

HILLCREST REDEVELOPMENT HOUSING WORKGROUP

Meeting Minutes | Thursday, June 23, 2022

Attendees

- Jesse Harms, Resident
- Rich Chen, Resident
- Ubah Shire, Resident
- Jeanette Jones, Resident
- Jamila Taylor, Resident
- Becki Winslow, Resident
- Mai Yang, Resident
- Jun Yang, Resident
- Monte Hilleman, SPPA
- Andrea Novak, SPPA
- Laurie Siever, SPPA
- Tara Beard, City of Saint Paul
- Gretchen Nicholls, LISC

MEETING SUMMARY

1. The initial discussion by the group centered around people are seeing in the marketplace.
 - a. Ubah Shire stated that since the rent ordinance passed, rents went up significantly prior to May 1. Rent for a 2BR apartment went from \$1200 to \$1600 for fees never paid before.
 - b. Rick Chen stated that around the District 2 area, the average house is selling for \$250,000.
 - c. Jesse Harms said a sign was posted by his house for a 1BR at \$1,000/month and that is about what his house payment is.
 - d. Becki Winslow asked if there should be 55+ housing in the plans because she wasn't seeing any references in the handouts.
 - e. Monte Hilleman stated that in addition to deeply affordable housing, the Planning Commission recommended: Rental housing, age restricted senior housing, and single-family housing with possible secondary dwellings (mother-in-law homes)
2. Tara Beard led a housing discussion with Gretchen contributing from her perspective
 - a. Pleased to hear everyone in the room for affordable housing.
 - b. Affordable housing is super complicated.
 - c. Affordable housing costs in the tens of millions of dollars to build.
 - d. Tools used for affordable housing
 - i. Lower Income Tax Credits (LITC), which is run through the IRS. It's challenging because people who invest want to make money.
 - ii. You must cobble together funds and layer them when doing affordable housing.
 - iii. Bonds are also used for affordable housing.
 - iv. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) can be used. Cities must be careful with how much they use for TIF. There are state laws that govern the use of TIF as well (TIF caps).
 - v. NOAH funds (Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing) are available as well. Homes and/or land can be purchased allowing this process to occur.
 - vi. Land Trusts: The Trust owns land and residents own the homes.
 - vii. Cooperatives: There is shared equity. Tenants don't own their unit; they own a portion of the property. They have a voice in how things are run and what money gets spent on. They minimize the cost of the property holdings to keep the property affordable. One person can leave, and another can move in at an affordable rate. Cooperatives have been around for a long time but haven't been used in a long time.
 - viii. Gretchen hopes they can do something with these tools because the housing crisis/costs is only going to get worse.
 - ix. Condos: They were working as an option until residents were able to sue the builders. Therefore, developers became skittish about building condominiums anymore.
3. Housing discussed in the marketplace:

- a. Discussed the Missing Middle which falls between single-family homes and large apartment buildings
 - i. Lack duplexes and fourplexes is unfortunate because they were good for housing. You see these mixes in old neighborhoods, but not the suburbs.
- b. Another issue is that once things (housing options) aren't done for a while (condos, duplexes, coops), who knows if developers will be able to get financing from banks anymore.
- 4. Monte moved on and stated the Urban Design Group said the neighborhood should be built with Pride. He asked the group how do they define Pride? As the discussion proceeded the group shared the following statements:
 - a. Clean neighborhoods that include places to shop, day cares, and other businesses so you don't have to leave your neighborhood to get what you need. Everything you need is here.
 - b. Healing Gardens
 - c. Working Lounges
 - d. Homes you can afford
 - e. Outdoor space (in the front and back) Court yards
 - f. Community feeling – everyone knows each other, walk dogs, sit on the porch.
 - g. Ownership brings pride.
 - h. Beauty inside and out.
 - i. Upkeep
 - j. Energize surrounding neighborhoods
 - k. Daycare, community rooms/spaces, senior activities, and classes
 - l. Outreach, small fee, non-profit
 - m. Food shelves, food trucks
- 5. Group exercise: Broke into two groups. One brainstormed on what they would like to see with low density. The other focused on high density.
 - a. Low to mid density priorities
 - i. Garage and parking: Open to attached and detached but agreed with the urban design group that garages and driveways should not be a neighborhood focal point.
 - ii. Lot size is important; smaller lots create a stronger sense of community (1,800 to 2,000 sq. ft.)
 - iii. Multiple floors are preferred
 - iv. The group prefers local buildings over national builders
 - v. Smaller units, under \$500,000 are preferred
 - b. High density priorities
 - i. An assortment of units with 1-4 bedrooms
 - ii. Underground parking or outdoor covered parking
 - iii. Concierge service, security, delivery boxes
 - iv. Fitness center
 - v. Pets allowed
 - vi. In-unit washers and dryers
 - vii. Tiered layouts with courtyards
 - viii. Family-feel important (not like a prison)