

AD HOC HOUSING COMMITTEE

September 17, 2020

5:00pm-7:00pm

Zoom Meeting

Members:

Mayor Pro Tem Stephens, Councilmember Cunniff, Councilmember Gorgol

Attendees:

Staff Members: Lindsay Ex, Carrie Daggett, Caryn Champine, Meaghan Overton, Sylvia Tatman-Burruss, Clay Frickey, Jackie Kozak-Thiel, Ingrid Decker, Sue Beck-Ferkiss, Shawna Van Zee, Yaz Haldeman

Presenters: Julie Brewen, Kendra Diede, Landon Hoover, John Williams

Community Members: Adam Egelston, Kevin Jones, Patrick [no last name listed]

Call to Order: 5:02

Approval of August Minutes and Agenda Review:

- Mayor Pro Tem Stephens moved to approve, Councilmember Cunniff seconded. Roll call for vote: Unanimous 3-0-0.

Discussion Item: Housing Strategic Plan Existing Conditions Document

- Presentation & Panel
 - Overall vision of the housing plan: “Everyone has healthy, stable housing they can afford.”
 - Prompt #1: Introductions
 - Panelists introduced themselves and shared their relevant housing experience
 - Prompt #2: If there were one or two housing challenges you’d like to see the community tackle, what would those be?
 - Density
 - Tying policy to resources
 - Cost structure, whether looking at equity or housing affordability, of all housing types and price ranges
 - Compounding issues
 - Difficult to attract and retain employees due to cost of living and housing (talent retention)
 - New construction is setting the market – request to better understand how cost of new construction/new homes drives up existing housing stock prices
 - Opportunity in policy to focus some resources on existing housing stock
 - Want to ensure costs aren’t driven down by reducing energy efficiency of homes
 - Want to better understand root cause of dearth of townhome construction, as that has traditionally been a good entry point for first time homebuyers

- Overall construction costs on townhomes are typically more than single family homes
 - Condo density can, however, help overcome those costs
 - An increase in density can be subtle and would create significantly more units
 - Relationship between decreasing costs and how that is transferred to the buyer
 - Prompt #3: What housing-related solutions have you seen in other communities you think we should test or consider in Fort Collins?
 - Denver flipped vacant apartments into affordable units
 - The solution has to consider not just the housing, but what that housing is near that is attractive for buyers (what makes Fort Collins great and how can people have easy access to those things when buying here)
 - Advanced Energy (AE) has offered move bonuses to incentivize people staying in town, but people generally still can't afford it
 - AE offers relocation bonus – may draw people here but doesn't retain them
 - For context, people are making a living wage and still unable to afford cost of living
 - Relationship between housing prices and wages/incomes – what else can employers do?
 - AE - cannot increase incomes to the point of being able to afford median home price and be competitive in manufacturing field in this country
 - AE – will do additional research to see what other major employers in town are doing in this space
 - Tiered water fees different for multiplexes depending on size
 - Relief for specific development standards, e.g., trees, parking, height, density, etc.
 - Worth looking at broader set of peer communities where affordable and attainable housing is being achieved: a few examples may be Ames, IA; Lincoln, NE; Waco, TX; Fayetteville, AR.
 - Metro districts
 - Water policy
- Draft Existing Conditions Document (Staff Presentation)
 - Created to assess the status of the housing market and set foundation for the Housing Strategic Plan: equity and inclusion, data, biggest challenges and remaining questions.
 - Drew from the Affordable Housing Strategic Plan (2015-2019), Housing Affordability Policy Study (2014), Trends and Forces Report, Gaps Analysis, Consolidated Plan.
 - Historic obstacles include redlining, restrictive covenants, and land use decisions, and there are still health and equity disparities in Fort Collins.
 - Challenges: Price escalation disproportionately impacts BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) households; current incentives and financial resources are insufficient for meeting affordable housing goals; job growth continues to outpace housing growth; cost of development continues to rise; addressing the entire housing spectrum will require new tools and processes.

- Remaining Questions: What will the long-term impacts of COVID-19 be? How will housing policies evolve to address health and stability, particularly for renters?
- Discussion
 - Would like to see price escalation chart as percentage of increase for income vs. housing costs.
 - Median income is far from the income that can afford housing.
 - No goals set for 80%-120% area median income (AMI) levels yet, but there is conversation around whether these will be added to the new plan.
 - Appreciate these challenges and also don't want to miss conversations about wages, workforce training, financial literacy and education, resident rights, renter registration – things that feed into housing.
 - These challenges will be informed by community input.
 - Engagement with community this fall will ask residents to share stories about their housing experiences in Fort Collins.
 - Connect with Poudre School District on graduation rates, and how increasing these rates (particularly for students of color) can lead to lower poverty rates and higher incomes in the future.
 - When was the federal housing burden number of 30% last updated and is it still a good indicator? Is it something we still want to use?

Next Steps:

- Process Check-in
 - The pre-work was helpful in getting prepared and in the right headspace.
 - The videos were well-received.
 - Would like more time to dig in, when possible, as Councilmembers.
 - May need time grounding in basics.
 - Want structured dialogue between Councilmembers to create roadmap and policy recommendations.
- Summary of Priority Topics
- Potential Next Meeting Focus/Considerations
 - Nexus of broader topics and housing affordability.
 - Density and development.
 - If anything needs to go to voters, time is short before April election.
 - Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and how big of a difference these have made in communities.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:00