

Affordable Housing Commission

Minutes

August 20, 2024 at Noon

City Administration Building – Council Chambers

In attendance: Shay Meyers, Meghan Jennings, Mary Abel, Amy Lipka, Maria Modayil, Solveig Spjeldnes, Megan Vogel, Kimberlee Francis, Zach Dye

Absent: Mollie Fitzgerald, Polly Sumney

1. **Introduction** – Solveig started the meeting at 12:02 p.m., welcomed all including those who may be watching on the Government Channel and read the AHC mission.
2. **Establish Quorum** – Quorum met.
3. **Disposition of Minutes** – Mary Abel moved to approve the minutes. Meghan Jennings seconded. All in favor and the motion passed.
4. **Speakers Glen Crippen, HAPCAP Affordable Housing Director and Zack Dye, ED**

Glen and Zack talked about how to fix up houses in disrepair for those who cannot afford it. Glen with HAPCAP works with Athens and Nelsonville on the CHIP grant which is provided by the Ohio Department of Development. This is a 2-year grant that is renewable. LMI income, 80% of area income, \$48k can qualify. City used to apply for the CHIP grant but now HAPCAP does it for the County.

Eligible home repairs (smaller projects \$15k-20k)- foundation, mechanical like HVAC- there is a long waiting list for CHIP. If found eligible, will determine if they qualify for RRS- residential rehab standard, and the household gets a grant. Owners have to be eligible

income wise. If a renter applies, the renter/ applicant has to qualify with income but also the owner should qualify but if not the owner does not qualify, they have to invest 50% of the costs. CHIP is funded by HUD.

Home rehabilitation is more comprehensive, \$60k-70k- mechanical, foundation, roof. County has to make an investment and there is a 5-year lien on the property. If the property is sold during the lien, folks would have to payback housing RLF (pay back and reinvested).

From past grants, received about \$350k for the County, City \$40k.

HAPCAP also has some grants- Housing Assistance Grant Program (HAGP) is emergency home repair for seniors, example on St. Charles Street.

Weatherization grant with COAD (Department of Energy)- this is an energy conservation program, there is bipartisan support for this grant given climate change. It funds health and safety issues in the home, Carbon monoxide, walls, air leakage, air sealing, furnace work. Columbia Gas and AEP have also partnered to do some weatherization projects. Weatherization grants follow the federal poverty guidelines for eligibility. There is usually a 3 year waiting list and about 70-80 homes benefit per year.

Lead safe grants up to \$50k per household are also available. These require lead abated contractors and on pre-1978 homes. The total grant is \$1.6 million.

HAPCAP's goal is fighting poverty through different avenues and housing is only one aspect of it.

HAPCAP also works with developers on large developments and is the non-profit partner for the LIHTC (IRS section 42) housing, for example, Kershaw Greene, and functions as a co-developer who has less than 1% interest in the property. HAPCAP currently has 12 projects in the county.

Zack (Athens Metropolitan Housing Authority) provided examples of 7 Euclid Dr., 12 Graham Dr. as projects they work with Glen/HAPCAP on the housing CHIP and home rehabilitation.

Solveig asked how individuals can find out more about these resources. Glen responded that they disseminate information through social media and their website, news story in the newspaper, and through their contractors. There is also a paint program in the Athens area.

There has been some reports of mold concerns at Kershaw Greene but there is no Ohio law on mitigating mold. Weatherization program may be able to mitigate moisture issues with fresh air.

Mary Abel asked how many CHIP grants were awarded in Athens City in the last 2 years. Glen responded that Athens County has received 20 grants. Applications are usually due in June and decisions are communicated by December. In June 2022, there were 7-10 houses that were repaired with the CHIP grant in the City. The maximum amount for the grant award is determined by census data and population in the county. Although the exact amount has varied a little, in the County, about 25 houses are repaired with the CHIP grant every two years.

Fair Housing (CDBG) information can be received from Zack.

5. City Planning and Zoning Changes – M. Jennings, City Planning – 10 minutes

1. Ridges Housing Project- Solveig provided a status update. The project has one more step that needs approval from the State Controlling Board. Design and planning is expected by end of the year. 700 housing units that includes townhouses, condos, rentals, stores, restaurants, plan for senior housing are expected. Housing is also expected to be as environmentally friendly as possible. Website with the plans will be updated soon- currently managed by the University.

2. University Estates Woods Edge- Solveig updated the group that the City County passed TIF ordinance. Next the infrastructure and design work will be begin. These will be 2-3 bedroom units.
3. Ordinances- Meghan reported that the zoning- bulk controls changes has been submitted. Alan Swank from City Council is the chair of the committee. Conversations will move forward in the fall and there have been no requests or changes and will be brought to committee soon.
4. Other Projects- The City applied for the Welcome Home Ohio grant for \$3.5 million which would include 14 affordable housing units. Update pending. The City worked with Joe Recchich (Ridges developer) who has had success this similar grants elsewhere.

6. For the Good of the Order – 5 minutes

- Ordinance and bylaw changes have been approved by the City Council.
- In September, nominations for leadership/officer positions will be received and discussed. Voting will begin in December. Solveig asked the membership to think about candidacy for these positions and requested that this discussion be brought up in the meeting in September
- Solveig suggested the following ideas for sub-committees:
 - i. Senior housing
 - ii. Rental Issues
 - iii. New legislation analysis- Ordinances for the city
 - iv. Low income housing
 - v. Housing options- new housing options
- Availability of a senior high school intern who can help with some research, etc. and will continue to work 10 hours a week.
- Rob Delach (guest) suggested a communication and advocacy committee similar to Disability Commission. If the group is small enough (not more than 2 committee

members) the course don't need to be public. These subcommittees can include the general public. Rob would like to be involved on at least one subcommittee.

- Legal Aid of Southeast Ohio has been disseminating information and educational materials. Rent money can be put in escrow if this is not fixed. Tips for tenants- Athens Independent, Athens News, and soon in the Post.
- 70% of the population in Athens are renters
- Inform landlords and property managers about what is legal, etc.
- The Commission is also responsible for writing a report yearly from the commission
- Shay- Zoning changes, new development opportunities, promoting new mixed use property, housing stock
 - Can't be taken by a land bank if property owner is paying taxes
- Solveig mentioned that the Commission could have 2-3 subcommittees
 - Megan Vogel would like to be involved in subsidized housing as the representative from the University
 - Amy Lipka wants to look at the bylaws and the priorities prior to committing to a committee
 - Mary Abel is interested in housing options/stock or legislation that would have impact
 - Maria is interested in renter and low income housing, different types of rentals for all income levels
 - Kim is interested in education on landlord-tenant relationship, prepaid services, student legal services

8. Concluding Remarks- 5 minutes

Solveig reminded the members about two items for next meeting:

1. Officer positions
2. Involvement on subcommittees

Remember to send agenda items to Solveig 7 days before the next meeting. Next meeting will be on September 17 at noon in the City Council Chambers.

9. Motion to Adjourn

Solveig made a motion, Amy Lipka seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 1:01 p.m.