
Guests:

Next Meeting: Thursday July 12 at 5PM at 200 Henry Johnson Blvd

To Do List for Next Meeting:

1. Lillian & Nelia will compile a survey for tenants and Robert & Dino will compile a survey for landlords.

2. Public meeting planning
   a. Sarah will develop a structure for the first public meeting.
   b. The forum will be structured around the general question of housing affordability and what can be done to meet the demand for it.
   c. Robert will confirm the Washington Ave Library Branch for our first public workshop to be held Thursday, August 18, 2016 from 5:30 to 7:30.
   d. Nelia will develop a flier.
   e. Everyone will distribute the flier among their circles ahead of the event.

3. Steve will work on his database of subsidized housing units in the City and will provide additional data regarding AHA’s waiting list numbers as compared with the waiting lists for other subsidized housing providers.

Minutes

Introductions
- The meeting opened with an introduction of Affordable Housing Task Force members.

Announcements
- Michael Boots has resigned from the committee due to unanticipated professional commitments.

Tasks Update
- Housing stabilization costs –
Donna provided a spreadsheet which broke down what Albany County DSS has spent since April 2015 on assisting individuals stabilize housing.

The data is broken up by month and type and, notably, includes the cost of restoring utilities or preventing utilities shutoffs which spike in March, when HEAP dries up.

The data establish that rent is not the only determining factor for the “affordability” of housing and that incidental housing costs play a role in housing stability.

- **Current availability of subsidized housing** –
  - Steve is continuing to compile this data.
  - He provided a rough breakdown of AHA’s waiting list.
  - There are about five-thousand households on the waiting list for Section 8 vouchers and nine-thousand on the waiting list for public housing.
    - Of these, 6000 live in the City of Albany.
  - Other subsidized housing organizations also have substantial waiting lists but it is logical to assume that many households are on multiple lists.

- **CDARPO survey questions** –
  - The group discussed this survey and the consensus was that we should come up with a short, user-friendly survey designed to capture usable data to support the Task Force’s findings.
  - The survey would be best distributed online, but should also include a paper version that could be distributed at meetings, etc.
  - Dino and Robert will formulate the questions and form of the survey, Lillian and Nelia will do the same for a tenant survey.
  - Suggested questions
    - Cost of apartments by size.
    - Percentage of apartments at each range.
    - Turnover times
    - Vacancy rates
    - Demand
    - What subsidies do you accept?
    - General question on recommendations.

- **Survey results** –
  - We folded discussion of the survey results into our discussion of the public meeting.

- **Cost/feasibility of formal housing study** –
Sarah looked into this and the price of such a survey.
Depending on the scope, would cost between $15,000 and $60,000.
Funding for this could be secured through a variety of sources.
It may be, however, that the data compiled by Clarion Associates as part of the ReZone effort may have captured a lot of what we need.
If we move forward with the formal housing study, we will next ask for examples of other surveys’ scopes.

**Public Forum Planning**
- We determined that we will hold a general forum featuring breakout groups of eight or so individuals grouped according to their status as either landlords or tenants so as to encourage participation and ensure a productive conversation.
  - We will use the information we obtain at the forum to formulate more precise forum topics.
- The first forum will be held August 18 from 5:30PM to 7:30PM.
- We will host it at the Washington Avenue Library.
- We should anticipate about 30 attendees for the first meeting.
- The task force will strive to hold public meetings in different parts of the City so as to make them as accessible as possible to as many individuals as possible.

**Misc**
- We discussed Donna Maylath’s observation that utility costs were a major contributing factor to housing instability in the region.
  - There are “carriers” who solicit individuals leaving DSS to switch utility service providers in return for a $25 gift card. The carriers then impose exorbitant fees for their services which exacerbate the problem.
- DSS has about 330 emergency shelter placements in the city.
- DSS assists about 2300 families, 200 of which receive restricted shelter payments.
- We determined that we will re-visit the creation of research committees after the public meeting and based on information we gather going forward.