

Minutes

Gresham Task Force on Housing

Wednesday, October 24, 2018 - 6:00 PM
Gresham City Hall – Conference Rooms 2A & 2B
1333 NW Eastman Parkway – Gresham, OR 97030

Members Present:

Richard Anderson
Jackie Bradford
Teresa Carr
Michael Davis
Jeff Edinger (by phone)
Scott Kilgo
Greg Knakal
Catherine Nicewood
Deborah Olson
Pamela Phan
Laura Bain Pramuk
Francisco Rodriguez
Travis Stovall
Cary Watters

Brian Monberg, Staff Liaison
Teresa Hall, Staff Liaison
Rosalie Diaz, Recording Secretary
Eric Chambers, Director of Gov't. Relations.
Erik Jensen, Facilitator; Jensen Strategies

Council Liaisons Present:

Kirk French
Janine Gladfelter
Mario Palmero

Visitors:

David Berniker
Jerry Hinton
Roger Meyer
Carol Rulla

Members Absent:

Staff Members Present:

Pamela Phan
Greg Knakal

1. Call to Order-Introductions-Agenda (Attachment A)

Brian Monberg convened the meeting of the Task Force on Housing at 6:04 PM.

2. Ground Rules, Protocols and Minutes from Sep. 26 (Attachment B)

Erik Jensen reminded members of the ground rules and protocols for Task Force meetings. There was consensus on the ground rules for conducting the meetings. Minutes for the Sep. 26 meeting with edits to be adopted at the meeting on Nov. 28.

3. State of Housing-Presentation

Summary Discussions

- Population and Demographics: Brian Monberg provided an overview of population and demographics in the City. The following was clarified for the Task force: Race and Ethnicity data on the U.S. Census is self-reported. The Census Bureau defines race as a person's self-identification with one or more social groups. An individual can report as White, Black or African American, Asian, American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, or some other race. Survey respondents may report multiple races. Ethnicity determines whether a person is of Hispanic origin or not. For this reason, ethnicity is broken out in two categories, Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino. Other ethnicities, such as

Slavic, are not reported in Census. There was clarification on the table presented - the term "2" refers to people identifying themselves as being two or more races. Income data refers to combined gross incomes within a household. The median income gives an overall view of where household incomes in the City of Gresham stand. Gresham has gained households within a number of income ranges; Portland's household gains have primarily been in higher income households. It was suggested that some households have been 'priced out' of Portland, causing some of the migration of households from Portland to Gresham. It was noted in one member's experience that senior populations seem more prominent than younger populations in Gresham, despite census data. Members considered including change over time for age categories; some young populations may move out of Gresham in earlier years, and then move back to the City as seniors. Housing needs based on age was discussed. The Task Force advised that properties offering shorter fixed leases create a space for faster rent increase, especially if a tenant is renting month to month. A recent trend of shared multigenerational housing to help alleviate financial struggles impacts quality livability and parking availability was shared as an observation. A similarity was noted amongst young and senior populations in which both generally have low incomes. Age trends and education in relationship to the median income in Gresham compared to other regions, and inclusion of the houseless population was requested.

- Existing Housing Production: Brian Monberg presented an overview of the current housing stock in the City, and new housing development. A question was made of Portland's Inclusionary Zoning policy resulting in higher costs to build multi-family housing and how it correlates to Gresham's housing development strategy. Staff suggested that more information would be needed to determine if the policy has impacted the development environment in Gresham. It was proposed that enforcement of livability standards in Gresham have resulted from the Rental Inspection Program and via City permits that allow mandatory inspections. It was asked if properties that tend to be more problematic, have certain characteristics derived from the Rental Inspection Program. Emphasis in return on investment and the effect of waiting on investing, was posed as an incentive for developers to encourage more construction. It was also commented that this has been overlooked by many new owners that opt to sell their properties instead of leasing to avoid taxation. It was indicated that the capacity in the Urban Land Growth Boundary needs to be distinct enough when strategizing development in the City. The City's 90-day turnaround for permits policy was mentioned as another benefit for developers. Staff informed the Task Force of the City's intention to develop several hundred units broadly among Civic Drive.
- Housing Affordability: Brian Monberg presented an overview of affordability in the City. Affordability is a relationship between income and the price of housing. It was mentioned that insufficient market-based housing as well as affordable housing may be hindering affordability. A task force member has witnessed Gresham residents spending 45%-80% of their income on rent. It was noted that very low incomes and very high incomes, above \$100k can skew the median income calculated for Gresham. Nationally, income growth have not kept pace with increases in rent. It was requested to explore this data at a more detailed level within the city, as well as unit availability across income levels.

4. Roles and Policies

A conversation around entity roles and policies was initiated as a preface for the next meeting, where the Task Force will converse on the topic more in depth. Attention to parking limitations and the possibility of widening streets to prevent accidents was discussed.

5. Task Force Discussion

It was commented that the data provided showed similarities, but notable differences with Portland and

the overall housing market. There was discussion regarding how employment availability and wages have impacted the median income in Gresham. It was questioned if Gresham residents work in Portland and other cities, and if so, are there further opportunities for the City to expand its employment base. A task member noted that Gresham's affordability relative to other cities could appeal to new families and others to move here. It was suggested that affordable rents can benefit Gresham businesses by attracting talented people with the incentive of livable wages. It was noted that younger people tend to work towards owning larger family-sized housing and that it has become popular for the young population to buy and restore older homes. Alternately, seniors are less inclined to seek housing that is larger than they can afford or maintain. There was comment that there are fewer ownership opportunities in some neighborhoods. There was discussion about adding new types of housing across all income levels, including 'missing middle' housing. Interest in alternative housing types, and condominiums to provide variety of housing options. There was discussion regarding challenges for rental affordability; it was commented that these have caused households to choose between paying their rent and paying for utilities, food, medical needs and/or transportation. A task force member noted that at least ten new families are registering at a local food pantry per week for food and essential household items. Other comments regarding affordability included the challenges of 'hidden costs' added to a monthly rent, seniors that are moving in with family members due to cost of senior housing, rent increases are happening more often than once a year, and shorter leases. There was discussion about how housing for seniors has unique challenges, including a high fluctuation in costs and daily rate changes. Weatherization statistics were requested as this too could be a factor in cost and rent affordability. An observation was made about the Rental Housing Inspection, and how it facilitated a conversation between the tenant and their landlord/property manager. There is interest to improve the relationship with 'absentee managers' who do not manage properties to standard. It was noted that Gresham has a relatively high share of 2-bedroom and larger units that appeal to families. There is interest to understand how and why people choose to develop in certain areas, including land availability.

6. Open Comment

It was requested for 1 and 2-bedroom rates in Gresham-wide compared regionally. It was also commented to note City programs additional to the Rental Inspection Program such as the NET Team, the Chronic Nuisance program, and the Zombie Hotel and Motels program.

Meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Next meeting scheduled on Nov. 28, 2018 at 6pm in the City Hall Conference Center/Trail Rooms