

**MINUTES
CITY OF FORT COLLINS
AFFORDABLE HOUSING BOARD**

Date: Thursday, January 5, 2017
Location: Community Room, 215 North Mason Street
Time: 4:00–6:00pm

For Reference

Diane Cohn, Chair
Ray Martinez, Council Liaison
Sue Beck-Ferkiss, Staff Liaison 970-221-6753

Board Members Present

Diane Cohn
Jeffrey Johnson
Eloise Emery
Jennifer Bray
Curt Lyons
Kristin Fritz
Catherine Costlow

Board Members Absent

Staff Present

Sue Beck-Ferkiss, Social Sustainability Specialist
Dianne Tjalkens, Administrative Assistant/Board Support

Guests

Zach Penland, Housing Catalyst

Call to order: 4:04pm

Agenda Review: Kelly Evans is unable to attend. Zach will provide a brief update for Neighbor to Neighbor. Betsy Sullivan, Volunteers of America, also unable to attend. Item/s will be rescheduled. Affordable Housing Education Campaign moved to beginning of meeting.

Public Comment: No comment

Review and Approval of Minutes

Jen moved to approve the December minutes as presented. Curt seconded.
Motion passed, 6-0-1. Catherine abstained as she is a new member.

Affordable Housing Education Campaign

- Eloise has drafted a proposal. Discussed forming a subcommittee. Campaign may include letter writing, partnerships, posters, etc.
- Curt agreed to me a member of the subcommittee.
- Next steps: Subcommittee will schedule a meeting offline. Sue will help schedule.
- Channel 14 may be able to run videos.

- Eloise will send former poster campaign video. Posters are available at fcgov.com/socialsustainability/documents.php

AGENDA ITEM 1: Veteran Homelessness—Betsy Sullivan, Volunteers of America
Postponed.

AGENDA ITEM 2: Red Tail Ponds and Permanent Supportive Housing—Zach Penland, Housing Catalyst

Redtail Ponds opened March 2015—permanent supportive housing (PSH). Like any other apartment complex with a lease, can stay as long as paying rent and abiding by lease. Different than transitional housing where time is limited. Data has shown transitional housing has poor outcomes. A segment of people experiencing homelessness (10-20%) have additional barriers—medical, physical, behavioral health—that require additional support. Redtail Ponds provides these supports to keep people housed. 60 units—40 PSH for people who have experienced homelessness or have a disability, 15 set aside for veterans. Supportive services offered to all residents. Can use vouchers for other affordable units. VASH is similar to Section 8 (subsidized by HUD) but for veterans. Project has won many awards for design of housing and programs. Serving people who have experienced trauma—building designed to look like any other market rate apartment but also includes trauma informed design like wide hallways, natural light, lots of windows, etc. Resident data—52 residents exited homelessness, 65% with physical disability, 17% with developmental disability, 20% domestic violence survivors, 40% substance abuse disorder, etc.. Partners for supportive services are Veterans Administration, SummitStone Health Partners, and Catholic Charities. Have continuity from shelter where people have stayed. Also have case manager for Family Self-Sufficiency (Housing Catalyst Program) which helps people get connected with employment and volunteer opportunities. 24 hours front desk staffing. Provide exceptional security for residents—many residents have experienced assault, weather, and theft while sleeping outside in the past. Partner with many agencies around the community as well. Examples: CSU Extensions nutrition classes, Great Clips, Meals on Wheels, etc. Apartments have full kitchens, baths, bedroom and living room. Most apartments come furnished, including cookware and dishes. Development also includes a variety of community spaces, an exercise room, shared laundry, etc. Have bingo nights, movie nights, holiday and birthday parties. Also have great outdoor spaces and smoking balconies on each floor—no smoking allowed indoors. After the first year there were no evictions, 95% remained stably housed. Have had some turnover, including people who have moved into unsubsidized housing. 10 have rejoined the workforce. 14 enrolled in employment training. Zero neighbor complaints. Have had some mutual rescissions and evictions—about 10 total in nearly two years open. Estimate \$200K saved annually from reduction of emergency health, shelter, and crisis care. Have also seen people get reconnected with family and friends and renew visitation with children. If level of need exceeds what can be provided, may move to assisted living or nursing home.

Comments/Q&A

- Diane: How do residents get funds to pay for their portion of the rent? What supports are available there?
 - Zach: Have a wide range of incomes from \$0-1300/mth. For the 40 designated units, they have project-based vouchers, so residents pay 30% of income. If have zero income they do not make a payment. Many residents have SSI or SSDI. If capable of working may have additional income. Have property management staff and Jumpstart coordinator who can help them access benefits. Also have navigator to make sure signed up for all benefits eligible for. Have budgeting classes. Work on strategies for money management.

- Eloise: Flexibility in zero tolerance policy?
 - Zach: No zero tolerance policy. Focus on harm reduction—to individual and community. Don't allow people to be intoxicated in common areas, but can do anything legal in own apartment. On services side work on reduction of harm as well—help people make healthier choices. If want to quit offer support as well. Not required.
- Catherine: Male/female breakdown? Typical for this type of housing.
 - Zach: 75% men, 25% women. Similar to percentages of people experiencing homelessness.
- Catherine: Have a waiting list?
 - Zach: No. Have an average of 6-10 units turnover each year. Also looking for residents who need the supports. Region is working on coordinated assessment process to identify most appropriate housing for an individual, plus vulnerability. Have vulnerability index to show how likely someone is to die on the streets. Range of scores for someone appropriate for supportive housing. Looking for next person in community who is most vulnerable.
 - Kristin: When first opened that was not the plan. Was community's first PSH. Two years in and have made the shift and feel equipped to be successful in that model.
- Catherine: Anticipation that some people stay a lifetime?
 - Kristin: Success is different for each individual, but that could be success for certain individuals.
 - Zach: If someone no longer needs the supports can work with them to find other housing in the community. Goal is to keep people most difficult to house housed.
- Eloise: If all vouchers are used and no others available, how are they getting vouchers?
 - Zach: Project-based vouchers stay with the unit rather than the person. Can get on a list for a portable voucher, which is challenging if not VASH.
- Eloise: Plans to build more housing like this?
 - Zach: Yes.
 - Kristin: Funding is prioritized for these types of projects—want to make sure in position to take advantage of those funds.
 - Sue: Hearing from leadership that would like BOB2 dedicated sales tax to be used for PSH.
 - Kristin: State and federal funding moving in that direction as well.
 - Zach: Data on how much money saving the community is creating momentum.
- Curt: impact on 30-80% AMI projects? If all dollars going to 0-30% AMI housing?
 - Kristin: Competitive funding and competitive tax credits priorities are PSH. Have to be more creative with how to get funding for other affordable housing projects.
 - Jeff: Ordinance redrafted for rebates to be only available to 30% AMI and below. Seems like creating a huge gap.
 - Eloise: Creating gap for those at 30% who don't need supportive housing. Will end up homeless because cannot get a place. Leaves out other special populations.
 - Kristin: 30% projects need more funding, but higher income projects are still very difficult to fund.
- Jeff: If take away traditional housing subsidies, shifting resources in a significant way. Is anyone looking at unintended consequence of success and political will?
 - Sue: PSH is not for everyone. A lot of low income people who don't need that level of service.
 - Eloise: And people who do need support and not getting it in traditional affordable housing.

- Zach: Need a spectrum of housing and don't have resources, so selecting target areas that will have biggest impact. Hope to see reduced need due to PSH. Would like to see bigger buy-in from other parts of community—saving resources at other entities that could be fed back into housing system. If put effort and resources in, could end homelessness. 10% of homeless use 50% of resources for homeless—these are people who benefit most from PSH. If use less resources on chronically homeless because they are housed using PSH, can put more resources toward those experiencing temporary homelessness.
- Sue: When Redtail was designed had 40 for formerly homeless and 20 for low income. Would you do this again?
 - Zach: Makes sense for all units to be occupied by people who need the supportive services. Hasn't been best fit for few people who moved in who were employed and stable. May not structure it differently in the future, but might market 20 to people with vouchers.
 - Kristin: Only have funding for supportive services for 40 units.
 - Zach: Staffing was based on 40 as well. Now providing to 60. Sustainable long term.
- Jeff: Transient/urban traveler issue uptick vs. homelessness. What are distinguishing factors? How do you communicate that difference to people in community who might be against subsidized housing because they don't like panhandlers?
 - Zach: Making distinction in terminology is important. Not everyone experiencing homelessness is being called a transient by police, papers, etc. anymore. That is a visible part of the homeless population, but a small part. Vast majority only experience homelessness once in life and for brief time and are member of a family with children. Education around causes of homelessness is important. Had some frustrations around people who are travelling using community resources; however, realized that those people are experiencing a lot of the same trauma, abuse, untreated mental health issues that people living in our community are experiencing. Be careful not to vilify that population. Rare to find someone choosing homelessness. When CDDT (Community Dual Disorder Treatment) program started offering housing vouchers to eligible homeless persons, people were excited to be housed. Some youth have chosen travelling, but end up getting trapped in homelessness. Travelers are people who need assistance too. If this community can do that, not necessarily a bad thing.
- Jeff: If concerned about creating environment that creates a continuum of housing, how do we prevent a perception that “if you build it they will come.” If we become a community that is known to have lenient ordinances, more and more people come. Currently we need to build four Redtail Ponds for our homeless.
 - Zach: Every community that comes to national conferences says concerned that doing a great job and drawing more people. If all doing a great job, why would there be movement to other communities? If doing assessments, getting to know them, identifying most appropriate housing, etc. Should be getting people into housing that is available, which might mean getting people in with family in another community. People are going to come here whether we have programs and services or not, homeless or not. Most people have moved here because it's a nice place.
 - Diane: Does data support that communities with strong support systems have an influx?
 - Zach: No. People who travel are most visible, but vast majority experience homelessness for short period of time. Even chronically homeless not likely to move around—know resources and people of the area. Also don't have resources to move. See some movement within region. Most stay within community they are connected to—home, family, etc.

- Jeff: Good data to get out to combat prejudice. Eugene and Berkeley with camping issues—how did that happen?
 - Curt: For every \$100 increase in rent, 15% increase in homelessness in Seattle. With rents here going up, generating our own homeless.
 - Sue: Statistics don't support influx of homeless, but will hear anecdotes that support the exceptions.
 - Zach: Every person who experiences homelessness is for a different reason and has a different story. Economic, social, criminal justice systems, availability of mental health services, etc.
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AGENDA ITEM 3: Rental Assistance and Group Homes

Zach Penland filled in to provide brief updates regarding Neighbor to Neighbor (N2N) programs.

Comments/Q&A

- Sue: VOA veterans program is housing people regionally, but not in Fort Collins.
 - Zach: Some in Laporte, Greeley and Loveland.
 - Sue: Betsy can come present to board on entire program. Governor's efforts have housed nearly 100 veterans in Larimer and Weld.
 - Sue: Rental assistance is biggest prevention tool we have since not much diversion. Diversion is looking at other options before a person enters a shelter. Ex: Staying with family, friends, filling gap before housing available, etc.
 - Zach: Landlord mediation/negotiation also as prevention—Ex: If provide case management or financial assistance person could stay rather than be evicted.
 - Sue: Rental assistance is available, but insufficient. Homelessness Prevention Initiative has merged with N2N, and will be looking at best practices around rental assistance to have best possible outcomes.
 - Jen: Larimer County Home Improvement Program offering up to \$10K to repair home.
 - Diane: \$300 in rental assistance will not do much to help someone stay in home.
 - Sue: Was designed to be half the rent. No longer good number.
 - Zach: N2N is looking at evidence-based best practices. Over the last decade the emphasis on data has started to change outcomes. Targeted assistance. In some cases \$300 bandaid will be best fit, but others might need 3-6 months of rental assistance, others might need intervention with landlord, helping sign up for food stamps/other benefits, etc.
 - Sue: Fundraiser for N2N February at Hilton.
 - Zach: Mosaic—funding for group homes is being diminished across the country. Mosaic lost funding to run their group homes. Both Fort Collins homes are outside City limits. Mosaic is trying to sell the homes to N2N—would be similar to support housing with outside service providers, case management, etc., but more of a shared housing model. Waiting on final information from HUD before proceeding. Also, N2N working on shared housing for seniors with Partnership for Age Friendly Communities. May function as match-maker to help find housing options for seniors.
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AGENDA ITEM 4: Other Business

Council Comments

- Eloise: Complete email to City leadership before Tuesday Work Session on short term rentals?
- Diane: Distinguish between investors and primary residence.

- Sue: On one block 25% of homes have become short term rentals. Small percentage of housing inventory citywide, but some want to make sure we get in front of this before it becomes an issue. Ex: Estes.
- Diane: Want community members to live in homes. When non-primary short term rentals take over a block, becomes an affordable housing issues.
- Jen: Larimer County does not allow non-primary short term rentals. Non-primaries are an affordable housing issue. Why allow them at all? On primary side, don't make it so complicated—helps individuals sustain their own housing.
 - Curt: Suggest using term “owner occupied.”
 - Diane: Let's not tie it to zoning, but to primary vs. non-primary.
 - Curt: Concern is that non-primary short term rentals take housing out of inventory, which threatens affordability.
 - Diane: Makes the housing for tourists only.
- Jen: Will provide comments at Council after the Work Session.
- Jeff: Will have other opportunities to talk about fee issues if the topic moves forward.

ACTION ITEM: Jen will draft email to leadership based on member input.

Future Meeting Agendas

- February: Mike Gebo, code changes
- March: Exclusionary zoning, tentative
- Unscheduled: Reschedule N2N and VOA presentations

Meeting Adjourned: 6:14pm

Next Meeting: February 2