved first. There is a new transit director that started a couple weeks ago, so we need to give him some time on that. There is a transit group through the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

#15 Liz stated we were chosen by AARP for the pilot program incremental development program. Works on how to rejuvenate or revitalize their own houses and business buildings in their neighborhoods, to avoid gentrification. We are in the very beginning of the process. AARP will basically teach people in their neighborhood how to do it themselves. The city doesn't really get involved, other than convincing the people to be involved.

It was decided that 3 points are plenty to focus on. #3 was added as it important to educate.

### Agenda Item 3 | Update and discussion on potential ARPA housing proposals.

The RFP for bids was approved at council for lots at 722 & 727 Jefferson and 1019 Bridge. They are zoned appropriately, and we have ARPA funds for them. Potentially working with the county on two more lots for infill. RFP for bids was approved for Thomas Street too, however we are waiting on the WAM grant.

### Agenda Item 4 | Schedule next meeting date.

The next meeting date would be June 7<sup>th</sup> at 10 am.

### Adjourn

# MINUTES

## Affordable Housing Task Force Committee Meeting

*Date | time* Friday, June 28, 2024, at 12:00 P.M. | *Meeting called to order by* Sarah Watson at 12:00 P.M.

### In Attendance

Members Present: Sarah Watson (C), Ben Lee, Kristin Slonski, Juli Birkenmeier, Diane Sennholz  
Members Absent: Tom Holster  
Others Present: Tammy Stratz, Liz Brodek, Alders Tom Kilian, Doug Diny, Andy Lynch and Gary Gisselman

*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 3/22/24

*Lee motioned to approve minutes, seconded by Sennholz. Minutes Approved 5-0.*

### Agenda Item 2 | Update on YIMBY Chapter forming in Wausau.

Watson reported that she had been working on forming a YIMBY Chapter in Wausau. She explained that the purpose of the chapter was to provide education, awareness, and advocacy within the community. Members discussed potential agencies to partner with in establishing the chapter, such as Habitat for Humanity and ADRC.

Lee emphasized the importance of collaborating with like-minded agencies that would offer consistent communication in advocating for affordable housing projects. He stressed the need for a unified front to demonstrate to the community that there are supporters of housing diversity across all neighborhoods, who are also willing to educate others on the matter.

Slonski shared that she had attended an affordable housing meeting with area churches. She noted that these churches were offering their support as a resource to help spread the YIMBY initiative to other congregations.

### Agenda Item 3 | Discussion on possible organization of a Community Land Trust in Wausau.

Watson explained the idea of Community Land Trust (CLT) has been discussed quite a bit lately. She said Wausau has a unique opportunity to participate in discussions with other communities who are starting them, including Stevens Point who just established their non-profit CLT. She noted there's a statewide action supporting CLT's and there are several communities who already have them including Madison and Milwaukee who have had them for quite some time. She explained that a CLT is more non-profit driven and perhaps quasi-government.

Stratz said she loves the idea but has a lot of questions about selling homes and what happens with the home's equity. Stratz asked Sennholz if NCCAP would be interested in housing a CLT in their organization.

Sennholz noted that it's definitely something NCCAP would want to do but at this point, her board knows nothing about CLT's, and she knows very little. She stated other CAP agencies have land trusts, and they run it much like a condo and the associated homeowner's association where they collect a nominal monthly fee but it's not enough to support a person managing the association. She commented that land trusts can all be run very differently and that it's not an easy thing and how to go about purchasing homes is another obstacle.

Stratz commented that she thinks that would be a great place for the Block Grant to assist with purchases and rehabs as necessary to help establish the land trust but identifying which properties would be difficult. Sennholz noted Coulee CAP agency identified the properties by people who may have been in the community for a long time or knew what neighborhoods needed some revitalization and spoke with the owners privately and purchased them without them ever being on the market and got them for a good deal without having anyone else being involved. Stratz noted this would be a great opportunity to work with the county in order to acquire foreclosed properties, rehab them and have them be part of the land trust. Foreclosed homes would be more attractive because they're vacant whereas purchasing a home that is currently occupied would create another layer of expense because of relocation costs as a requirement when utilizing Block Grant funds and it's not the goal to displace anyone.

Lee asked if this opportunity was discussed with Habitat. Stratz replied she had thought of that organization as well. Lee noted when you look at the tasks of a land trust, it's exactly what they do, and the Exec. Director of Habitat is ambitious and looking for ways to expand how their organization operates. Stratz agreed with the thoughts on Habitat but also said if Sennholz and NCCAP are interested in tackling it, they would be their first choice. Watson noted Stevens Point investigated having a CAP agency run theirs but, in the end, they chose to form their own non-profit, however Watson couldn't determine the reason for going that route versus CAP. Sennholz commented that Stevens Point's CAP agency is still involved with Points CLT. Sennholz said she is not opposed to it but does have to do more investigation into it and said she's all for more homeownership because it really creates communities. Watson said she is unsure if there's an advantage to pursuing a partnership with another community. She noted the UW Extension Community

Development educator was concerned if our serviceable population was the same. Lee commented that Wausau's ALICE population is higher than Portage County and he said we'd have a higher likelihood of us receiving a grant over Portage County because of where Wausau ranks in that system.

Slonski noted she has a bit of a concern about CLT's. She asked how this would be different from a mobile home park where the landlord owns the land, and the resident owns the trailer but still has to pay "rent" which doesn't offer many protections. It was noted a buyer would purchase the real estate which would hopefully offer more protections but that would need to be confirmed by an attorney. Birkenmeier questioned if when a buyer sells the property, all the contingencies follow the property. Watson responded yes, but they also get equity from the sale of the home but share that equity with the CLT.

Sennholz said she would try to have something prepared for 2026 CDBG funding.

---

#### **Agenda Item 4 | Discussion on United Way's Housing Task Force efforts.**

---

Watson asked if there is anything this task force is duplicating with the Housing Task Force through United Way. Sennholz commented that previously that task force was specifically geared towards the homeless population. Lee responded saying yes, but they're trying to move away from that because their goal is to lift 10,000 people to financial stability by 2033 so it cannot solely focus on the unhoused population. He noted they're finding much more success focusing on advocacy for affordable housing developments as well as easing the financial burden on homeowners so they can stay in homes whether that be through basic needs, mental health, childcare, etc. He stated they are on session 4, of their 2<sup>nd</sup> round of Results Based Accountability Training which goes until September. Lee noted he's been seeing an uptick in lack of neutral (meaning, not based on religion, sobriety, gender, etc.) transitional living. He said he's seen people who are not religious, sobriety is not the root cause of their chronic homelessness, and they are left with no options. Lee also noted the community does not have a true housing first model with the appropriate parameters in place like 24/7 case management. Slonski commented that that's a heavy lift.

Sennholz commented it is a heavy lift but it's what chronically homeless people need. They need to be in an environment where maybe they're sober enough to go to work every day and when they come home to their "living center" and had a bad day, they have access to counseling, group therapy or whatever is needed but they need to be in something long-term, 24/7/365 because when they step outside, that's generally when this population falls. She commented that they cannot require people seek services when they utilized the housing programs at NCCAP so it would be wonderful if they had that resource.

Slonski asked if they were referring to tribal housing. Lee responded that no, but he shared information he was made aware of in another state that make a huge investment into "Community Wellness Court" for tribal members because addiction/substance abuse is raging in tribes.

Lee is unsure what will come out as their new objectives but noted things like keeping people housed, affordable housing, creating a sense of belonging in the community, refugee support, more case management, opening/sustaining something like the McClellan House (transitional housing) which worked well when it was open as well as helping those who are "stuck" here and don't want to be here. He said objectives will be determined at their next meeting, and they'll determine an additional three for the year after, so they don't have to establish objectives each year. Once the objectives are set, they will determine what partners need to be involved and the members of their task force could change. This process will begin in August, wrap up in September and then have a community conversation in October to announce what their objectives are and who the new members of the task force will be.

---

#### **Agenda Item 5 | Update and discussion on ARPA housing projects.**

---

##### **Background and Overview**

The City received \$15,586,461 of American Rescue Plan Act Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery (ARPA) Funds from the US Treasury. Through a process developed by this City's Finance Committee with public input, ARPA funds have been allocated on a scored matrix, first-come, first-served basis.

The City's Community Development Department (CDD) applied for and was allocated \$600,000 of ARPA funds for affordable infill housing, and \$500,000 for an affordable multifamily development on September 13, 2022. These were classified as Public Health Negative Economic Impact – Assistance to Low- or Moderate-Income Households for its reporting to the Treasury.

To date, there are \$590,308.53 and \$484,455.00 of funds remaining in those allocations, respectively.

In addition, CDD was awarded \$25,000 of ARPA funds for Housing Counseling on September 13, 2022. The balance of that allocation is \$23,000. It is requested that these funds be reallocated to affordable housing projects.

ARPA funds must be obligated by 12/31/24 and are an invaluable asset to increasing the supply of affordable housing that may not otherwise be built. Affordable housing projects are complex and time consuming. To preserve these ARPA allocations for their intended purpose of affordable housing, Staff is proposing to transfer the funds through a beneficiary agreement.

##### **Wausau Community Development Authority (WCDA)**

The WCDA's mission is to provide quality housing options to elderly, disabled, and low incomes residents in a variety of locations and formats and assist in the redevelopment of challenged sites. Transferring the Affordable Infill, Affordable Rental, and Homebuyer Counseling allocations to the WCDA through a beneficiary agreement allows these funds to be retained for retention or creation of affordable housing beyond the 12/31/24 deadline.

In addition, the WCDA has experience in managing complex funds and adeptly executing projects at all scales. As a beneficiary of the funds, the City would not be able to put conditions on the use beyond requiring that they be used to retain or create affordable housing in the City of Wausau.

Particularly, ARPA funds are important to the execution of two main projects:

**1. Affordable Infill Housing on Jefferson, Bridge, and Thomas Streets**

The original ARPA application for Affordable Infill Housing noted eight City-owned infill opportunities. These did not contemplate the 13 Thomas Street properties. Of the eight other infill lots, most have been sold to private buyers. Only 722 and 727 Jefferson Street, and 1019 Bridge Street, remain as buildable infill opportunities.

A Request for Bids was released in April 2024 for manufactured or modular housing on these parcels, which returned no bids. Staff have since reached out to contractors and learned of opportunities to improve the Request language.

ARPA funds were the main driver of the Thomas Street infill project. Construction of modest, 2-3 bedroom, 1 bath homes with a detached garage is roughly \$250,000. ARPA funds are proposed to bridge the gap between construction cost and an affordable sale price of \$90-100,000. ARPA would therefore contribute up to \$160,000 per home.

Other funding sources that are planned to assist with planning, design, construction, and sale of all infill homes include HOME and CDBG funds, and the Affordable Housing TIF Extension.

**2. Development of Affordable Multifamily Housing**

Affordable multifamily housing is needed in Wausau, as was identified by the Affordable Housing Task Force. This project proposes building 6-8 units of affordable rental housing for low to moderate income people. The complex would be sold or leased to North Central Community Action (NCCAP) for a program similar to what they run in Wisconsin Rapids, which houses families and individuals that are near-homeless. Further details of the project are outlined in the original ARPA application.

---

**Agenda Item 6 | Discussion regarding strategy and action for the three priorities identified at 3/22/24 meeting.**

---

Watson reminded the task force of the 3 objectives discussed in the previous meeting. Stratz noted she feels we are accomplishing the objectives but does think the education piece could be better because many people don't understand what "affordable housing" means in development terms and its important people know that the city doesn't have control of or set the requirements as it pertains to income/rent limits with these developments.

Watson suggested the newsletter could include an info-graphic and/or information to educate the community about affordable housing. Sennholz noted the UW has the rent smart program and would look through their material and see if there's something she can pull from that.

---

**Agenda Item 7 | Discussion and action on collaborating with the County on affordable housing opportunities.**

---

Stratz noted there are several properties with delinquent taxes, but the county has not begun the foreclosure process on them, however, they have discussed it some. These properties would be eligible for purchase through the redevelopment authority which could then be rehabilitated and sold to low/moderate income persons. A meeting will be scheduled with the county through MCDEVCO and other municipalities to put pressure on the county to begin foreclosure proceedings so these properties can be purchased for affordable housing opportunities.

---

**Agenda Item 8 | Schedule next meeting**

---

Next meeting is scheduled for August 30, 2024.

---

**Agenda Item 9 | Adjournment**

---

Birkenmeier motioned to adjourn, seconded by Lee. Meeting adjourned.