



CITY HALL • 100 STATE STREET • BELOIT, WI 53511

**MINUTES
BELOIT EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES
COMMISSION**

Wednesday, August 19, 2015 at 5:45 PM

1. Call to Order and Roll

Vice Chairperson Zoril called the meeting to order at 5:50 PM. Commissioners Hansen, Howland, Weaver, Perreault were present. Councilor Sloniker arrived at 6:02 PM. Staff noted the new Commissioner had been sworn in, but decided to decline so there is still an open seat on the Commission.

2. Approval of Minutes of the June 17, 2015 Meeting

Commissioner Howland moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Weaver seconded the motion.

Discussion: Commissioner Perreault mentioned her last name had been spelled incorrectly.

Commissioner Howland made a motion to approve the minutes with corrections. Commissioner Hansen seconded the motion. **Motion carried.**

3. Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.

4. Nomination and election of Officers

a) Nomination and Election of Chairperson

Commissioner Hansen nominated Commissioner Zoril for Chairperson. Commissioner Perreault seconded the motion. **Motion carried.**

b) Nomination and Election of Vice-Chairperson

Commissioner Howland nominated Commissioner Hansen for Vice-Chairperson. Commissioner Perreault seconded the motion. **Motion carried.**

5. Update on Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing and Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) HUD Final Rule



CITY HALL • 100 STATE STREET • BELOIT, WI 53511

Staff read the staff report explaining the HUD AFFH Final Rule of July 17, 2015 indicates that the document formerly known as the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing (AI) is to be replaced by an Assessment to Fair Housing (AFH) and HUD is providing a new web-based assessment tool that must be used to complete the AFH. The comment period on the Final Rule ends August 20, 2015. For the City of Beloit, the new AFH appears to be due on January 1, 2017. The City will be required to do the AFH as well as the Beloit Housing Authority.

Discussion continued on whether to hire a consultant to do both pieces. A Request for Proposal (RFP) will be needed.

Commissioner Howland advised a Google search would show a seven (7) page document summarizing AFFH which may be easier to read than the whole ruling.

6. Discussion of 2016 Annual Strategy to Address Impediments to Fair Housing

Staff read the staff report and explained that if the Commission chooses to adopt an annual strategy it should be finalized at the December 2015 meeting. She explained it is not a requirement, but helps with actions steps and documentation that the City is taking steps to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing.

Commissioner Hansen asked if the consultant contracted to draft the AFH would refer back to old AI report for recommendations. Ms. Downing responded that it will depend on what new document is requires. The previous may be very different and offer no guidance. There may be new specifics and web tools utilized as well.

Commissioner Hansen stated it may be difficult to develop an annual strategy due to Beloit not having any recent major complaints.

The Commission discussed recent newspaper reporting of events in Rockford in which HUD warned the City of possible Fair Housing violations. The City denied a public housing and/or mixed income housing project due to public outrage on the issue. HUD warned that the due to Rockford's receipt of federal funding, they have a duty to affirmatively further fair housing. Commissioner Weaver said the Dallas / Fort Worth area had a similar issue. Commissioner Hansen said it can be a tough situation with the council listening to citizens and wanting to do what the people want.

Commissioner Howland stated that part of developing the annual strategy is looking closely at what we have here and what problems we have in our community such as extreme turnover, policing, and other services. These are all part of the challenge to better understanding the issues, and that by digging a little deeper and looking at potential policy issues this will enhance for the strategy.



CITY HALL • 100 STATE STREET • BELOIT, WI 53511

The Commission discussed the process for choosing a consultant for the AHP and hiring of an intern to conduct Fair Housing education and outreach activities. A contractor would be chosen through a public Request for Proposal (RFP) process, then City Council will need to approve any contract over \$25,000. An intern can be hired administratively within budgetary constraints.

Commissioner Hansen asked if the work for the AHP would be duplicated because of requirement that both the City and the Beloit Housing Authority need to have an AHP. Staff suggested having both requirements outlined in the RFP. Staff explained that the EOC set aside CDBG Fair Housing funds from 2011, 2012, 2013 totaling \$25,000 for a consultant.

Commissioner Howland said there appear to be a lot of hoops to be gone through and asked if the work would finish on time. Ms. Downing advised she would be checking with the City Attorney about the 2016 deadline and time for public review, public hearings, and potential requirements before drafting an RFP.

Commissioner Hansen asked if it would be submitted to commission. Staff indicated that the Commission can be as involved as they would prefer and that the EOC can request that the consultant come to meetings to update the Commission for regular updates and public input sessions. Commissioner Howland recommends looking into a consultant and bringing a draft of the RFP to the Commission.

Chairperson Zoril suggested working on the Annual Strategy for 2016, and leave the 2014 Strategy as is for 2015.

Chairperson Zoril requested removing "F" because it has already been accomplished. This item referred to finalizing EOC Rules of Procedure. Commissioner Howland agreed.

Commissioner Perreault asked if the Commission had done "G" recently, which refers to referring residents to established literacy programs throughout the City. Chairperson Zoril suggested the EOC and City do this on a recurring basis. Councilor Sloniker agreed.

Councilor Sloniker whether an intern would be hired again for outreach and education as suggested in letter "A". Staff indicated that last year the EOC had considered submitting an RFP to accomplish letter "A".

Chairperson Zoril asked if we get an intern or go outside. Commissioner Hansen advised ongoing educational is not what the consultant would do. Commissioner Howland stated we do poor job with outreach, asked whether there was any funding available and whether an intern be beneficial. Staff responded that interns have been



CITY HALL • 100 STATE STREET • BELOIT, WI 53511

very beneficial and helpful. Chairperson Zoril asked if we get an intern and then need an investigation would be have to fire the intern to get the money for an investigation.

Staff explained that we only had one case in 2015 and the total bill less than \$1000.00. There was no cause found, but there is a 30 day appeal so the case cannot be discussed at this time. She explained that there is usually a summary of cases presented during the December meeting.

Chairperson Zoril said there is a process to follow and the EOC is not involved until the last stages of the process because it is so effective; there is not much for the EOC to do. He said he feels there is value in hearing about the cases.

Chairperson Zoril stated the meeting for December 2014 was cancelled due to being close to the holidays. Staff explained that there were no Fair Housing complaints last year. Two cases were referred to the State because one was domestic violence related, which is not a protected class under Beloit's ordinance. The other one was against one of our city organizations and since we are unable to investigate that it was also referred to the state.

Commissioner Howland stated that outreach could be done with an intern. He said he thinks the bank outreach seems to be separate educational piece as there is a lack of awareness of options for a lot of people. The more that people know the more power they have to influence their lives in a positive way. Having an intern to do outreach would be beneficial.

Staff asked the Commission whether they are recommending the hiring of an intern for outreach and education for 2016. Commissioner Hansen asked if it was typical to have an intern for three (3) months in the summer. Staff replied that January is a good time to reach out to the colleges. Summer is good, and obtaining an intern tends to be less successful in the fall.

Chairperson Zoril suggested an intern help compile a three (3) or four (4) page document / instruction booklet about Section 8 and use that to apply for mortgage to encourage home ownership. Staff explained that the Beloit Housing Authority (BHA) has someone working with the FSS Program. Chairperson Zoril stated he would like the information brought back to the Commission from BHA. Blackhawk presented to a small community attendance. I want to see more done for people who don't have time to attend. We could then hand them a packet of information.

Commissioner Weaver suggested if there was more time to plan the attendance would be higher.

Commissioner Hansen asked if the Section 8 tenants now know about the program and staff replied that she will ask the BHA Director Cathy if there are handouts or other



CITY HALL • 100 STATE STREET • BELOIT, WI 53511

information about the program. Chairperson Zoril said that information about Section 8 for mortgage funds is so hard to find they don't know about it.

Councilor Sloniker said there is general lack of information about all City Programs not just Section 8. Commissioner Perreault asked if there was a database or list of who does what and where to go to get obtain various services. Staff replied that said there used to be a website run by United Way, but that no longer exists. Commissioner Howland commented that it would be better to have an intern or consultant walk the people through their options. Staff explained that a similar service is being run by the Salvation Army.

Commissioner Hansen asked Ms. Downing what her experience was with some of the home ownership with Section 8. Staff explained that there was a lot of interest in the program; with 18 total homeownership vouchers, 25 families enrolled, and 7 families that purchased homes under the program. She explained that some of these families were also on the FSS Program, and explained that it take quite a long time to clean up credit. She said some families were working for a year or two to clear up credit. She said that the program was pretty successful, that a down payment from their own pocket equaling 3% of the purchase price was required. She said they also had to be working 30 hours a week unless they were elderly or disabled. She said the biggest obstacle was credit and financial literacy.

Chairperson Zoril asked whether there would be any further changes other than keeping "A" and removing "F". Some discussion followed but not further changes were made.

Commissioner Howland made a motion to approve Annual Strategy for 2016 to Address Impediments to Fair Housing and Commissioner Perreault second.

Motion carried.

7. Commissioner Comments and Upcoming Events

Commissioner Weaver suggested watching a series "Show Me a Hero" airing on HBO. It is a miniseries based on a book of the same name showing details on the middle class in Yonkers.

Chairperson Zoril inquired as to whether the series could be purchased and distributed to the Commission.

8. Next Meeting Date: October 21, 2015

Chairperson Zoril announced the next meeting date.



CITY HALL • 100 STATE STREET • BELOIT, WI 53511

9. Adjournment

Commissioner Perreault made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Howland seconded. **The motion carried** and the meeting adjourned 6:55pm.

Respectfully submitted by Joan Chesmore

Date approved by EOC

Teri Downing,
Director of Community and Housing Services