

I. Call to Order

Members Present: Robert Millar, Anna Wageling, Leslie Black-Plumeau

City Staff Present: Heather Carrington

Guests Present: Councilor Jim Duncan

Call to Order by: Robert Millar

Meeting Start Time: 6:05 PM

Minutes Recorded by: Anna Wageling

II. Public Comment

None

III. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

Meeting minutes from 11/23/20 were approved.

IV. Policy Review and Priority Concerns Discussion

At the November Housing Commission meeting, staff asked Commissioners to consider the following for discussion in December:

1. Identify your current top housing concern.
2. What data demonstrates that it is a problem in Winooski or would be needed to confirm the issue locally?
3. What resources are necessary to address the issue you identified? (funding, policies, programs, enforcement, etc.)
4. Would the issue be best addressed at a local or state level? Why?

Members each shared their biggest concerns about housing and what might be done to address it. Some of the issues identified included: housing quality, barriers to accessing certain types and sizes of rental housing, and barriers to home ownership. Specific concerns compiled by US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants staff included: Cost, number of larger units, pool of landlords has shrunk over time, conditions of apartments are less than desirable, some rentals need bank statements and history, harder and time consuming to find apartments that are Section 8 eligible, clients who have vouchers have a hard time finding a place, a lot of new buildings in the city have affordable units but the screening requirements makes many new Americans ineligible. Looking at the immediate future and responding to the pandemic, there were structural concerns about the direct rental assistance requirement that landlords participate in order for renters to access funding assistance. The Housing Commission may have an educational role in supporting Winooski landlords and tenants in taking advantage of the next round of rental assistance funding. More work will be done on assessing any relevant policy or programs in the coming months.

V. Housing Targets - Family Housing/Bedroom Counts

Commissioners looked at how Winooski rentals compare to other towns in terms of the number of bedrooms being provided. Winooski has a much larger proportion of 0- and 1-bedroom

rentals making up 56% of all rentals, with a much smaller share of 2- or 3-bedroom rentals that are better suited for families. Based on this, the data shows what people have been hearing from residents – it is harder to find housing suitable for families in Winooski. Based on the data, the Commission will discuss how to incentivize and promote the development of family-sized rental housing. Additional information and options will be reviewed in coming months.

VI. Adjourn

Motion by: Leslie

Second: Anna

Meeting End Time: 7:18 PM