

Advisory Team Meeting #17

December 8, 2021

6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Summary notes are below. A recording of this meeting is also available on the website at www.red-wing.org/1032/Policy-and-Practice-Project-Meetings

Team Members Present

Alexis DeVries, Yaneth Santiago Huerta, Marvin Bradford, Cory Koplin, Steve Blaine, Racheal Savage, Samantha Malcom

Team Members Absent: Cholwe Hantuba Walker, Michael Holmes, Sara Kern, Liz Magill

Facilitator: Michelle Leise, City of Red Wing Community Engagement Facilitator

Meeting Notes

Meeting began at 6:05 p.m.

Welcome and Check In

--Members did a one-minute check-in with their name and one holiday tradition they like.

Update on Adopted Racial Equity Plan with Advisory Team Recommendations

Michelle Leise gave a brief summary of the status of the Strategic Racial Equity Action Plan. The Council voted unanimously to approve the plan at its November 22, 2021 meeting.

Presentation and Discussion: Leah Hall of Three Rivers Community Action

Leah Hall, Community Development Director of Three Rivers Community Action, attended virtually to give an overview of the services provided by Three Rivers, including education courses. Leah also reviewed housing projects Three Rivers has done in other communities near Red Wing that encompass supportive and affordable housing.

The team had time to ask questions. Questions included queries on the types of education classes provided. Some team members voiced they would like more promotion of these classes in Red Wing. Leah confirmed that classes are available in multiple languages, including Spanish.

Leah also discussed how communities can be most supportive to affordable and supportive housing development projects. She discussed the idea of "NIMBY" (Not in My Back Yard) and how this mindset has very negative effects. Often NIMBY is based in fear

of the “other” and not understanding the benefits of this kind of housing. It’s helpful when communities – residents and elected leaders - are more knowledgeable about these benefits. It’s also helpful when there are people in a community who can tell the stories of who this helps, and when there are people/groups to be allies to advocate for this kind of housing. Providing education early on helps a community learn together and build a foundation for these kinds of units.

Draft Recommendations on Housing as a Team

The document below is an outline of what the Advisory Team identified at its November meeting as a starting point for its recommendations to the City Council on housing issues. The team made additional comments or suggestions at the December 8th meeting, and those ideas are noted in red.

Starting Point for Housing Recommendation to the City Council from the Advisory Team

This is just a draft from all the team’s ideas – Team will work on these as a group on Wednesday.

8 Topics came to the forefront in Advisory Team Discussions:

(These are not in any particular order of priority here.)

- **Landlord and Tenant Issues and Concerns**
- **Educational Needs**
- **Discrimination of All Kinds**
(race, age, physical ability, immigration status, formerly incarcerated)
- **Housing Limitations for Undocumented Residents**
- **Homelessness**
- **Mobile Home Parks**

- **Stigma of “Section 8” Housing by Neighbors and Landlords**
(also discussed as NIMBY – “Not in My Back Yard”)

- **City Zoning Opportunities**

The recommendations on the following pages take into account all the meetings the team has had on these issues. Some recommendations fell within more than one area (for example, educating the community on the Fair Housing Act fit in the areas of both Education and Discrimination.)

The following is one way to incorporate all eight focus areas into a concise list. All of this can be switched around or changed per the team’s direction.

1. Create More Affordable and Supportive Housing Units

a. Seek out and approve supportive housing projects so Red Wing has more units for those who live with the following:

- (a) addiction to drugs and/or alcohol and are in recovery
- (b) criminal backgrounds, including those who have been recently incarcerated

Need to clarify what is legal and not legal regarding criminal background checks in terms of what landlords, realtors, and lenders can do when considering someone’s criminal background. (Find out what the maximum length of time is in how long a person’s record can be used.)

One team member brought up the NuWay organization as a successful example of what’s happening in other communities. NuWay is a nonprofit organization serving individuals recovering from co-occurring substance abuse and mental health disorders. <https://www.nuway.org/>

- (c) mental health and behavioral health needs
- (d) physical disabilities

b. Help combat the stigma of affordable and supportive housing in a community.

- (a) Designate City staff time to providing facts to the public about the economic, social, health, and community benefits of these units.
- (b) Utilize data (along with stories) to show reality versus myths about these types of housing.
- (c) Collaborate with other housing organizations to solidify a unified message.

- c. *Work with housing partners to build more affordable housing units – either through new construction or improving current houses and apartments.*
- (a) Research and potentially approve building incentives for homeowners, landlords, and potential developers to create more housing units
 - (b) Create and strengthen partnerships with interested developers who have successful experience in affordable housing projects.
- d. *Provide more flexibility in City zoning to do the following:*
- (a) Use the Red Wing median income (\$54,785) instead of the Goodhue County median income (\$66,800) when doing Tax Increment Financing projects and other affordable housing projects so rents are more affordable.
 - (b) Decrease the number of parking stalls necessary (on a case-by-case basis)
 - (c) ~~Implement zoning areas for supportive housing so these types of projects have a greater chance of being implemented.~~ *Michelle noted here that after discussions with the Community Development Department staff, the idea of zoning areas in specific spots does not work well. It's better to scatter throughout a community.*
 - (d) Density of units -- *Team members discussed advocating for an idea that's working in other communities – small homes (sometimes called tiny homes) on small lots. Sometimes this works specifically for people who are in need of deep-subsidy housing.*
 - (e) Update the language in our current local zoning language to use words that better reflect today (i.e. “half-way house” would become “supportive housing.”)

2. Provide More Education and Resources

- a. *Provide more education and services to people in English and Spanish on these topics. Support a collaborative, multi-agency effort with time and funding. **
- (a) Financial literacy for new renters, landlords, and first-time homebuyers
 - (b) The local programs already in place, such as the homebuyer's assistance loan, owner-occupied rehab loans, etc.
 - (c) Rights and responsibilities for renters, landlords, and homeowners
 - (d) Access to housing assistance for undocumented residents with a Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN)

- (e) Mediation services and legal aid, especially for tenant-landlord conflicts
landlord conflicts
- (f) How to expunge an eviction **and assistance in doing that**
- (g) Anti-discrimination information (such as the Fair Housing Act) and how
renters can utilize it and get help
- (h) Anti-discrimination practices for the real estate community and landlord
community
- (i) Classes for young adults who want to rent. This would help them gain
“points” and make landlords more willing to rent to them.
- (j) Training for landlords on de-escalation

** Start some of this education in the high school through the “adulting” classes and other avenues so students know this information before graduating.*

b. Write a regular City Question and Answer series on a wide range of housing issues. Use social and traditional media to get the information out to the public in English and Spanish.

(a) Include facts on services, rules, regulations, etc.

(b) Incorporate things for the public like “why is housing an issue?” “why do we need all types of housing?” and “why do some people have trouble getting housing?”

3. Increase Safety in Mobile Home Parks

Change the language here so it doesn’t sound like we’re saying that mobile home parks are “unsafe” because of violence or other reasons.

- a. Research ways the City could help improve the health and safety of mobile homes (inside and out) and the neighborhood structures around them (roads, parks, etc.)*
- b. Ensure that contracts, licenses, and agreements are available to people in English, Spanish, and any other language requested.*
- c. Reach out to mobile home residents to listen to their needs and follow up with opportunities to improve things.*

Based on the experiences of team members who have lived in mobile homes, there is a need to look again at these mobile home neighborhoods and see what local government can do and/or should (or should not) do to better ensure the health and safety of residents who live in either of Red Wing’s two mobile home areas. Some

people rent their mobile homes and some own in the same neighborhoods - and they have different services available to them. Getting clarity on this issue is necessary.

4. Improve Homelessness

- a. *Get out emergency shelter information more often and in better ways so people know what options are available to them when they are in crisis.*
- b. *Work with others to provide an emergency shelter system that people can count on. (The upcoming report on Homelessness & Housing Instability will provide more detail.)*
- c. *Look into how to provide an area for storing belongings for people in transition. (This could be through a nonprofit or some kind of partnership.) Having storage would help people who own things but need to store them short-term while they are finding new housing.*

Overall, the team also agreed it would be beneficial to know exactly what City government can do and what they can't do in all categories so the team's recommendations are the best they can be and relevant to what local government can do.

Meeting adjourned at about 7:56 p.m.