

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Richfield, Minnesota



Special Concurrent City Council and Housing and Redevelopment Authority Work Session

April 25, 2017

CALL TO ORDER

The concurrent work session was called to order by Mayor Elliott at 5:37 p.m. in the Bartholomew Room.

Council Members Present: Pat Elliott, Mayor; Edwina Garcia; Michael Howard; and Maria Regan Gonzalez.

HRA Members Present: Mary Supple, Chair; Pat Elliott; Michael Howard; Doris Rubenstein; and Sue Sandahl.

Staff Present: Steven L. Devich, City Manager/Executive Director; and John Stark, Community Development Director; Pam Dmytrenko, Assistant City Manager/HR Manager; Mary Tietjen, City Attorney; Jared Voto, Executive Aide/Analyst.

Item #1	PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING
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Mayor Elliott addressed the audience and introduced principals from Aeon to the audience. The members of the Aeon team introduced themselves.

Eric Schnell, Chief Operating Officer for Aeon, spoke about the purchase of Seasons Park and the work they do to keep units affordable.

Christine Hart, Community Developer at Community Action Partnership of Southern Hennepin (CAPSH), introduced herself and other presenters, Lisa Horn, CEO of VEAP, and Lael Robertson, Staff Attorney with the Housing Justice Center. Hart provided an overview of the upcoming discussion on the trends in affordable housing and talked about the consortium of 20 service providers in Hennepin County that came together a year and a half ago, known as the Suburban Hennepin Housing Coalition, which is looking at issues in suburban Hennepin and trying to find gaps in the services they provide.

Horn discussed who VEAP serves as a basic need social service agency. VEAP is an active member of the Suburban Hennepin Housing Coalition and works closely with Hennepin County in providing integrated services. She discussed the issues VEAP are seeing with their clients; the work they do to help clients and working with an affordability and accessibility problem in housing; helping clients navigate with landlords; and keeping people within their communities. She also spoke about the need for a comprehensive approach to this issue.

Hart noted an information guide that was handed out and discussed information on it, including that 73% of rental housing in Richfield was naturally occurring affordable housing.

Robertson discussed the Housing Justice Center, a non-profit law firm, which has been working with cities and counties to keep and create safe, suitable, and dignified affordable housing.

She discussed the rental/housing market is a very tight currently in the Twin Cities area. She discussed options that Richfield could implement, including:

- Identification of buildings and documenting the problem;
- Advance notice period;
- Help preservation to buy at risk buildings;
- Right of first refusal;
- Local programs offering rehab financing in return for affordability commitments;
- 4d property tax program;
- Prohibition of Section 8 discrimination;
- For cause eviction;
- Incentives to address landlords concerns about renting to certain groups of tenants;
- Inclusionary housing;
- Increasing local government leverage through zoning; and
- Rental assistance.

Hart further discussed having strong and proactive language in the comprehensive plan about affordable housing. Robertson added that the comprehensive plan is a tool to layout Richfield's values and what we want Richfield to look like in the future.

Mayor Elliott invited Hennepin County Commissioner Debbie Goettel to speak from the County's perspective. Commissioner Goettel spoke regarding the difficulty of instable housing, shared handouts of County programs available to residents, a new program called the Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing Fund, and the need to identify at-risk buildings that provide affordable housing currently. Mayor Elliott commented he thought the County is a more viable partner and better resource in the current political climate.

Council Member/Commissioner Howard thanked everyone for attending, stated we should continue the conversation, and suggested Richfield hold a forum on housing, similar to a forum Eden Prairie held in their community.

Council Member Regan Gonzalez thanked everyone for attending and agreed with the forum on housing and asked the Council and staff to review the list of options available.

Council Member Garcia thanked everyone for attending and agreed that everyone needs to be on the same page to form sound policy moving forward.

Council Members and HRA Commissioners all thanked the presenters for the information and allowing them to look proactively at the issue and thanked those in attendance at the work session.

ADJOURNMENT

The concurrent work session was adjourned by unanimous consent at 6:43 p.m.

Date Approved: May 9, 2017

Pat Elliott
Mayor

Jared Voto
Executive Aide/Analyst

Steven L. Devich
City Manager