

Minutes of the Ypsilanti Housing Commission

Thursday, October 12, 2017– 6:00 p.m.

601 Armstrong Dr., Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Meeting called to order at 6:03pm by Commissioner Smith

ROLL CALL:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| • Commissioner Frankenhauser | Present |
| • Commissioner Hollifield | Present |
| • Commissioner Moore | Present |
| • Commissioner Palmer | Present |
| • Commissioner Smith | Present |
| • Executive Director Z. Fosler | Present |

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: R. Smith asked if there were any changes to be made to the agenda. A. Moore moved to approve the agenda as written, second by C. Hollifield

Motion passed 5-0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: R. Smith asked if there were any changes to be made to the meeting minutes of September 14, 2017. A. Moore moved to approve the agenda, second by T. Palmer.

Motion passed 4-0, Abstention 1 (C. Hollifield)

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: A group of social work BSW students from EMU were present to observe meeting proceedings as part of a class assignment.

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS' COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS: None.

RESIDENT COUNCIL REPORT: T. Palmer stated that she has met with Darlene Holliday from the Family Empowerment Program to move forward with creating a resident council.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Executive Director Workplan Update:** Z. Fosler gave a progress report for each priority area on the executive director workplan.
 - o **Improve quality and long-term visibility of YHC housing stock:** Z. Fosler stated that the Strong Future renovation project has been successfully completed and all units have been occupied. The New Parkridge renovation project is on schedule for completion in 2017.
 - o **Community Engagement-Law Enforcement:** Z. Fosler stated that the YHC has successfully hosted two community events involving law enforcement, National Night Out at Sauk Trail Pointe and at Hamilton Crossing.
 - o **Support Family Empowerment Program & Other Supportive Services for Residents:** Z. Fosler stated that Strong Families Fund portion of the FEP has been fully funded for its first two years. The program is currently collecting data to determine scoring criteria for the pay-for-performance funding model for year three. Z. Fosler gave the audience a brief overview of the resident services provided by FEP. Z. Fosler stated that the YHC will have volunteers coordinated by United Way installing community gardens at Hollow Creek and replacing the raised beds at Hamilton Crossing this fall. A. Moore asked why YHC's own residents have not been encouraged to participate. Z. Fosler stated that United Way will be coordinating the work and residents will be given the option to participate.

Minutes of the Ypsilanti Housing Commission

Thursday, October 12, 2017– 6:00 p.m.

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- o **Community Engagement-Other Government Entities:** Z. Fosler stated that the YHC has a goal of attending at least four City Council meetings this year, and Z. Fosler has attended two meetings so far. Z. Fosler stated that he attended the September 18th special meeting to express the YHC's support of the International Village development proposal. R. Smith stated that Z. Fosler spoke very well at the meeting. A. Moore stated that there is room for improvement regarding YHC's attendance at City Council meetings. A. Moore stated that Z. Fosler should try to attend meetings more regularly so that City Council is more aware of YHC activities. A. Moore asked if there is an event planned to engage City Council this year. Z. Fosler stated that City Council members will be invited to the New Parkridge ribbon-cutting ceremony. R. Smith asked A. Moore if she is asking Z. Fosler to send out a report in advance of each City Council meeting. ~~A. Moore stated that she only expects Z. Fosler to provide a report to City Council at each meeting he decides to attend.~~ A. Moore stated that she expects Z. Fosler to provide a report when scheduled to a City Council meeting. Z. Fosler suggested that his 2018 work plan could be more explicit regarding regular attendance at city council meetings. T. Palmer asked if the Parkridge documentary will be show at the ribbon-cutting event. Z. Fosler stated that the YHC does plan to show the documentary during the event.
- o **Development/Acquisition of Additional Affordable Housing:** Z. Fosler stated that the senior affordable-housing development proposed for Michigan Ave. did not receive approval from the City Planning Commission. The project developer, NRP Group, informed Z. Fosler that they will not be moving forward with YHC for the tax-credit application. Z. Fosler stated that the YHC plans to look into doing a project on that site if NRP Group has not submitted their application. A. Moore stated that Z. Fosler should reach out to the Planning Commission to understand their reasoning for rejecting the proposal. Z. Fosler stated that he will joining a conference call with other executive directors across Michigan to discuss how to approach MSHDA and advocate for a change in the Qualified Application Plan, the criteria used to score projects that are competing to obtain 9% tax credits. Housing commissions are having a difficult time obtaining 9% credits for their RAD conversions.
- o **Communications:** Z. Fosler asked the board for some guidance on what should be included in a communications plan. A. Moore agreed that the creation of a formal communications plan should be moved to the 2018 work plan. A. Moore stated that a communications plan should answer two important questions: who are the key stakeholders that need to be informed of YHC's activities, and how do those stakeholders become informed? Z. Fosler stated that he will continue to work on a communications strategy. Z. Fosler stated that all requirements for the Michigan Humanities Council grant have been met, and the Parkridge historical panels created with grant funding will be installed in the New Parkridge community building once construction is complete. T. Palmer stated that a community member reached out to her to suggest that the Parkridge documentary be placed in Ypsilanti's historical record. Z. Fosler stated that T. Palmer is welcome to give the community member his contact information to move forward with that process. Z. Fosler stated that the documentary is available on YHC's website and additional screenings will be scheduled.
- o **Safety:** Z. Fosler stated that security patrols have been implemented on the New Parkridge site. A camera has been installed behind the YHC office to prevent car vandalism, and additional lighting will be installed behind the building as well. Z. Fosler stated that the surveillance camera issues at Hollow Creek have been fixed. Z. Fosler stated that he met with the City Manager and the Public Works Manager and it was determined Armstrong Ct., the road leading to the YHC office and the Parkridge Community Center, is a city street. The City has filled the pothole in front of the ramp leading up to the office entrance and

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plans to do additional street repairs following the completion of the New Parkridge project. Z. Fosler stated that he is in the process of scheduling a concrete company to repair the entrance ramp. A. Moore asked if Z. Fosler has started compiling best practices to maintain a safe living environment for residents. Z. Fosler stated that HUD and other entities conduct inspections annually to address structural safety issues. T. Palmer stated that community safety can only be addressed with resident participation. T. Palmer stated that the resident council can work on addressing issues of community safety. R. Smith asked if safety can be added as a standing item on future board agendas. A. Moore inquired about potential landscaping near neighboring low-laying areas.

- o **Quality of Service and Product:** Z. Fosler stated that YHC's asset manager will be calling into this evening's meeting to summarize her role in evaluating and monitoring property financials and activities. Z. Fosler stated that he would like to hold off on developing a key indicator dashboard until he is sure that YHC will not be duplicating an asset management tool that is already in use. A. Moore stated that the YHC should utilize the dashboard that asset management, CCA, currently uses.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **YHC Resident Homeownership Education:** H. Frankenhauser stated that she met with Marquan Jackson (FEP), Mirada Jenkins (Old National Bank), and the Director of Family Services for Habitat for Humanity to discuss hosting an event for YHC residents. The event will showcase the free homeownership education and financial counseling programs that are available to Washtenaw County residents. A. Moore stated that she hopes for programming to be sustained beyond hosting one event. Z. Fosler thanked H. Frankenhauser for her efforts. Z. Fosler also thanked H. Frankenhauser for connecting YHC residents with the free lightbulb replacement program through Habitat for Humanity.
- **Housing Waitlist Complaint:** C. Hollifield stated that he has been confronted by men in the community regarding the availability of low-income housing. C. Hollifield stated that the men claim that they are unable to get housing because the waiting list favors women with children. Z. Fosler stated that single fathers with children have the same opportunity to receive housing as single mothers with children. Z. Fosler stated that single men may have a more difficult time getting on the one-bedroom waiting list because the YHC has a preference for elderly applicants, but the YHC certainly doesn't discriminate on the basis of gender.
- **On the Ground Ypsilanti Article:** Z. Fosler stated that he and Marquan Jackson were interviewed by a local news outlet, *Concentrate Media: On the Ground Ypsilanti*, to discuss Deborah Strong Housing, New Parkridge, and the Family Empowerment Program. Z. Fosler stated that he also did a follow-up radio interview at *WEMU*. Z. Fosler distributed the article to the board.

MONTHLY REPORTS:

- **Regulatory, Oversight, and Legal Actions:** Z. Fosler gave an update on the pending lawsuit related to an alleged slip-and-fall injury occurring at a now demolished public housing unit on Maus Avenue. Z. Fosler stated that he has submitted all necessary documentation requested by the plaintiff's attorney.
- **RAD Construction Update:** Z. Fosler gave the board a construction update. The community building has been delayed in order to keep on schedule with the completion of units. The first set of permanent-supportive housing units has been completed and Avalon has been providing services for the new residents. Z. Fosler stated that property management and YHC staff will be participating in a training to learn about Avalon's harm reduction approach. Z. Fosler stated that paving on Hilyard Robinson Way is scheduled to take place next week. A. Moore

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asked if Z. Fosler has followed up with Rohde regarding installing a rain barrier between New Parkridge and surrounding homes. Z. Fosler stated that he still needs to talk to Rohde about the issue.

- o **Solar Panel Update:** Z. Fosler stated that Chart House Energy needs the DTE account number for the community building in order to move forward with the installation of solar panels. Z. Fosler stated that funding has become available to train residents on panel installation, and YHC will begin recruiting residents soon.
- **Financial Reports:** Z. Fosler and the board reviewed and discussed financial reports with YHC's asset manager, Beth Steffen, (present via phone). B. Steffen stated that she is an asset manager for Chesapeake Community Advisors and her role is to act as a liaison between YHC and property management. B. Steffen stated that she reviews the financials for Deborah Strong Housing, New Parkridge, and Hamilton Crossing on a regular basis for accuracy. B. Steffen stated that New Parkridge is owed subsidy funds from HUD to cover operational costs, but overall is doing great considering that it is still in the development stage. B. Steffen stated that Deborah Strong Housing is also owed funds from HUD. B. Steffen stated that Hamilton Crossing is experiencing a slight revenue loss due to an increased number of vacancies on the property, but the property can submit an application to HUD to recover up to 80% of lost revenue once the unit has been leased up again. The board was very satisfied with B. Steffen's presentation.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- **Ward 1 Productions:** Z. Fosler stated that A. Moore has inquired about renting office space at the YHC for Ward 1 Productions, a youth media production company. A. Moore stated that she created Ward 1 Productions in order to not only continue creating documentaries with local youth, but also to function as a job training center. Three YHC youth residents that participated in the Parkridge documentary will be working for Ward 1 Productions. Z. Fosler stated that the company's purpose is aligned with the YHC's goal of providing career and educational opportunities for residents. Z. Fosler stated that he has spoken with Eric DeGroat, the YHC's legal counsel, about making this decision as transparent as possible and ensuring that potential conflicts of interest are avoided. Mr. DeGroat advised that the use of the office space should not interfere with YHC's business activities and that the rent charged should be based on the market. Z. Fosler stated that the space is presently vacant and unused and that he has spoken with a local real estate agent about commercial lease pricing for the area. H. Frankenhauser asked Z. Fosler whether the YHC still has plans to rent office space to a surveillance company. Z. Fosler stated that the surveillance company will not be renting the space and is looking at other space in the City. R. Smith made a motion to direct Executive Director Fosler to enter into negotiations with Ursus Ventures regarding leasing YHC office space for Ward 1 Productions, second by H. Frankenhauser.

Motion passed 3-0, Abstentions 2 (A. Moore and T. Palmer)

- **Vandalism:** Z. Fosler stated that he attended a town hall meeting for New Parkridge residents on October 6, 2017. The purpose of the meeting was to make residents aware of the resources that are available to them and to encourage residents to take pride and ownership in their community. Z. Fosler introduced himself to new and returning residents and the Parkridge documentary was shown. Property management will be scheduling additional resident meetings for each YHC site.
- **Car Sales:** Z. Fosler stated that he is in the process of contacting everyone who expressed an interest in purchasing the cars that YHC has for sale. Z. Fosler stated that maintenance needs to jump one of the cars in order for it to be moved.

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- **Outdoor Storage for Residents:** Z. Fosler stated that he has spoken to property management about the outdoor storage issue (for bikes, etc.), and they advised against creating additional outdoor storage space, and residents are encouraged to store bicycles inside their units. H. Frankenhauser suggested that property management provide indoor storage hooks for residents upon request.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Frankenhauser: No comments.

Commissioner Hollifield: He stated that he had a great meeting and thanked B. Steffen for her financial review.

Commissioner Moore: She thanked B. Steffen for giving the board an excellent review of financials.

Commissioner Palmer: She thanked the students for attending the meeting.

Commissioner Smith: She thanked the students for attending the meeting and stated that she hopes they found the meeting informative. She also stated that she has been meeting with Beverly James regularly and Ms. James is excited about the possibility of the New Parkridge community building being named after her father, Amos Washington.

Z. Fosler stated that Ms. James should be invited to the November board meeting and a resolution should be drafted to get the building named.

ADJOURN: A. Moore moved to adjourn, second by C. Hollifield. **Passed 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:52pm**

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

The Ypsilanti Housing Commission and its Board of Commissioners, of the City of Ypsilanti, Michigan, hereby authorize the Executive Director to sign the approved Board of Commissioners minutes of October 12, 2017.

	YEAS	NAYS	ABSENT
Commissioner Frankenhauser	_____	_____	___X___
Commissioner Hollifield	_____	_____	___X___
Commissioner Moore	___X___	_____	_____
Commissioner Palmer	___X___	_____	_____
Commissioner Smith	___X___	_____	_____

Zachary D. Fosler, Executive Director