

CITY OF HASTINGS, NEBRASKA
MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMISSION
Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a meeting of the Hastings Planning Commission was conducted Hastings Municipal Airport 3300 W 12th Street, Hastings NE 68901, on November 7, 2023.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:06 p.m. in worksession by Chair Sinner with the following members present: Rossi, Hinton, Sinner, Kully, Lewis, Stutzman. and Rosenburg
Absent: Hoffman, Srivastava, Cranson

2. Roll Call

Stutzman, Lewis, Kully, Hinton, Sinner, Rosenberg, Rossi, Others Present: Lee Vrooman, Director of Engineering, Chad Bunger, Development Services Official, Jesse Oswald, City Attorney, Tony Herrman, Public Information Manager

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Sinner led the group in recital of the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

4. Motion to adopt the current agenda for the Planning Commission Meeting

Chair Sinner entertained a motion at this time for the approval of the current agenda.

Moved by Kully.

Seconded by Hinton

Ayes: Rosenburg, Stutzman, Lewis, Kully, Sinner, Hinton, Rossi

Nays: None

Motion passed.

5. Public Notice - Official Notice of the Regular Meeting was published in the Hastings Tribune on Friday , October 27, 2023. Pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statute Section 84-1412, the public is advised that a copy of today's agenda and all reproducible written material which will be discussed at today's meeting is available to the public. Also, a current copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act is accessible to members of the public.

The Public Notice was read into the record. - Official Notice of the Regular Meeting was published in the Hastings Tribune on Saturday, October 26, 2023. Pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statute Section 84-1412, the public is advised that a copy of today's agenda and all reproducible written material which will be discussed at today's meeting is available. Also, a current copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act is available to members of the public.

6. Special Order of Business

Chair Sinner opened discussion to review the draft City of Hastings Affordable Housing Plan dated October 27, 2023 Created by Marvin Planning Consultants and Community Planning Insights.

- a. Review the draft City of Hastings Affordable Housing Plan, dated October 27, 2023, created by Marvin Planning Consultants and Community Planning Insights.

Sinner- Informed the commission he spoke to Chad previously, and Chad is ok with the Commission raising their hands and asking questions during his presentation. Please come through the chair and be recognized so Chad will answer questions at that time.

Chad-With us tonight is Mason Herrman from Marvin Planning Consultants and Aaron Sorrell, also on the line via teams from Community Planning Insights. Aaron was the craftsman behind the Affordable Housing Plan. In 2020, the State Legislature passed the Missing Middle and Affordable Housing Act, which required a couple of things for a city of Hastings size to do. The first one was done in 2021, creating a Housing Report, which detailed specifics on the amount of property we have zoned as residential, our building permit numbers, and general discussion on affordability. The other piece requires a city of our size, basically a city of 50,000 people or lower to develop a Housing Action Plan to specify how our community will address the affordable housing issue that is fairly prevalent across the state. That is the intent of this meeting. With a January 1, 2024 deadline to get this plan adopted to meet state requirements, we're pushing this forward. One last thing about that state requirement and what it means to get this adopted. If we don't adopt it, by the first of the year, the State Statute overrides a number of provisions in our zoning regulations and means we have to allow for certain types of multi-family or more dense dwelling residential development than we normally would allow in our zoning. To address our housing issues, we as a community need to figure that out, other than legislation defining that for us. We are striving to run this plan quickly and get it adopted by mid December. We will take this plan, run it to a number of our community members in the housing field and expand on it so that it can be appropriately incorporated into our comprehensive plan. This is a good element to be in our Comprehensive Plan update. We should see this in the first of the year. Aaron is joining us virtually, and is the one who implemented this Matrix onscreen and can answer questions.

Sinner-Aaron, could you do a brief overview of what you saw going through this?

Aaron-Hastings is situated like a lot of Nebraska communities that have a significant housing need. What is laid out in the plan is the first cut of the plan, and we will go into more detail as the Comprehensive Plan, but it's really a comparison as far as missing Middle Class Housing as Hastings compares to the rest of the state. As far as highlights, one is that there is a significant need for affordable rental housing, which there is probably a lot of strides that can be made on the Tri Plexes and Quads. My experience in Nebraska, is that there is a strong demand for doubles, both for sale and for rent, which Hastings is well poised to continue heading down that path. Spoke on the number of vacant rental units that continue to go up. Essentially, the demand for housing in Hastings is pretty strong. Largely, as a matter of capturing those who are commuting to Hastings to work, their calculations show a potential ownership demand of between 230-240 new housing units, largely that is based on people from commuting who are paying significantly less for housing than they could afford. So there are probably some step-up demands that are there and, on the rental side, between 550 -700 units, again largely driven by one, commuter capture, two, the cost to renters, those who are paying more than 30 percent of their income. That is where you get the affordable housing component, or the housing demand, which is the point of the missing middle act. One of the key recommendations is to increase the area that's zoned to either permitted by right or conditionally permitted, or this Missing Middle including adding increasing it to the R1

district, which would then open up more of your residential area. Utilities are already there, lots are not that much larger than your other districts.

Sinner jumped in with a quick question, asking if Aaron had a timeline on the 160-240 on housing and 500 on rentals.

Aaron responded no, they only projected out for the next five years. Hastings is not going to be able to satisfy that kind of demand in the next five years, based on historical building permits, but they just went with a five-year projection. They think every couple of years that it should be updated based on job creation or other factors that influence housing demand.

Sinner-On the Affordable Housing side, people come up and say affordable housing in Hastings is not affordable housing. What are some figures associated with that and will that show up on the comp plan in detail?

Aaron replied it will. He also explained Affordable Housing on page 11 and the table and discussed the Comprehensive Plan in more detail and how to read it, as it is kind of complicated. Getting to your specific point, we do have demand broken out by AMI. They can further break that out in a manner that is helpful to the planning commission as part of the comprehensive plan. We would just need to know what would be helpful for you? If you tell us what you are looking to see or what questions you need to answer, we can certainly do that.

Bunger- stated Table 7 on Page 10, outlines the cost burden for households, this is a fairly good indicator of homes not making enough, and their total housing costs are burdensome to them. Of the Owner Occupied homes, we have roughly 1,000 homes. Owners, that if your household costs are equal or less than 30%, then you are doing pretty well in terms of housing costs to your income. Anything more than that, especially into 50%, that is burdensome. So right now, we have 1000 homeowners paying more in their total household bills for mortgage, utilities etc. and upwards of 1500 renters in town are burdened by their housing costs. That paints the baseline picture of residents or households, and what they are experiencing when it comes to their housing costs. A couple of different things we have to address about our housing for our existing residence, and its costs, and/or income, and also bringing in the right mix of households for new residents, as Aaron was saying, those commuters living outside of Hastings city limits, or extraterritorial jurisdiction area, living further away and driving for their jobs, which is and of itself is not a good deal.

Sinner asked Stutzman, who deals with underprivileged people, and people who are financially challenged, as well as when they go out into the housing market, whether it's ownership or renting, do you have anything to get them prepared for that?

Stutzman replied that what she sees a lot of, is the skills gap in jobs in the community. So, she doesn't know if the comprehensive plan addresses partners, whether it's work force agencies, or others that can assist with that skills gap, so they can have the income to afford housing?

Bunger- Stated they had a conversation about that with Marvin Planning Consultants, limited audience, goal partner with HADC workforce training, but not sure that carries a lot of weight as a planner, or with a comprehensive plan. We will look for different

avenues to improve that, but not through the Comprehensive Plan.

Stutzman employed her staff and none of her staff lived in Hastings. They all live outside of Hastings, and she was not for sure they would move to Hastings. How, when you look at the numbers, how do you account for those that will never potentially move to Hastings?

Aaron replied. The demand or potential demand is based on a rule of thumb: rental housing, potentially about 10 percent are living or renting outside of Hastings, if the right product was there to move in. Ownership side: Tied to a mortgage-cut down to 3- 5 percent, is a realistic number. Further out, in fact, these numbers do not capture all commuters. At some point in time, if over 40 miles outside of the community, probably because you have another tie, where you have zero interest in moving, family, partner, children. These numbers only capture a fraction of those commuters working inside Hastings.

Sinner -Chad today, we are reviewing this. No action is taken, and we will push this up to the City Council, and when will that be?

Bunger - The 14th we will hold a formal public hearing with the Commission to give a formal recommendation to the city council, and then they will take up a resolution to accept the plan on December 11th, 2023. So we will meet that deadline. From there, we will make an effort to get it out to the community.

Sinner-Next year can we have several hearings so the occupants of the city and people that transverse into the city will be able to come to the podium to speak ?

Bunger-We certainly can. We will definitely have some meetings. We are working with United Way, and a couple of other housing partners in the city to hold an affordable housing summit early next year. We are looking at making more community engagement efforts around the housing topic, workforce housing, and we will definitely keep you involved.

Sinner said that was his point.

Bunger said, Yes, then figure out what that looks like, including it in an action plan and a comprehensive plan. To do this right, the community has to be involved, engaged and we need to bring that information back to you for your understanding of it, approval and charge us to move ahead, doing the things to make an impact.

Sinner apologizes, saying he knows he caught Chad off guard, he just came on, and he's doing a great job catching up, he keeps throwing a lot of things at him. There is a reason for that. There are people that watch this at home, then the Commissioners get questions out in public and we can continue to build a dialogue with our community as we go through the comp plan.

Bunger-Agreed, that's needed..

Rosenberg-Served at some informal gatherings with builders a few years ago and there was concern about the hoops builders went through to build in the city and a lot of them were disgusted with what was happening in Hastings trying to get permits, and all the flood plain. He said it was quite a dialogue, and involved a majority of the

builders. He has seen them reducing the number of houses they are building and they claim they can't really build anything that's affordable because of the cost. He was hoping the city would work with these people. We didn't seem very flexible, back then, and that's why a couple of members of the council and him got together with those builders, but there is really a lack of housing in Hastings. Probably the main reason Hastings is not growing. He recently tried to help a family member find a rental, and they are building some beautiful apartments out here and great apartments north of town, but the cost is more than what these people can make. It's going to be a real challenge to improve what we need to do to get the houses we need in Hastings.

Bunger- His philosophy when it comes to affordable housing and workforce housing is the full spectrum, not one silver bullet to get us out of this problem, and one where he has some influence is our building permit process, and all the things folks go through. Some of those are there for good reasons, to keep people safe and sound in their homes and people building them safe and sound, but he wants them to be as practical and as effective and as efficient as possible. We're taking a hard look at those right now, and would say we'll roll out something in the next three months or so. The big ones won't take effect until next year, as it will affect fee schedules and ordinances, but we're going to make some changes to make things more effective. We work hard with our builders, our subcontractors to find solutions to make life easier, to build in Hastings. It's still going to be safe, still going to be attractive, not going to cut corners, or lower our standards in that regard. That doesn't get us anywhere, but we are going to be effective in how we work with our partners and builders.

Sinner -he would think too about these dialogues we are creating. The HUD offices should be involved. Being in the rental business here in the city, he is exposed to this in his daily life, and there are a lot of issues, and probably one of the biggest is the financial issue. That office can talk to that, they have some numbers that Sinner has checked into that are astounding for our community,

Bunger-The other piece is how do you fund some projects, find some incentives or financial tools to close that housing gap? We all know what it costs nowadays to buy things and build things, we know what we have to get in terms of what people can afford for rent and homeownership, so what can we do with some financial tools to close that gap between the expense of what people can afford? It's the full gamut: regulations, ownership tools, financial tools, the whole nine yards, and we intend to work on it.

Bunger closed by saying he appreciated the dialogue today, will bring this back next week for a formal adoption, continue to read the plan, and will answer more questions next week.

Sinner-As indicated by you, Chad, next week will be a rather large agenda, with several public hearings so we can all come mentally prepared for the meeting on Tuesday.

Adjourn

Chair Sinner would entertain a motion at this time to Adjourn.

Moved by Kully

Seconded by Rosenberg

Ayes: Rosenberg, Stutzman, Lewis, Kully, Sinner, Hinton, Rossi

Chair Sinner adjourned at 4:42pm

Chairman