



HOUSING SOLUTIONS NETWORK

Tuesday, January 8, 2013

9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

**Conference Room, Northwest Michigan Council of Governments office
600 E Front, Suite 201, Traverse City**

Anyone interested in affordable housing for Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, and Wexford Counties is welcome to attend.

AGENDA

A. Welcome and Introductions

Tina Allen	Greater Grand Traverse Continuum of Care
Bob Carstens	Acme Township
Virginia Coulter	Grand Traverse County
David Denison	Senator Levin office
Brandon Fewins	Senator Stabenow office
Julie Gardner	MSHDA
Pat Hess	Northern Lakes Community Mental Health
Jennifer Crowley	Traverse Area Association of Realtors®
Penny Hill	Village of Kalkaska
Janie McNabb	NWMCOG
Bill Merry	Homestretch
Connor Miller	NorthSky Nonprofit Network
Carol Moorman	Goodwill
Dee Wilkinson	Area Agency on Aging
Cathy Odom	Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency
Dan Paulson	Habitat for Humanity Grand Traverse
Kim Pontius	Traverse Area Association of Realtors®
Michelle Reardon	TBA Credit Union
Joann Turnbull	Traverse City Housing Commission
Jeff Vitton	Grand Traverse County

B. Consideration of Agenda and November 2012 Meeting Minutes

V. Coulter suggested adding an agenda item at the end to discuss a CEDAM reception for the new MSHDA Director, Scott Woolsey. Minutes – County updates on low-income RD funding clarify – lowest-income level funding has been used up.

C. County Updates

C. Odom updated that NMCAA and others had a meeting with Senator Booher and Representatives Potvin and Rendon in Lake City to discuss MSHDA's targeting policy. Starting next year we're going to have to target 100% of our funding, which we find discriminatory. It's all HUD funding; everyone pays taxes for HUD funding but we'll be turning people away who need things like new wells and septic systems. About 25 people came to the meeting. They will call for a hearing with MSHDA. J. Gardner commented that HUD wants more targeting to get more bang for their buck; MEDC is also pushing for it.

D. Depot Project – Update and Energy Efficiency Opportunities

B. Merry updated that Homestretch and Habitat purchased the Depot property and are now looking at infrastructure design and taking another look at residential designs. Over the next few months we'll be nailing down financing for construction. Infrastructure development will probably begin in April, and a few months after that we'll begin construction.

Dan Paulson, Habitat for Humanity Board member, explained net zero vs. house built to code. Getting to net zero is very challenging, as you're not only building an energy efficient house but one that produces energy. With a net zero house, in the winter you spend some money for energy and in the summer you get paid for energy. It has been done all over the world by using techniques such as paying rigorous attention to insulation, air infiltration, etc.; and producing energy by putting solar energy panels on the home. He noted that one of the cheapest ways to build a house is through heat exchange, which brings in cold air, captures molecular movement, and blows it into the house. He explained some additional energy conservation features that will decrease our energy use for heating and discretionary energy use, such as light switches with motion sensors, conduction stovetops, and LED lights.

Paulson continued that one of the reasons we're doing this is to change the way homes are built in the US. He explained that the Habitat mortgage payment would cover house and energy for 30 years, but financing is the most difficult part of energy efficiency, because appraisers and lenders don't have the tools to work with these features. When we build the house we have to include the value of all donated products in the value, so that when we sell the house we get our equity back. Habitat owners will have to own the house for a certain time period. We are trying to develop a model that honors all aspects of the situation though things like shared ownership. V. Coulter asked if homeowners are mandated to sell back to Habitat? D. Paulson answered not necessarily; Habitat has the right of first refusal on all homes.

E. Village of Kalkaska

Penny Hill, Kalkaska Village manager, discussed Kalkaska issues and planning initiatives. She noted that the Village lost a third of their manufacturing base during the recession, with a lot of subsidiary businesses following. At the time the Village was looking at updating the master plan, and applied for a Community Growth grant through NWMCOG to redo the master plan in a way that would reflect all of the changes over the recent few years. The Master Plan was updated to incorporate lots of flexibility, focus on walkability, placemaking, and other elements. The Village is now working to move forward with a lot of the concepts in the Master Plan. For instance, a lot of buildings downtown are losing businesses and they're being replaced with a lot of thrift stores, so we're trying to figure out how to get our downtown back. The Village Council established a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority, applied for additional Community Growth grants, and put together a redevelopment strategy. The Village also has a new logo that will be incorporated into a wayfinding project. The Downtown Development Authority (DDA_ DDA has supported efforts as much as possible. The Village is also working on the redevelopment of the 300 block of side of downtown, which includes a lot of Village-owned property, including a parking lot and the former Village garage. On the east side of 131 on that block is the former Chamber of Commerce building, which was recently acquired by the Village from the Traverse City Chamber of Commerce basically as a donation; and on Friday the Village is acquiring the former Erb Lumber building that has been vacant for some time. A proposed redevelopment design would include a mixed use development with uses such as a theater, brew pub, and housing in a design that matches the west side of 131. She noted that there is a rail line that bisects the east side of the block, and private developers have been concerned about the railroad. It doesn't get much rail traffic – 2-3 trains a week – but would be a hindrance for private investment. She also noted that nonprofit housing developers want to see a housing needs/market study before moving forward.

In other activities, the Village of Kalkaska is looking for ways to improve the quality of housing in the Village, and is currently looking at International Property Maintenance Code, but there has been a lot of pushback from landlords. She added that there's a citizens group that is trying to develop a sense of community. One of the biggest stumbling blocks we've found is the negative self-perception of the community, which is in contrast to outside perspectives that are very positive about what the community can do. So the Citizens for Kalkaska group is working on community events like street fairs, farmers markets, outdoor movies, etc. It will be a long term effort but things are falling into place.

D. Denison asked what the timeframe is for redevelopment; Penny answered they hope to have a developer in place next year. K. Pontius stated that we should look at rail as a real asset, given the direction that we're moving.

F. Framework for Our Future: Tools & Strategies for Supporting the Grand Vision (Grand Vision to Grand Action) – HUD Sustainable Communities Grant

Janie McNabb reviewed talking points and communication issues around the Framework for Our Future project, formerly the Grand Vision to Grand Action project (see attached presentation).

G. Rental Video

S. Lucas played the rental video developed by NWMCOG staff and Jeff Vitton. Members discussed elements that could be added to help regionalize the message a little more, such as tax credit projects in Kalkaska, Benzie. P. Hess suggested adding more language regarding accessibility.

D. Dennison asked who the audience is intended to be. S. Lucas answered that the idea was for the video to be general enough for anyone, including the general public, but we'd also like to make this available to policy makers and local units of government.

K. Pontius noted that realtors in the region have set new records for number of houses sold. Existing housing stock median prices are just below the height of the bubble and inventory is not out there.

H. Organizational Items

a. Meeting Schedule

The 2013 meeting schedule was accepted with a change to cancel the March meeting, in light of the MSDA reception scheduled for that month.

b. Appointment of Chair

V. Coulter was reappointed as the Housing Solutions Network Chair.

I. CEDAM Reception

V. Coulter noted that Scott Woolsey is the new MSHDA Director. CEDAM is putting together receptions in communities throughout the state to introduce him to stakeholders. Dates are available in February or March, V. Coulter suggested putting a committee together to discuss and plan for the reception. We could have a shortened meeting with presentations, driving tour, and lunch. March meeting of HSN will be our reception date. Jennifer Crowley from TAAR, Bill Merry, Emilee Syrewicze, Sarah Lucas, and Kris Brady will work to plan an event for March 18.

J. Roundtable Discussion and Announcements

This is a chance to share experiences and best practices with other affordable housing stakeholders. Feel free to bring brochures, flyers, and other materials for distribution.

The purpose of the Housing Solutions Network is to provide a forum for interagency and intergovernmental communication and coordination related to housing issues in Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, and Wexford Counties. This meeting is open to all who wish to attend. If you are not planning to attend this meeting, but would like to have input in the discussion, or provide handouts to the group, please contact Sarah Lucas, Northwest Michigan Council of Governments at (231) 929-5034 or sarahlucas@nwm.cog.mi.us.