



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Richfield, Minnesota

Concurrent City Council and HRA Work Session

August 19, 2019

CALL TO ORDER

The work session was called to order by Chair Supple at 5:45 p.m. in the Bartholomew Room.

ATTENDANCE

- Council Members Present: Maria Regan Gonzalez, Mayor; Mary Supple; Edwina Garcia; Ben Whalen
- Council Members Absent: Simon Trautmann
- HRA Members Present: Mary Supple, Chair; Maria Regan Gonzalez; Pat Elliott; Erin Vrieze Daniels
- HRA Members Absent: Sue Sandahl
- Staff Present: John Stark, Director of Community Development/HRA Executive Director; Katie Rodriguez, City Manager; Julie Urban, Housing Manager; Neil Ruhland, Communications and Engagement Manager

ITEM #1

CONSIDERATION OF RENTAL HOUSING WORK PLAN AND PRIORITIES

Housing Manager Urban reviewed the strategies and tools the City has accomplished in the past two years to strengthen the City’s rental housing. She described the items currently being worked on and presented a list of items that policymakers may choose to focus on moving forward.

Community Development Director/HRA Executive Director Stark presented some statistics on the affordability distribution of rental housing in the community compared to similar communities. He pointed out that the City’s share of rental housing is primarily affordable between 30 and 80% of the area median income and that less is available at the higher and lower ends of the income spectrum. Policymakers discussed the need for more current data to see how new and planned construction as well as the increased housing market prices impacted the data.

Councilmember Whalen stated that he didn’t see the value in providing resources for housing at the higher end and said that instead he thinks we should focus our resources on housing at the lower end.

Housing Manager Urban presented information on the potential use of the 4d tax classification to provide tax breaks to apartment owners in exchange for preserving and/or improving naturally occurring affordable housing.

Policymakers agreed that the 4d programs being used by other cities are not a good fit for Richfield and encouraged staff to explore how the tax break might be used to encourage deeper affordability and more improvements.

Housing Manager Urban presented information on the City’s Inclusionary Housing policy and potential revisions suggested by Councilmember Whalen.

Policymakers discussed how changing from a policy to an ordinance might impact development, the need for public assistance, the amount of an in lieu fee, accessible units, and creativity through a planned unit development.

Staff was directed to prioritize creating community among residents and offering tenant supports, adding a point of sale inspection for rental housing, revising the Inclusionary Housing policy, and exploring the use of 4d to encourage greater affordability and investment in rental housing.

ADJOURNMENT

The work session was adjourned by unanimous consent at 6:55 p.m.

Date Approved: September 10, 2019

Maria Regan Gonzalez
Mayor

Julie Urban
Housing Manager

Katie Rodriguez
City Manager