

MINUTES

Housing and Human Services Advisory Board (HHSAB)
February 8, 2024 from 6:30 PM-8:30 PM

This will be a digital meeting. Members of the public may participate electronically in the meeting or by telephone.

Zoom link: <https://washtenawcounty.zoom.us/j/87074256804?pwd=vLLBtjnQgLw793CU8sT2qt5DrKaoja.1>

Meeting ID: 870 7425 6804 | Passcode: 577364

Members Present: Amanda Carlisle, James Daniel, James Downing, Anna Erickson, Jean Leverich, Brenna McMahon, Ellen Rabinowitz, Linh Song, Paul Sher, Peter Slutzker, Chris Watson.

Members Absent: Anya Ganger, Faith Redwine-Otieno, Karen Wanza

Staff Present: Tara Cohen (County OCED), Brett Lenart (City Planning), Jennifer Hall (Ann Arbor Housing Commission)

Guests: Geoffrey Lowes (Renters Commission)

I. **Convene Meeting** (Brenna McMahon, Chair)

Brenna convened the meeting at 6:38pm and took a roll call, with each person stating their location:

Brenna McMahon – Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County
Jean Leverich – Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County
Ellen Rabinowitz – Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County
Council Member Linh Song – Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County
Paul Sher – Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County
Geoff Lowes – Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County
James Daniel – Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County
James Downing – Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County
Amanda Carlisle – Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County
Anna Erickson – Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County
Peter Slutzker – Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County
Brett Lenart – Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County
Council Member Chris Watson – Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County
Tara Cohen – Ypsilanti, Washtenaw County

II. **Welcome/Announcements** -- Council Member Song noted her excitement that LIHTC expansion is being considered by Congress and plans to share a related article via email.

III. **Public Comment** -- None

IV. **Approval of Agenda (ACTION)**

Motion by Ellen Rabinowitz; Seconded by Jean Leverich. Motion passed unanimously.

Next meeting: Thursday, March 14, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. | Location: Remote (Zoom)

V. Approval of Minutes from November 9, 2023 (ACTION)

Motion by James Downing; Seconded by Amanda Carlisle. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. Business/Updates

a. Update: Ann Arbor Comprehensive Plan – Progress & Next Steps (Brett Lenart, City Planning)
(Discussion only)

Ann Arbor's Planning Director, Brett Lenart, gave a 30 minute presentation on the City's Comprehensive Plan and provide next steps and ways to be engaged in the process. More details can be found on the [A2 Comprehensive Plan website](#) and in Brett's slide deck in the updated meeting packet.

Brett noted that the Comprehensive Plan takes approximately a year to develop.

He gave a disclaimer that economic data isn't collected at the local or regional level, so it's federal data and likely a bit outdated and with a margin of error (specific to Jobs data in his presentation)

He noted the City's intentional use of the term Comprehensive Plan rather than Master Plan,

He requests that everyone to help get the word out about the [ongoing survey](#) to networks, post on your social media, etc.

He shared that they are also working on a joint public engagement event with DDA's [Downtown Area Circulation Study](#), which began around the same time that this Comprehensive Plan development kicked off.

Questions/Comments:

Amanda: Do you have to be a resident to respond to the survey?

Brett: No, there's a question where respondent can indicate if they're a resident, employee in the City, or other relationship.

Council Member Linh Song: Can you speak to what the University of MI is doing?

Brett: UofM is currently doing Strategic planning and Campus Physical Plan. Different institution. A lot of their operations are shifting to north campus. Concepts for re-envisioning family housing along Plymouth Road. City wants to understand the University's plans there, and how those plans will interact with Plymouth TC-1 corridor.

Jean: Noticed in City-wide conversations, mention of mismatch between the housing as currently zoned, embracing of suburban sprawl, and the Comp Plan planning for the city of the future – how do we help people downsize, stay in the city, climate refugees. Where's the balance between what people are comfortable with and keeping status quo vs education about why/how things need to change?

Brett: When talking about evolving neighborhoods, first step is setting expectations. A lot of conversation about the limited land that can currently be developed and need to make changes in

those limited parts within the City's limits. A lot of the newer housing has been targeted to student population to meet needs, but you may not see increased housing options over a lifetime. Our culture puts a lot of value on real estate as wealth building, so there can be a lot of fear about change.

Brett welcomes feedback, ideas, questions at any time.

Council member Watson: Are physical post cards available to distribute?

Brett: Yes – he will deliver some to him soon.

b. Policy Revision: A2 Affordable Housing Waitlist Policy (Tara Cohen, OCED) **(Discussion and Action)**

- Waitlist now includes **33** affordable units across 3 private developments:
 - Ann Arbor City Club (201 S First) – 16 Studios (12 at 80% AMI; 4 at 60% AMI)
 - Beekman on Broadway (1200 Broadway) – 15 Units (5- 1 bed; 5 studios; 5 efficiencies); 7 of these are in new building, still pending certificates of occupancy for selected tenants to move-in (60% AMI)
 - The Standard (405 S Main) - 2 Studios (80% AMI)
- Staff has made some proposed edits to the existing Waitlist Policy document, to add more clarity and align with current practices. A red-lined copy is included in your packet for discussion and action (approval by HHSAB).

Tara noted a typo in the agenda – there are 33 affordable rental units currently administered through the Waitlist, not 23. She also mentioned there will be 14 additional units coming online, likely by fall 2024, at the new Vic Village South apartments on University. These will be capped at 80% Area Median Income (AMI), and to include 11 studios and 3 – 1-bedrooms.

During discussion, Amanda asked for the reason behind the proposed edits to the Income Qualification section of the policy. Tara explained this was to better clarify the 1040 method and point out exceptions that can arise. Jennifer Hall noted that she made most of the proposed edits to that section of the policy document, with the impetus being to avoid accidentally excluding students from low-income households.

Ellen asked how well the waitlist works, how many people are on the list, and how quickly does it turn over? Tara explained that there are probably around 300 something people still active on the waitlist, but it takes a lot of work to find a match for the units that become vacant. All units right now are studios and 1-bedrooms, so they don't accommodate larger households.

Discussion among the group continued around the topic of varying approaches over the years -i.e. trying to obtain more affordable units (even those in private market rate developments) versus wanting payment in-lieu into the City's Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Jennifer and Tara asked Council Members Song and Watson whether they felt this Waitlist Policy needed to go before the Council for approval, or whether it can stay within the HHSAB since the changes are more administrative in nature. Jennifer also mentioned the original policy from a few years back never actually went to the Council. Song and Watson stated they're both comfortable with this Policy staying at the HHSAB level and not needing to route through Council.

Jean asked if it might be helpful for Council to have discussion to clarify their goals around housing.

Watson noted that Council is holding a working session soon to discuss issues of density, affordability, and more.

Motion to Approve Proposed Edits to the A2 Affordable Housing Waitlist Policy as written in the meeting packet.

Moved by Carlisle; Seconded by Slutzker.

Motion approved unanimously.

c. HHSAB Membership/Recruitment (Tara Cohen)

- There are currently 2 vacancies that need to be filled. If you know any Ann Arbor residents who are eligible and interested, please encourage them to apply for 1 of these open seats:
 - Professional/academic in social services seat
 - Representative of business/development/banking/architectural/legal community
 - Tara provided update that Amanda C. brought forth an applicant from a few years ago who meets this criteria. Tara has reviewed and put forth for Mayor's consideration.

d. Renters' Commission Update (Geoff Lowes)

Geoff shared out on recent topics covered at the Commission's last meeting. They heard a presentation from the Fair Housing Center of Southeast and Mid-Michigan, discussed Right to Renew Ordinance and some possible changes, and began drafting updates to the City section of the Rights of Tenants handbook. He shared links to documents referenced:

1. [ELO/RTR Revisions](#)
2. [Fair Housing Center Presentation](#)
3. [Tenant's Rights Handbook](#)

VII. City Council (Council Member Update)

Council Member Watson shared:

- Council Passed TC-1 Plymouth! Those parcels are zoned.
- Approved Development Agreement for 121 Catherine Street!
- Next Monday – Council is holding a working session for economic development to articulate City's goals. Deputy City Administrator, John Fournier, wrote a report and will bring some suggested resolution language for City's economic development goals – touching on density, affordability, businesses, etc.

Jen: Will Fournier's report touch on the new MSHDA Brownfield policy allowing up to 120% AMI?

Chris: No, report doesn't cover this topic but understand this an issue.

Council Member Song shared: Last month we asked City Administrator to consider bonding for affordable housing. Want to push with other Council members in light of MSHDA's new budget, the Governor's State of the State message (Build, build, build), and potential bonding of affordable housing millage dollars.

Song and Watson offered to [share the link](#) to the publicly available December 1, 2023 memo from City Administrator Dohoney to the Mayor and Council on Potential Bonding of Housing Commission Millage.

Jennifer Hall shared that she also met this week with Bond Council and Administrator to discuss bond options for affordable housing.

Song: If we can bond over parking lots and roads, why can't we bond for housing in Ann Arbor?

A Tax bill making its way through Congress now – fewer bonds would be needed to make the Low Income Housing tax credits available.

Group Discussion ensued around various types of bonds -- tax exempt, municipal bonds, etc.

Hall: We'll need 2.5 years' worth of affordable housing millage dollars just for Catherine St project to pencil out. Bonds backed by millage dollars would be hugely helpful.

Song: Discussed the Kline lot (Ashley @ Main St) at Council meeting. Wish City was more creative about how we think about parking. Not a good track record for turning parking lots into housing. Radina and Eyre are talking more about what we want.

Had a first public hearing on sidewalks for area near two schools in Packard/Stone School area (Bryant and Pathways to Success) to fill gaps in sidewalks. Met with some push back.

In addition to sidewalks, Tara mentioned playgrounds as another sign of a community valuing families.

Watson noted investments in Leslie Park (bicentennial mural on b-ball court and Bicentennial Park (universal access splash pad, updated playground, pavilion, restrooms coming).

More info here: <https://www.a2gov.org/departments/Parks-Recreation/parks-places/Pages/SoutheastArea.aspx>

VIII. General Updates - None

IX. Public Comment - Council Member Song noted that University of Michigan has admitted a record number of freshman this year (including her son). Housing is an issue. Question of where students should live.

X. Adjournment
Motion by Paul Sher; Seconded by James Downing
Motion passed unanimously.

Adjourned at 8:23pm.