

**Agenda**  
**Housing Committee**  
Monday, July 16, 2018 3:00 PM  
Legislature Chambers

1. **Call to Order (3:00)**
2. **Public Comment (3:00)**
3. **Changes to Agenda (3:05)**
4. **Chair's Report (3:05)**
5. **Reports/Discussions/Presentations**
  - a. **City Housing Initiatives - Nels Bohn (3:15)**
  - b. **Condominium Development Update - Jim Salk (3:45)**
  - c. **Report/Discussion: The Path Forward for Housing Funding Discussion (ID #7964) - David West (4:05)**
  - d. **Deputy Commissioner's Report - Megan McDonald (4:20)**
    - Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Update
    - Updates on Various Housing Efforts (Tompkins County Housing Market, Funding Resource & Solutions Analysis; Housing Tompkins)
6. **Minutes Approval (4:50)**
  - a. June 18, 2018
7. **Committee Members' Reports (4:55)**
8. **Adjournment (5:00)**



**Housing Committee**

121 E. Court Street  
Ithaca, NY 14850

Meeting: 07/16/18 03:00 PM  
Department: Planning and Sustainability Department  
Category: Housing

**REPORT OR DISCUSSION ITEM NO.  
(ID # 7964)**

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**The Path Forward for Housing Funding Discussion**

# The Path Forward for Housing Funding Discussion

At the Monday, June 18<sup>th</sup> Housing Committee meeting the committee found consensus to move forward on four initiatives:

1. County Attorney and Planning Staff will develop materials to solicit an opinion from the NYS Attorney General on use of local monies to expand or enhance the Community Housing Development Fund
  - a. Draft an outline of a program that adds County dollars to the CHDF that would be suitable for review by the Attorney General. Planning Staff.
  - b. Draft a letter requesting an opinion from the AG. County Attorney
2. Planning Staff will develop a proposal for a Municipal Affordable Housing Support Matching Fund that would provide funding to municipalities as requested:
  - a. For hiring consultants to write and administer grants that would support affordable housing development in Development Focus Areas
  - b. For hiring consultants to improve zoning to support affordable housing development in Development Focus Areas
  - c. For infrastructure studies that serve affordable housing development in Development Focus Areas
  - d. For infrastructure improvements that serve affordable housing development in Development Focus Areas
3. Planning Staff will conduct an in-fill analysis of sites in the Development Focus Areas, as described in its 2018 work program.
4. Planning Staff will participate in the Policy Lab Study (“Jennifer and George’s Study”) to provide data and help inform the client committee.
5. County Administrator will continue direct outreach to developers who have expertise in SROs and supportive housing for people who will not be served by market rate or typical subsidized affordable housing options. Planning Staff may reach out to other regional developers and market Tompkins County as well as the CHDF.

**Housing Committee**  
 Regular Meeting Minutes (same as Notes) – Draft 7-2-18  
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 Legislature Chambers

**Attendance**

<b>Attendee Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Status</b>
Martha Robertson	Chair	Present
Michael Sigler	Vice Chair	Present
Anna Kelles	Member	Present
Anne Koreman	Member	Present
Deborah Dawson	Member	Present
Henry Granison	Legislator	Present
Katrina McCloy	Deputy Clerk	Present
Jason Molino	County Administrator	Present
Katie Borgella	Planning & Sustainability Commissioner	Present
David West	Planner, Planning and Sustainability Department	Present
Marcia Lynch	Public Info. Officer, County Administration	Present

Guests: Jennifer Tavares and Dominick Recckio, Chamber of Commerce; George Ferarri, Community Foundation of Tompkins County; Paula Younger, Ithaca College; Paul Rossi, Ithaca Board of Realtors; and members of the public

**Call to Order**

Ms. Robertson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

**Public Comment**

There were no members of the public present who wished to speak.

**Changes to Agenda**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**Chair's Report**

Ms. Robertson had no report.

**Reports/Discussions/Presentations**

Tompkins County Housing Market, Funding Resource & Solutions Analysis (ID #7908)

Ms. Tavares reviewed the summary of the project entitled Tompkins County Housing Market, Funding Resource and Solutions Analysis. She stated PolicyLab Consulting will be conducting the study and they have hired a local individual, Marcia Nedland, Fall Creek Consultants, to assist on this project.

Mr. Recckio said they are beginning to put together a Client Committee and it will include representatives from the Community Foundation, Tompkins County, City of Ithaca, private landlords, Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services (INHS), and Cornell Real Estate.

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Mr. Ferarri stated the core of their mission is to improve the quality of life in Tompkins County and with all entities working together to make systemic changes and deliver the necessary resources.

Ms. Dawson hopes PolicyLab will take into consideration the unique demographics of the County; the student population and large number of lower income versus the large number of very well off individuals leaving very few individuals in the middle. Ms. Tavares noted it could be possible that some of the people reported to be lower income may be students whose parents are paying their rent and agrees the Consultants need to take this into consideration.

Ms. Koreman requested to see the housing stock inventory include \$100,000 homes because the median income is about \$53,000 and this level would be more realistic to the wages lower income families are actually making. Ms. Tavares said there may be a way to adjust some of the numbers but noted if a family was able to afford a home they would most likely be able to utilize one of the INHS programs and therefore receiving government subsidies that provide infrastructure to support access to housing. She said the goal of this study is to look at the level where government subsidies stop through higher income levels. Ms. Robertson stated it may not be appropriate to include the inventory of lower priced housing because INHS provides assistance for housing up to the \$150,000 level and they have stated there are very few homes in that price range. Ms. Tavares explained that the Consultants will comprehensively look at all the programs available in the County and will also look at programs available at the State and Federal levels to ensure the County is not overlooking them. Ms. Kelles stated the housing problem for the very low income is a separate issue that is being addressed through various programs and is not what this study is tackling.

Ms. Kelles inquired if the Consultants had a specific focus area. Ms. Tavares stated they will focus more on nodal development and areas that are ideal for potential development.

Ms. Kelles stated there is a need to define affordable housing because there is no standard definition and spoke of affordable being dependent on other factors such as childcare and transportation and access to both. Ms. Robertson spoke of the combined cost of housing and transportation affecting the affordability of housing.

Ms. Kelles asked about the effects of NIMBYism on housing development. Mr. Ferrarri believes NIMBYism is a diagnostic of something else such as self-interest, the inability to see the importance of community, frustration of not being involved in the beginning of the development process, and not being connected in a meaningful manner. He said in order to diagnose the problem we need to look at what NIMBYism is telling us.

Ms. Borgella stated the proposed timeline is very aggressive and she is concerned about the work involved for desired data points that may be requested from her staff. She said the housing numbers are very complicated and the Housing Needs Assessment and Housing Strategy took a great deal more time than was originally anticipated to complete. Ms. Tavares is not certain what would be needed from the Planning and Sustainability Department but there is a great deal of information already available in various reports and studies.

**RESULT:                    COMPLETED**

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Department of Planning & Sustainability Data-Driven Approach for Municipal Housing Outreach (ID #7905)

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Mr. West provided an overview of the Planning and Sustainability Department’s plans to analyze the data they have access to and said they will be concentrating on developing plans to work directly with municipalities and developmental focus areas to further the Housing Strategy. He explained the difficulties involved with the Department’s current work to break down the county-wide data to specifically look at the developmental focus areas because there is not a lot of data collected at the small parcel level. He stated the Department is tracking and analyzing where development has taken place and development currently in the pipeline.

Mr. West said the Department’s work with municipalities will include looking at the demographic changes, vacancy rates, and property values. He explained some difficulties involved include properly understanding the demographic changes at the municipal level because the slightest forecasted population change for a short timeframe in a small municipality has an enormous margin of error. He stated the information put out to municipalities needs to be done carefully because it could have an effect on the municipality. He also plans to have conversations with municipal planners to understand what they would like the Planning and Sustainability Department to do to help them and what it can bring to the table to continue the investment in the Housing Strategy county-wide.

Ms. Robertson inquired about information previously distributed to the Committee regarding new units built. Mr. West explained that it is a start but there is more work needed on it. Ms. Borgella stated they are trying to lay out a timeframe and by the end of the year they hope to have solid information to move forward. She stated they will be working with municipalities to be certain there is nothing missing.

Mr. West said the collaboration with the Assessment Department is a new manner in which to view data and is very useful but will take time to look at the combination of data and how certain points are measured. Ms. Robertson stated it is very difficult to track housing data.

Ms. Kelles asked if there has been any interaction with the municipalities and are they receptive to the assistance. Ms. Borgella stated there have been discussions with the Towns of Danby and Dryden and the City of Ithaca and they all were receptive and welcoming of further collaborations.

Ms. Koreman explained that she has suggested tracking housing that is no longer being used and was recently told by a municipal official that there is no mechanism in place to report that information. She inquired if such a mechanism could be developed to assist municipalities in gathering and reporting that information. Ms. Borgella said something could be developed and possibly used to update assessment records.

Mr. Molino suggested clearly defining the various terms and create baseline definitions used in housing analysis that are universally applied. He said the consistency in terms is key to the data analysis.

**RESULT: COMPLETED**

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**County Administrators Report**

Mr. Molino had no report.

**Proposed Housing Capital Reserve Fund**

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Proposed Housing Capital Reserve Fund Local Spending on Affordable Housing – Why, How?  
(ID #7909)

Ms. Robertson reviewed in detail Local Spending on Affordable Housing - Why, How that included a summary of meetings regarding housing from September 2017 through March 2018, problems and barriers, and possible solutions.

Ms. Kelles expressed her concerns about the expense related to infrastructure and said the focus development areas report from the Planning and Sustainability Department mentioned the cost of building infrastructure outside a focus development area had an estimated increase in cost of 40 to 400 times more due to the cost of the initial capital investment and maintenance. She is not interested in funding infrastructure at that price. Ms. Robertson explained that infrastructure referred to in the summary is for a smaller scale expansion not the entire development of infrastructure in a green field.

Ms. Dawson stated she would like to identify the priorities but would like to see some of the funds used in a method similar to a loan or fund. She would like to see the funds used to directly to address priorities established in the Housing Strategy. In addition, to make this cost effective she would like to see the resources currently in place be expanded in some way. She is also in agreement with the statement Ms. Kelles made about infrastructure.

Mr. Sigler stated he would be supportive of inflow and infiltration (I & I) sanitary sewer systems repairs if they were holding up development, similar to the problems currently in Lansing. Ms. Robertson said Lansing is willing to allow development but they have a problem with I & I and no means to make the repairs. Mr. Sigler is also supportive of providing funds that will release more funds from another source.

Ms. Koreman is more supportive of assisting at-risk populations instead of funds being put into the Community Housing Development Fund. She is also supportive of assisting projects to move forward and assist projects to become shovel ready.

Ms. Robertson spoke of setting up criteria for a fund that a municipality could apply for to assist a project to move forward. The application could be reviewed and either approved or denied by this Committee or another established committee. She said the idea is for the funding to be relatively nimble with pre-established criteria to move development projects forward.

Ms. Kelles stated the infill analysis that the Planning and Sustainability Department has included in its work plan for all municipalities is very important as a prequel for all this. In addition, she is supportive of using some of the funds in a revolving loan fund program.

Ms. Dawson suggested making the decision as to the portion of population that the Committee would like to see served first.

Mr. Molino stated he believes the Housing Market, Funding Resource, and Solution Analysis report Ms. Tavares is working on will have direction and answers to where a financial contribution would have a high impact. He said a common “in demand” need is funds in the Community Housing Development Fund and there is also the need for a clear opinion from the Attorney General regarding the use of County funds for housing. He stated Mr. Wood, County Attorney, is currently writing a letter to the Attorney General asking an opinion regarding this.

Ms. Borgella stated while the Attorney General is drafting a response it would allow time for the

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Housing Market, Funding Resource, and Solution Analysis report to be completed and ideally at the beginning of 2019 there would be time to have all information gathered and then a decision could be made as to how to move forward.

Mr. Molino believes the County should continue establishing a developer’s forum to work with municipalities and bring other partners together to work with municipalities and work with at-risk populations.

Ms. Kelles expressed concern about additional funds for the Community Housing Development Fund due to the limitations on tax credits making the fund precise but narrow in its ability. She said it may be possible to change the set up that would make this fund more nimble. Mr. West stated a large number of projects that have come through the Community Housing Development Fund do qualify for tax credits and other options may not be enough to make a difference in the costs. Ms. Koreman said developers have stated there is a desire to have additional funding cycles throughout the year. Ms. Borgella asked to have the developers referred to her and she can look into this if there is a need.

Ms. Dawson spoke of the Convention and Visitors Bureau being interested in creating a consortium with local developers who may be willing to accept a lower return to create more affordable housing options and that may be a manner in which the County’s funds could leverage the private developers money and vice versa. She said this could be done through the Community Housing Development Fund.

Ms. Borgella suggested providing support to municipalities and work on the possibility of setting up a matching fund program for various affordable housing needs including infrastructure and/or consultant services.

Following discussions regarding possible impacts and consequences of use of the County Housing Reserve Fund, Ms. Robertson requested direction from the Committee as to how to proceed.

It was MOVED by Ms. Kelles, seconded by Ms. Dawson, and unanimously adopted by voice vote to:

- Await the opinion from the Attorney General regarding the use of County funds,
- Have the Planning and Sustainability Department work on/think through setting up a grant fund program to assist municipalities for various affordable housing needs that could benefit from hiring a grant writer and bring back an outline to the Committee,
- Work with developers to address at-risk populations, and
- Participate in the Housing Market, Funding Resource and Solution Analysis report.

**RESULT:                    COMPLETED**

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**Minutes Approval**

May 21, 2018

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<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Anna Kelles, Member
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Anne Koreman, Member
<b>AYES:</b>	Robertson, Sigler, Kelles, Koreman, Dawson

### **Committee Members' Reports**

Ms. Dawson stated this community is not the only community dealing with a housing and homelessness crisis and if an individual is making minimum wage he or she cannot afford an apartment. She said this problem is nationwide and believes there is a need to revisit the minimum wage issue or there may be more people homeless.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 4:59 p.m.

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