



**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**  
**501 North Anderson Street, Ellensburg WA 98926**

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**MINUTES OF ELLENSBURG CITY AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMISSION**

**Date and Time:** Affordable Housing Commission meeting, July 15, 2020 - 4:30 p.m.

**Place of Meeting:** Remote meeting held via Zoom

**Present:** Mayor Bruce Tabb, Nathan McQuinn, Hannah Tower, Sarah Bedsaul, John Perrie, Dolores Gonzalez, Charli Sorenson

**Absent:**

**Others Present:** Planning Manager, Jamey Ayling; Community Development Director Kirsten Sackett

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Tabb called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm. He shared that Council Member Goodloe had been reassigned to the equity and diversity initiative and that he would be now chairing the Affordable Housing Commission.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Commissioner Perrie made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner McQuinn seconded. All in favor, motion passed.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Perrie moved to approve with the amendment proposed by Commissioner Gonzalez to correct the spelling of her name. Commissioner Bedsaul seconded. All in favor, motion passed.

**4. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Develop an application form for funding applications outside of the formal RFP process.

Planning Manager Ayling stated that at the previous meeting they discussed creating an application that could be used as a mechanism for the Commission to formally approve applications outside the formal RFP process.

Ayling referred to the overview document included in the packet, which highlighted options for the Commission to consider. One option is the standard RFP process, while a second option could be through sole sourcing for projects that can only be accomplished by certain groups or developers. A third option could be an "over the counter" type application. With this option, applicants propose an idea and submit it for consideration at any time. He utilized the first couple of pages from the RFP application that could be utilized as a means to formally apply.

Chair Tabb called for discussion and noted that the City does have the opportunity to go outside the RFP process right now. Commissioner Bedsaul said her understanding, based on the last commission meeting, was that we don't have any funding available to provide opportunities.

Bedsaul said she is still interested to better understand all of the requirements for the available funding. She would like a much clearer picture of what those are. She is not sure it will do any good to create these application processes – of sole source, or prevailing wages – if applicants have to jump through hoops like paying prevailing wages.

Ayling said that the prevailing wage piece is not negotiable. It is part of the RCW that created the funding opportunity. Bedsaul said she is not really sure where that came from. She said that the Commission is not getting good information from the City about how the decisions are made to require prevailing wages. Director Sackett explained that the City Attorney had hired outside counsel to write up a legal opinion as to whether prevailing wages were required. She said that another question that the Commission asked at the last meeting was whether or not the requirement to pay prevailing wages could be waived. The question was posed, and the simple answer is that it is state law and cannot be waived.

Tabb referenced the option paper provided by Ayling. Gonzalez asked if the submittal requirements could include the need to identify which housing needs would be met, as outlined in the current housing needs assessment.

Tabb thought the sole source option was a little bit confusing, based on the options that were provided. He asked how the sole source would be different than over the counter (OTC). Sackett explained that in this scenario it would be the City soliciting a proposal from just one entity. This would be used only in the event that the City identified a very unique project that could only be created by a certain type of entity, ie. non-profit versus private developer. Gonzalez thought that the purpose was to be equitable. Bedsaul thought it would need to be a very unique situation to utilize the sole source process.

Tabb said we could look to get the prevailing wage opinion out to the Commission, or the portion of it that was appropriate to be shared.

Commissioner Tower asked if we go with the OTC permit idea, would there be a list of requirements that would need to be met if they applied. Tabb said that is the question before the Commission – what would they like the staff to work on and include in developing an application process.

Tabb referred to the vetting process found on the second page, that could include items like consistency with zoning, prevailing wage, or other items that the developer needs to pay attention to.

Bedsaul doesn't think that the RFP application the Commission created is really that cumbersome. She wanted to know if we can just have this open process all the time using the same application form we previously used for the RFP.

Tower thinks that the information is already out there, and she thinks that simplifying it might just be a means of slowing things down. The applicant might not be aware of what needs to be submitted, and the Commission might not get all of the information they really need to evaluate a proposal.

Commissioner Perrie said that a developer will be looking at a simplified application trying to figure out what needs to be done. Sometimes the simpler you try to make something, the more complicated it could get.

Tabb said that the intent is to move forward with a more open process, and not so much the RFP process. That would still require the inclusion of the different types of projects that could be considered – such as rehab, new construction, etc.

The Commission decided that rather than trying to simplify the application more, they would like to simply to ask a potential applicant to use the former RFP application form already created.

Bedsaul thinks if the AHC could be more flexible, we might be able to capture more projects. Tabb suggested that if the AHC did have several projects they would like to support, it might be easier to go after bonding for those specific projects. The idea is to expedite the ability for any project to come forward and be considered.

Gonzalez said that one thing that was discussed previously was to coordinate funding with the state's grant process. She thinks that it needs to be built into the schedule to be reviewing and approving projects every few months or so, not just every meeting. Tabb suggested that they base the AHC review on a case-by-case basis, as sometimes the financing windows are tight. Bedsaul noted that if a non-profit is going after layered funding, a lot of times grants can be given just based on Letters of Intent.

Tabb said he wants to develop an open application process. The Commission just needs to develop the list of parameters. If a developer decided they wanted to proceed, they would be given the RFP application form and it could be reviewed by the Commission.

The Commission is available to review on a quarterly basis, or on a rolling basis if the proposals were time sensitive. The applications would go to the Commission for review, evaluation and recommendation, then forwarded to City Council for final approval.

Bedsaul thinks it would still be a good process for the AHC to evaluate the applications. She felt like it created good dialogue to discuss the proposals.

Tabb said that we just need to develop the one-pager introduction.

He asked the Commission if they explored the idea of helping to fund ADU's. Sorenson said that last year they had talked about a PR campaign saying they had funding available. Tower thinks that trying to be prepared for every scenario is just slowing down the process in general.

## **5. OLD BUSINESS**

None.

## **6. CITIZEN COMMENT**

## **7. STAFF UPDATE/DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **a. Monthly Budget Report**

Ayling ran through the June monthly budget report included in the packet. He noted that we are at 50% of the year, and the budget is at 51%, but it should start declining as the lag in sales tax due to COVID starts to catch up.

**b. 2019 RFP award project updates.**

Ayling said that Hope Source did secure funding from the County - \$332,816. They had asked for a \$400,000 commitment from the City of Ellensburg. Ayling said that staff is still asking for clarification on the final budget numbers. There was a question about the impact of the prevailing wage requirement for their project. He said that staff will have a draft contract by the end of the week, we just need final numbers from Hope Source to plug into the contract.

Ayling said that with the Crytyl project off Bender, Staff is currently exploring some alternative options with him.

**7. COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVE UPDATE**

Tabb shared that Kittitas County Habitat for Humanity has merged with King County Habitat. Two of our local board members will go onto the King County board. We will keep a local advisory board as well. Tabb has met with their CEO and some of their board members. He thinks this is an exciting opportunity as they bring knowledge, skills and assets. They would love to come introduce themselves to the Commission at their next meeting. The purpose would be just to inform the commission on the work that they do.

Bedsaul said she would want to hear from them about how they would work and interface in our local community.

Discussion on when to hold future meetings. It was agreed to go to the first Wednesday of the month. Next meeting was set for August 5, 2020.

For the next agenda, Commissioner Sorenson asked about discussing the eviction moratoriums and whether the City could authorize any additional rental assistance money. Tabb noted that there might be some additional funding coming through the CARES Act that could be distributed. The final numbers won't be known until the September meeting.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

Perrie moved to adjourn. Tabb adjourned the meeting at 5:52 pm.