

NOTES

THRESHOLD

Lexington's Housing Commission
Wednesday, September 22, 2021 – 4:00 p.m.
City Hall Second Floor Conference Room

Threshold:

Present: Fred Kirchner, Chair
Cristyl Vozzo, Vice-Chair
Marylin Alexander, Council Liaison
Nadine Craney
Vicki Turner

City Staff:

Arne Glaeser, Planning Director
Kate Beard, Administrative Assistant

Absent:

CALL TO ORDER:

F. Kirchner called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

AGENDA

The agenda was approved unanimously with additions suggested by A. Glaeser and C. Vozzo. (5-0)

MINUTES:

A. Glaeser explained staff could find no evidence that the Commission had approved a number of Minutes from past meetings and wished to correct that oversight for the record. In response to a question from F. Kirchner, K. Beard confirmed that the minutes from the October 20, 2020 meeting had been corrected and were included in the packet of Minutes and Notes being considered by the Commission for approval. V. Turner moved to approve the entire packet of Minutes and Notes from 10 meetings with a date range of July 18, 2019 to August 25, 2021 as presented. M. Alexander seconded and the motion passed unanimously. (5-0)

NEW BUSINESS:

None

OTHER BUSINESS:

- A. Continuing discussion of scheduling an affordable housing guest speaker – A. Glaeser introduced the notes and suggested agenda provided by Planning Commissioner John Driscoll for Threshold's review. M. Alexander stated that Mr. Driscoll wanted to be sure Threshold is familiar with the Housing Chapter of the new Comprehensive Plan. Commissioners indicated they were aware of and had reviewed the chapter prior to its adoption, but a contemporaneous review would be helpful. V. Turner asked for clarification of the session's intended goal. M. Alexander stated that one of the strategies provided in the Comp Plan is for Threshold to "organize and facilitate seminars and workshops on housing issues," and suggested this is a role Threshold could play in the

community in addition to facilitating rehab projects. She added that if Threshold does not define its purpose and actually take some sort of action it would cease have much relevance. She requested agenda items be added for the next meeting for discussion of Threshold's mission and projects delayed by the pandemic. C. Vozzo said she believes organizing and hosting educational sessions such as this is one of the most important things Threshold can do. She suggested putting together an invitation list for other jurisdictional partners and drafting a press release to make the public aware of the educational opportunity. A preliminary invitation list was discussed. There seemed to be general approval for the joint educational session and of the draft agenda provided by Mr. Driscoll and general agreement that a scheduling poll be done to determine a mutually acceptable date. There also seemed to be general agreement that invitations be extended to jurisdictional partners, that the session be advertised to the public with a press release, and that anticipated attendance would warrant using one of the schools as a venue. M. Alexander offered to forward Mr. Famuliner's CV and C. Vozzo offered to assist staff with drafting a press release and invitation list.

- B. Training update – A. Glaeser reported he recently attended a virtual training by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development on affordable and special needs housing. He suggested that DHCD could be a resource in the future should Threshold opt to pursue continued educational sessions. He also indicated there are resources available from the state to fund rehabilitation projects which staff can research if Threshold is interested. Commissioners Turner and Kirchner expressed enthusiasm for an eventual follow-up.
- C. REDI Grant update – C. Vozzo reported the Rural Economic Development Innovation Grant awarded to Rockbridge County is a fairly new USDA program designed to provide technical rather than monetary assistance. For two years, Rockbridge County has been working with USDA consultants to identify strengths and weaknesses for economic development in the area. With respect to housing, one of the main directives from the grant is “to enhance the quality of life by promoting current assets, developing new assets to include affordable workforce housing and infrastructure, and developing and improving community facilities.” She noted the trend is to reference “workforce housing” rather than “affordable housing,” and indicated the change may help to reduce negative associations and misunderstandings associated with this type of housing. A. Glaeser asked about implementation and the housing study. C. Vozzo said she hoped that once the regional housing study is finalized, the three Rockbridge County jurisdictions will recognize how useful a local County-wide housing study would be.

ADJOURN:

The meeting adjourned unanimously at 4:53 p.m.

Fred Kirchner, Chair
Threshold Housing Commission