

Memo

DATE: 2/4/2019

RE: November 15, 2018 Housing and Human Services Commission Meeting
Comments from the Public Hearing regarding the Housing Element Update

After staff's presentation on the Housing Element and Ashland Housing Strategies the following comments were made during the public forum.

Isleen Glatt, Senior Services Superintendent for the Senior Services Division of the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission thanked the Commission for having a policy related to age friendly, accessible and age-in place housing. Ms. Glatt was glad to see the needs of seniors specifically being noted in this plan. She also mentioned that all the other policies related to affordability, unit size, house styles, etc. impacts our seniors as well.

Forest Berg, is a planner who started a company with a group of people called GreenEarthCity.org. This is a company that focuses on sustainability developments both urban and rural. Mr. Berg shared that as we study the current system and as we impose on the natural world he would like to see in our planning structure a stronger emphasis on a comprehensive system as a whole and move away from actual zoning. His company looks at the whole system design and development both socially and ecologically. The premise of zoning is what we as a society have pushed upon the earth. We have lost our village. Mr. Berg would like the wording in the future to have a little more teeth with the developers to encourage them to help solve the inherent problems that are coming such as energy, food production and increase of fire. Mr. Berg would like to see planning do a little more comprehensive review with the developments presented to them. No reason that Ashland should be totally dependent on fossil fuels, stated Mr. Berg.

Jesse Sharpe, works with tenants every day listening to their housing issues such as no cause evictions and rent increases. At least once a week Mr. Sharpe speaks with someone who is becoming homeless. Mr. Sharpe would love to see some recommendations going to the City Council involving rent protections such as relocation assistance and mitigating the displacement of tenants.

George Kramer, was concerned about the use of the word “**encourage**” multifamily development. Encourage implies it would still be possible to build a single family residence in a multi-family zone, emphasized Mr. Kramer. Ashland has areas of multifamily zoning that are never going to be developed as multifamily. Mr. Kramer suggested saying “**We will** build multifamily developments in multifamily zones.”



Teresa Safay, remarked it would help to keep rents lower in multiplex's if the City offered the property owners a utility break. Ms. Safay manages an eleven-plex on B Street and they pay more than one month of rent just to cover the water. If those rates could be lower, it would be possible to keep the rents down.

Regina Ayars, acknowledged the ideas in this document are great however being doable is something else. Ms. Ayars asked "Where is a timeline going to be referred too?" Each item has a priority assigned to it but that is the only indication of importance nothing refers to when it should happen. Ms. Ayars is asking for a timeline associated with the document that would reflect the ability to actually accomplish these goals and strategies.

