



THRESHOLD
Lexington's Housing Commission
Wednesday, October 26, 2022 - 4:00 P.M
Second Floor Conference Room, City Hall
300 E. Washington Street, Lexington, VA

AGENDA

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Approval of Agenda**
- 3. Approval of Minutes**
 - A. Approval of September 28, 2022 minutes*
- 4. New Business**
 - A. Follow up from discussion about commercial fire inspection program
- 5. Other Business**
- 6. Adjournment**

*indicates attachment

MINUTES

THRESHOLD

Lexington's Housing Commission
Wednesday, September 28, 2022 – 4:00 p.m.
Lexington Police Department Conference Room
11 Fuller Street, Lexington, Virginia

Threshold:

Present: Fred Kirchner, Chair
Nadine Craney
Shadrey Sands
Marylin Alexander, Council Liaison

City Staff:

Arne Glaeser, Planning Director
Kate Beard, Administrative Assistant

Absent: Ash Mullis

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Kirchner called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m.

AGENDA

The agenda was approved unanimously as presented. (M. Alexander / S. Sands)

MINUTES:

The minutes from the June 22, 2022 meeting were unanimously approved as presented. (M. Alexander / N. Craney).

The notes from the July 27, 2022 meeting were unanimously approved as presented. (M. Alexander / S. Sands)

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Glaeser noted that Threshold's by-laws allow the Chair and Vice-Chair to serve no more than four consecutive one-year terms. Because he has served four consecutive terms as Chairperson, F. Kirchner could be elected as Vice-Chair, but not as Chair.

A. Elect Chairperson

1) **Nominations** –S. Sands was nominated to serve as Chair.

2) **Motion & Vote** – **F. Kirchner moved to elect S. Sands as Chairperson. M. Alexander seconded and the motion passed unanimously (4-0).**

B. Elect Vice-chairperson

1) **Nominations** – F. Kirchner was nominated to serve as Vice-Chair.

2) **Motion & Vote** – **S. Sands moved to elect F. Kirchner as Vice-Chair. N. Craney seconded and the motion passed unanimously (4-0).**

C. Discussion of August 25, 2022 CSPDC regional housing study focus group meeting –

A. Glaeser reminded the Commission that the CSPDC received federal funding to conduct a housing study for the region it serves and that our locality was prioritized to be the first area

studied. He reported that the first area focus group meetings were held on August 25th in Buena Vista and included service providers, bankers and realtors. He noted initial data would likely be available in Spring 2023 and the final study would likely be completed sometime in 2024.

M. Alexander reported a key takeaway from the service providers meetings she attended was that one of the biggest challenges for multi-family housing locally had to do with tenant mental health issues. She said other topics covered were homelessness, the promotion by realtors of market rate rentals over affordable housing options, a greater police presence due to mental health issues, a lack of services for emergency mental health situations, and the lack of reliable data from the 2020 census. A. Glaeser reported that topics discussed in the service providers meeting he attended included the poor conditions seen in some local, existing housing and transportation difficulties experienced by a large number of area residents. S. Sands reported that RARA has seen a marked increase in requests for assistance from transient and homeless populations in the area and cannot find partners to provide services to meet the demand. He noted that the Lexington/Rockbridge area is a particularly challenging place to be homeless. A. Glaeser commented that while there are limited resources in the area for short-term housing, there is no transitional housing. The conversation then segued into a discussion about options for increasing people's investment in maintaining their surroundings. M. Alexander provided some history of efforts undertaken in the City to tackle homelessness, suggested some of those efforts may need to be revived and offered that she saw the main goal for Threshold to be education to the community, developers and other interested parties about how to develop affordable housing.

D. Discussion of JMU Housing Project –

A. Glaeser reported that a graduate level Public Administration class from JMU will be doing a study about the impact of rental units on the City's housing affordability which they will present to City Council in December. The students and their professors met with various City staff earlier in the day to gather background information. M. Alexander recommended putting the class in touch with the CSPDC.

OTHER BUSINESS:

M. Alexander said she had been approached recently by someone requesting that the Rental Housing Inspection program be restarted and asked if Director Glaeser had received similar requests. He responded he had received approximately two requests during his six year tenure. Commissioners Alexander and Kirchner expressed some concern about whether safety issues, particularly fire safety, were being adequately addressed in some Lexington rental units. A. Glaeser offered to provide Threshold with information about the Fire Marshal's commercial inspection program and schedule at its next meeting.

ADJOURN:

The meeting adjourned unanimously at 5:08 p.m. (S. Sands / M. Alexander)

Fred Kirchner, Chair
Threshold Housing Commission