

DRAKE NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING MEETING

HOUSING SUB-COMMITTEE

Thursday November 5th, 2009 at 6:30pm

Holiday Inn Express, 1140 24th Street

I. Overview of Des Moines Area Non-profit Housing Providers – 45 mins.

Home Opportunities Made Easy (HOME), Inc. – Pam Carmichael, Executive Director

- Housing/Property Programs
- Housing Counseling
- Other Programs
- Opportunities in the Drake Neighborhood

II. Housing Goals Brainstorming Session – 45 mins.

Next Meeting will be Thursday December 3rd, 6:30pm
December topics: Habitat for Humanity and The Dream Center

Meeting Notes:

Overview of Des Moines Area Non-profit Housing Providers – HOME, Inc.

Pam Carmichael, Executive Director of HOME, Inc., gave an overview of HOME Inc.'s programs and services. HOME, Inc. was founded in 1967 and is the oldest private, non-profit housing agency in Des Moines. They provide housing counseling services to prospective homeowners, as well as landlords and tenants. Their counselors have also dealt with situations such as eviction, homeless prevention and rapid re-housing, refinancing, and foreclosure. In addition, HOME, Inc. works to revitalize neighborhoods by acting as developer and general contractor in the construction and rehabilitation of homes. Aside from their regular turn-key home sales, they offer a lease/purchase model for homeownership. HOME, Inc. is also a partner in the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP). The mission of HOME, Inc. is to provide quality, affordable housing opportunities. Their average clientele is low to moderate income, with most families earning between \$30,000-65,000 per year. For more information on the programs that HOME, Inc. offers, visit: <http://www.homeincdsm.org>.

Within the next year, HOME, Inc. will become a CHDO, or Community Housing Development Organization. This means that they will receive a specific allocation from the City of Des Moines each year to undertake affordable housing projects.

HOME, Inc. is willing to work with neighborhood associations on specific issues, and can also partner with other organizations to approach a particular problem or design a particular solution. The subcommittee asked if they can downsize large multi-family homes. Pam

responded that they can, however it is often difficult to find families who can afford the purchase and maintenance of such homes.

The subcommittee discussed potential ways for the Drake Neighborhood Association to partner with HOME, Inc. One possibility is to target specific areas of the neighborhood for pilot rehabilitation projects. Suggestions included the NE quadrant, Drake Park between 23rd & 24th and 27th south of Kingman. The housing committee / DNA should approach HOME, Inc. with specific project proposals. Another idea is to utilize the Rental Handbook for Landlords and Tenants that HOME, Inc. publishes, and distribute those to the rental community in the Drake neighborhood. The DNA could also refer residents to HOME, Inc. for housing counseling. Pam mentioned that they do have a Spanish-speaking counselor on staff, and have worked with Sudanese clients as well.

Another topic of discussion was the Forest Avenue project, on the City-owned land at 22nd and Forest. While there is not yet a plan in place for the site, Pam suggested this project be marketed to Drake law/graduate students, young professionals and possibly empty nesters. The committee discussed the need for more amenities in the area to attract this market. In particular, if higher density projects are pursued, there needs to be additional green space in the area for families. This led to a greater discussion on the need to generally improve the area around Forest Avenue, and on what to do with Forest Ave between 27th and MLK. The housing committee sees potential in targeting the corridor for high quality multi-family development, along with small offices and service businesses. They agreed that retail development should be directed to University.

Housing Goals Brainstorming Session

Kyle Larson and Amber Kobler, City Planners, gave the committee a preliminary draft of housing goals, based on discussions to date. The committee members reviewed the draft and made suggestions for improvements and additions. There were several issues the group wanted to see included in the goals, including: working with area lenders to create neighborhood-specific products, creating a “pattern book” or set of advisory design guidelines for the neighborhood, and looking at re-zoning the “spot zones” of multi-family south of University and around Carpenter (targeting conversions for down-zoning to R1). Committee members asked when the grandfather rights expire if a property is vacant. The time frame is 12 months for residential properties and six months for other types of property. The housing committee would like to have a more in-depth land use and zoning discussion related to the residential areas of the neighborhood.