

Eau Claire Neighborhood Revitalization Summit

Meeting Notes

January 14, 2016, 7:00 PM
RCU Corporate Center, Community Room
200 Riverfront Terrace, Eau Claire

1. Darryl Tufte, Director of Community Development did a brief welcome and introduction.
2. Presentations were given about *What Are We Trying to Address (background, current local challenges and programs)*:
 1. Pat Ivory, Senior Planner, City of Eau Claire
 2. Keith Johnathan, Housing Authority of the City of Eau Claire
 3. Shane Sanderson, Director of Environmental Health, Eau Claire City-County Health Department
3. Panel discussion from the Neighborhood Task Force members and guests:
 1. What is a neighborhood watch program and how would it be an advantage to a neighborhood? The Police Department states it is best to get to know your neighbors, watch the neighbor's property and then inform the police with problems right away.
 2. Are there block parties/clubs in our area? Block parties are approved through the Police Department. Some events/street closures can be administratively approved and others must be approved by City Council.
 3. How are complaints dealt with by the Inspections Department and Health Department, such as residents leaving empty garbage bins on the curbside? Inspectors do not have the resources to go door to door. The inspectors prioritize whether there is a health and safety concern versus an eye sore.
 - a. The City website has information on garbage/recycling requirements and code enforcement information.
 - b. One member suggested that the garbage company track issues during their pick-up route. It should be a license issue if the company cannot manage homes for leaving cans out.
 - c. Public Works and the Inspections Department can address concerns with unkempt backyards.
 4. One member asked about the benefits of downzoning neighborhoods and whether the City has seen improvements to the neighborhoods as a result of the downzone. There are significantly less conversions of homes than in the past and it improved the density.
 5. A member questioned the Housing Division home ownership program. The Housing Division works with a realtor to search for homes; 2-3 are done per year.
 - a. Spoke further about the CBDG homeownership program relating to the needs and trends.
 - b. The number of people on the waiting list averages 330-350 families, which includes those that are senior/handicapped.
 - c. Could we qualify for more affordable housing since there is such a great need, based on population of the city and the need? At this time, no additional funds are available.

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6. Another comment was made that landlords make a lot of money on dilapidated rentals. Can we enforce or make requirements for the condition of the home before they are rented out?
 - a. A member noted she likes the idea of rental inspections; however she notes not only to penalize the landlord for a non-maintained house, but to penalize the tenants for not keeping the apartment in good condition.
 - b. A member supports rental adoption to help the department.
 - c. Another member would like to see homes stabilized. Is there a code or stipulation that could require a home to be listed as a non-rental? Darryl will ask the City Attorney.
 - d. Good renters make good neighbors.
7. A member questioned why Eau Claire had the highest rental ratio. This data compares to other cities of similar-size with a university.
 - a. It may be likely that lower wages drive more rentals.
8. The City does not plow alleys. Public Works and City Council did an analysis of changing the policy. The City costs would include several new pieces of equipment and personnel costs in order to plow alleys. The City Council decided not to move forward on this item in 2016 but could in the future if they decided to appropriate the necessary funds.
9. What is holding these neighborhoods from having greater home ownership, replacement, remodels? Lending loans have changed, so there are no incentives for first time home buyers since they cannot get assistance to make home improvements. People don't want to purchase an old home that needs significant repair (and unknowns). It comes down to money.
4. Bill Weber requested Task Force members and guests to write down issues on cards. They were turned in at the end of the meeting.
5. Darryl gave closing remarks. The meeting ended at 9 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 11 at 7 p.m.