MEETING SUMMARY
Neighborhood Revitalization Board

September 4, 2019, 5:00 p.m.

Call to Order/Roll Call
Meeting called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Kelly Kennedy
Roll Call by Tom LaPointe:
Present:        Molly Hanson, Kelly Kennedy, Greg Lewis, Frank Owens, Marge Ramsey, Tom LaPointe, Leslie Berckes
Absent:         Seth Johnson, Kari Warren, Alex Piedras, Jan Goode
Staff:          Chris Johansen, Director and Anu Minhas, Assistant Planner

Approval of Agenda
Motion to Approve: Leslie Berckes; seconded by Greg Lewis
Amended with additional item “September 4, 2019 Des Moines Register Article on Property Values” brought by Tom LaPointe.
Motion carried (7-0)

Approval of Minutes:
Motion to Approve: Greg Lewis; seconded by Molly Hanson
Motion carried (7-0)

Chairman’s Report/City Council
Actions
Chris Johansen: Last month, we talked about recertifying the list of neighborhood associations that before the NRB. That’s going to be on the Council Agenda for Monday, September 9 for approval. Before we start this evening, I do request that we flip flop the items for the Neighborhood Revitalization Program. That we discuss the Carpenter Neighborhood Association item first. Anu from my staff is here to present on that. If that is okay with the board.

Kelly Kennedy: Okay

Removal of Carpenter Neighborhood Association form the List of Recognized Neighborhoods and Amend the Map to Show the Carpenter Neighborhood area as part of the Drake Neighborhood
Anu Minhas: Good evening everyone. I’m Anu Minhas with the Community Development Division. The item in front of you was carried over from the annual neighborhood survey that was sent out in March. One of the reasons this is going so late before the City Council is because we’ve had a little bit of an issue trying to get feedback and surveys back from some of the neighborhoods. As part of the neighborhood survey, we received feedback from the Carpenter Neighborhood that they are no longer active. They haven’t been active for some time now. And there is absolutely no representation on the board. Robert Gieber, President of the Carpenter Neighborhood Association, had sent an email saying that he has been on the board for a long time (15 years) and he’s ready to retire. Nobody else is stepping up and they have no representation on the board. They would like to fold as a neighborhood association. The item in front of you is essentially 1) to put forward a recommendation to the City Council to not recertify the Carpenter Neighborhood as a recognized neighborhood association going forward.
Anu Minhas: Part 2 of the same recommendation is that that area falls within the Drake Neighborhood Association boundaries. That has been the case since the early 1990s. When Carpenter folds as a neighborhood association, the residents of that area and neighborhood would be represented by the Drake Neighborhood Association. The map would change to show those boundaries. [https://maps.dsm.city/docs/maps/NeighborhoodsSmall.pdf] The areas we’re talking about are #6 for the Carpenter Neighborhood and #11 is the Drake Neighborhood. You can see that Carpenter already belongs in the Drake Neighborhood Association boundary. Just south of #6 was an earlier neighborhood association called Drake Park, which folded, I believe, in 2015. That area merged with the Drake neighborhood boundaries. From what I’ve learned, when this process started back in 1994, when Drake Park and Carpenter were recognized as neighborhood associations that’s when we started the Neighborhood Recognition Policy and Program. The Carpenter neighborhood had been in existence since the late 1990s. They had been meeting as a neighborhood and ended up staying as a neighborhood association. Drake Park also ended up staying as a neighborhood association within the broader Drake area. Back then, they would have categorized it as a project area but now we would call it a sub-area, which focus on areas for revitalization efforts, which is what Drake Park and Carpenter were identified as back then. The action item for you today is to not recognize it, or not recertify, Carpenter Neighborhood and let it fold. And then clean up the map to show it as part of the Drake neighborhood. Are there any questions?

Tom LaPointe: Mr. Chairman, I understand the resolution you presented as decertifying and the second one is to adopt or amend the existing Drake neighborhood to incorporate the Carpenter neighborhood. Is that correct?

Anu Minhas: It’s not an action item to expand the neighborhood boundaries for Drake. Drake’s neighborhood boundaries already include Carpenter. It’s just to clean up the map.

Tom LaPointe: I had a conversation with a member of the Drake Neighborhood Association board and was told that they have not taken an affirmative action to accept what is being proposed here.

Anu Minhas: The City has been in conversations with Jennifer Sayers, who’s President of the Drake Neighborhood Association. She had brought it up at the Drake Neighborhood Association meeting in early August. Here is a snapshot of our email exchange. It shows that she took it back to her neighborhood association meeting and there was a consensus that Drake would let them merge. She did mention that they had a couple of concerns, which I have been trying to follow up with Robert Gieber, but it’s been difficult to get feedback. The concerns that she had were, first, they would like to have some sort of representation from that area on their board, which is only natural and a good thing. They don’t have it at this point because there is nobody in the Carpenter neighborhood who is ready to be on the Carpenter board. Our hope is that over a period of time, the Drake neighborhood can do the outreach and get the momentum going to get somebody to participate on their board. The second
concern was whether Carpenter had any liabilities or assets as a neighborhood association that they should be aware of. I haven’t been able to find out anything on that front yet.

Tom LaPointe: Mr. Chairman, just to follow up, if I can. My conversation with the member of the Drake Neighborhood Association board prior to this meeting, was that they have not taken affirmative action to adopt this Carpenter neighborhood; notwithstanding your presentation. The question I have is based upon my experience with the Beaverdale Neighborhood Association in the Merle Hay Neighborhood Association, adopting the Meredith Neighborhood Association. That went through a very prescribed process, where there were a series of steps that required an affirmative action. Based upon conversations I have had, there doesn’t appear to have been a such an affirmative action. It would be my point, and I make a motion that we “table this item for one month, until the next monthly meeting to determine if the Drake Neighborhood Association has affirmatively voted to accept this neighborhood association that’s being decertified.”

Chris Johansen: Are you in disagreement that we decertify Carpenter?

Tom LaPointe: Based upon what’s being recommended, I would go forward with the first part of what’s being presented. The second part of what’s being presented is whether the Drake Neighborhood Association is prepared with an affirmative vote to accept the decertification and adopt them into their designated area.

Chris Johansen: Just for clarification, if you take Carpenter off the map, it doesn’t do anything to change Drake’s boundaries. Drake’s boundaries already include Carpenter.

Tom LaPointe: I have no problems with that distinction. I think it’s an important distinction. The distinction I’m trying to make with my motion, that has not been seconded, is that Drake needs to accept them with an affirmative vote.

Greg Lewis: We can’t have a discussion until there’s a second. I will second, so we can have a discussion.

Molly Hanson: If I understand correctly, the only thing we’re voting on right now is to not recertify Carpenter.

Tom LaPointe: That’s not my understanding through the Chair. It’s a two-step motion. Is that not correct?

Kelly Kennedy: What I heard from the motion you made, Tom, was that we’re going to table the moving into the Drake. I didn’t hear anything on the motion, about accepting the decertification.

Chris Johansen: If I could clarify, if you decertify Carpenter, Carpenter goes away. That area is already in Drake. There’s no further action needed. If Drake doesn’t want that area to be a part of their neighborhood association, they’d
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have to request to amend their boundaries to exclude it from their boundaries.

Tom LaPointe: I think that’s where we have a disagreement.

Kelly Kennedy: I’m questioning why Drake’s boundaries were never amended to no longer include Carpenter, if Carpenter had its own neighborhood association.

Chris Johansen: The history of the Drake neighborhood is that they had several shared neighborhood areas. Drake Park and Kirkwood Glen were such areas. Those neighborhood associations over the history formed a special focus within the Drake neighborhood. That’s always been allowed by Drake. I want to make sure that when we communicate back to the Drake, because if we take Carpenter out, Drake’s boundaries have always included Carpenter. If Drake says they don’t want Carpenter, Drake would have to amend its boundaries to reflect the Carpenter area as being removed. That’s what needs to be communicated back to Drake, if that’s what you’re wishing.

Tom LaPointe: I’m not sure that’s what I’m wishing. What I’m proposing is that Drake fully understands what its accepting, notwithstanding the fact that the Carpenter Neighborhood Association – now being decertified – is now back in the Drake neighborhood. And the Drake Neighborhood Association is ready to affirm that. It would just require an affirmative vote by them.

Leslie Berckes: They wouldn’t need to vote because it’s already in their boundaries. Anu said they brought it up at their neighborhood association meeting, so I think that’s as far as we can take it.

Tom LaPointe: I fully understand the distinction that you’ve reinforced from Chris. I think that the Drake Neighborhood Association should understand that they’re taking on these responsibilities. If they don’t want to do that, they need to take a vote to modify, or amend, their boundaries. It’s a pretty straightforward proposition. To elaborate, a year ago, we looked at some boundaries that had a zig zag affect.

Greg Lewis: That was my boundary. Douglas Acres decided that they were going to change their boundaries. They didn’t talk to us. You can see Fairmount and the zig zag is an industrial area. We’re talking about #14 and #9 on the map. They decided that they wanted to take those businesses in but they never talked to Fairmont. You can see that it’s the gray area. The point is that there are no residences in that area. I’m curious about what Tom said about the Drake boundaries, because I see a straight line coming down across the east side of Carpenter (#6). How are they already included in the Drake Neighborhood Association? And wouldn’t the Drake Neighborhood have to agree to take them in? I don’t see how we can say that to Drake when there is nothing on record saying they are going to take them in.

Molly Hanson: From my point of view, our neighborhood association has been trying to beef up. I remember being asked to join the board at my first meeting before anyone met me. That’s how active they are. On one hand, yes, Drake
needs to think about this. But on the other hand, nobody in Carpenter wants to participate anymore. We can’t make them. Voting to decertify Carpenter seems like a moot point, since they don’t even recognize a Carpenter Neighborhood Association as existing. Are we telling Drake what they need?

Greg Lewis: What would happen if King Irving (#24) said they want Carpenter?

Frank Owens: If the boundary’s established, I don’t think they can say they want it. There’s been a codicil that’s been allowed for them to actively participate as an independent organization within that confine. It’s not much different than what happens on the eastside of town, where we’ve got this large network that has several neighborhood associations within it that works. But, I think your example of what happened in your neighborhood is a bit different. You guys had an adversarial thing going on. If I’m hearing it correctly, we have a motion, and in the course of this motion taking place, we’ve heard from one person who says that they’re concerned about it. I couldn’t see us doing more than writing a letter to them saying what we think about it. In terms of a letter that states that they make sure that everyone knows what’s going on and move it off our plate.

Molly Hanson: Obviously, if Anu’s been in communication with their board president, who’s tried, as Leslie mentioned, to present at the meeting. It sounds like some of that communication is going on. I don’t think we should get bogged down from the opinion of one person.

Frank Owens: We have it in writing from the board president. We don’t have anything in writing from the person who said they were concerned. I don’t know if they were angry about something or just questioning. I think the President, representing the board, alleviates us of any responsibility. That coupled with the fact that no one is willing to step up to the plate. If we look at it from another standpoint, perhaps they will receive some service as opposed to no service. What is the greater good here? When all is said and done, how do we get the most service to the residents of DSM? How do we represent them? How do we get them services even if they must share them with someone else? I understand the thought here, but if no one is willing to engage, then this is a way for them to have some engagement.

Tom LaPointe: Mr. Chairman, I withdraw my motion. I think this has been a useful discussion. I think the comments that were shared with me, in private, don’t lend themselves to being on the public record.

Greg Lewis: I second.

Tom LaPointe: The motion has been withdrawn.

Kelly Kennedy: I would add that the agenda says that we’re removing the Carpenter Neighborhood Association from the list of recognized neighborhoods. And we’re going to amend the map. What’s on the agenda doesn’t say anything about adding in Carpenter to that area. We’re just amending the map.
Tom LaPointe: Mr. Chairman, I’m prepared to make a motion. I move for the adoption of the action that was suggested by City staff as presented.

Frank Owens: I second.

Kelly Kennedy: We have a motion and a second.

Greg Lewis: We must have a discussion. The discussion is what is the boundary that goes along the east side?

Chris Johansen: That’s MLK Jr Pkwy.

Greg Lewis: What if King Irving (#24) wants Carpenter?

Kelly Kennedy: Carpenter is already a part of Drake.

Chris Johansen: On Drake’s neighborhood page, there’s a pre-existing boundary of the Drake Neighborhood Association. https://findneighborhoods.dsm.city/ If you look at their boundary lines, it goes all the way over to MLK.

Greg Lewis: East to Martin Luther King Parkway. Okay.

Kelly Kennedy: Anymore discussion? All those in favor of the motion, signify by saying aye. Those opposed same. Motion carries.

**Motion to Approve:** Tom LaPointe; seconded by Frank Owens

Motion carried (7-0)

Chris Johansen: I do have one item closely related to this. It came up during our last meeting, when we talked about neighborhoods expanding their boundaries into areas where there isn’t an existing neighborhood. We talked a little bit about whether to require a survey of those residents or not. I want to give you a specific example that’s happening right now. Just to make sure that I’m crystal clear on what you guys want us to do. Number 48 on the map is Watrous Heights. https://maps.dsm.city/docs/maps/NeighborhoodsSmall.pdf They’re looking to expand their boundaries to that area above #27 (Magnolia Park). It’s an area that is not recognized by a neighborhood association. A couple of years ago, we met with areas 48 (Watrous Heights), 27, 22 (Indianola Hills) and 43 (South Park) to see if there was interest in that area becoming supported by an existing neighborhood association. South Park, Magnolia Park and Indianola Hills didn’t have any interest in expanding their boundaries. So, it’s not a debate amongst neighborhood associations. But, Watrous Heights is looking to amend their boundaries to include that non-recognized area. Last month, we talked about whether we should require a survey of those residents. Another thing we talked about internally is whether to have a public meeting and invite the residents of that area to come to the meeting. As of now, in our policy, we don’t require those things. But, prior to having the neighborhood association come here with their request to amend their boundaries, I want to
make sure that we give them guidance on what the board would expect. If you want a survey, or if you want us to schedule a public meeting, please let us know. That’s what we need to communicate back to the neighborhood association.

Greg Lewis: From my past experience, we looked at the area that we call the triangle - the Grandview Park neighborhood. ACCENT and Fairmont looked at that area. Fairmont had a public meeting. Due to the expense of a mailer, we did more a leaflet drop. ACCENT also had a public meeting, and it was determined between these public meetings that Grandview Park would go into ACCENT. They decided that they had more in common, etc. If Watrous Heights wants to take them in, I would recommend a public meeting letting the residents of that area know that South Park, Indianola Hills and Magnolia Park have no interest. I would make a motion that this board give them the guidance to hold a public meeting and give the residence an opportunity to know that they’re being annexed into the Watrous Heights neighborhood.

Molly Hanson: I think that’s a good suggestion. I would add only one other thing. Regarding outreach, I would say whatever the area is that is hoping to grow, they should reach out to their folks and they should make a concerted effort to reach out to the folks in the area that they hope to annex.

Greg Lewis: Yes, it would become Watrous Heights’ responsibility. Our guidance would be that they hold a public meeting just as an informational meeting about what is going on. They will decide yes or no if they want to be part of the neighborhood association.

Kelly Kennedy: Do we have a timeline of when they’re looking to have a vote or to change their borders?

Anu: Not really. They’d like to have it done as soon as possible. But I don’t think they have a hard deadline. They have mentioned that they don’t have the resources to do the door-to-door outreach to the proposed area as well as the existing neighborhood boundaries. I think that the City can send out fliers or notices to organize a public meeting.

Kelly Kennedy: Is this something we are going to ask Watrous Heights to do? Or is this something the City is going to take care of or assist in?

Anu: We can do the notices, I think.

Greg Lewis: When we did the Grandview Park, it was up to us. We did as much door-to-door leaf dropping as we could and posted fliers in local businesses.

Leslie Berckes: Chris, what do you think would be the best route?

Chris Johansen: I know they don’t have the capacity to do it. It’s up to you if you want us to help them or not. We gladly will, because we knew this was going to be an issue coming back to the board.
Molly Hanson: Are we trying to set a general precedent not necessarily specific to this?

Chris Johansen: I know we could be. It’s up to you on what you want us to do. They were reluctant to do anything further. I knew how much outreach they did was going to be one of the first questions you were going to ask. That’s why I want to be crystal clear on what you want us to ask them to do.

Molly Hanson: We don’t want to create a burden with a whole process.

Chris Johansen: We could send out a simple postcard, like we do for our rezonings. That’s relatively cheap to get out there. But if you don’t want it, just say.

Greg Lewis: Are we now setting a general precedent where somewhere down the line another neighborhood association will say, “Well, you did it for them. Are you going to do it for us?”

Chris Johansen: That’s one of the problems.

Molly Hanson: Maybe we don’t dictate the how and just say you do need to have a public meeting. You must give people the opportunity to talk. If they reach out to Community Development for support, you get to make those decisions.

Greg Lewis: We don’t want an issue with the cost to the City coming back either. I know you get a mailing for cheap but you still research the addresses. So, it’s costly. Even if they don’t have a public meeting, why don’t they invite them to one of their monthly meetings?

Kelly Kennedy: I would just add to that, that if we’re going to ask them to hold a public meeting, again, does that make it a precedent?

Molly Hanson: I like the idea of inviting them to their next neighborhood meeting.

Chris Johansen: I think moving forward when you have someone expanding their boundaries, we need to establish what that process is. I think asking them to hold a public meeting, or however they get the sense of the input from the area they’re asking to bring in, there’s nothing wrong with that. I think it’s not a bad precedent to create.

Kelly Kennedy: I would completely agree. I don’t have a problem with the City sending out mailers. I think that’s a minimal expense that the City could absorb. My concern would be, we hold this public meeting, nobody shows up then everyone finds out they’re part of Watrous Heights. Then the residents state that they weren’t aware of the meeting.

Greg Lewis: It doesn’t matter. If we send a mailer, somewhere in this world you must accept the responsibility.
Kelly Kennedy: I agree with that. The first meeting we had for Goode Park, we had another neighborhood association show up and say they had already absorbed our area. I would like to make sure that whatever we do, going forward, that we make sure that the people who are unrepresented now, have a say. Because some of the people who live there now don’t want to be represented by a neighborhood association. There’s a reason why they’re not represented.

Tom LaPointe: What is the motion in front of us, Mr. Chairman?

Kelly Kennedy: Could you clarify the motion please?

Greg Lewis: The motion would be that Watrous Heights (48) conduct an informational notification of the non-neighborhood association area and tell them they are going to be annexed into Watrous Heights.

Tom LaPointe: Was there a second?

Leslie Berckes: I’ll second.

Kelly Kennedy: We have a motion and a second. Any more discussion? All those in favor signify by saying “aye”. Those opposed same sign.

Motion to Approve: Greg Lewis; seconded by Leslie Berckes

Motion carried (7-0)

Presentation on Consolidated Plan Update

Chris Johansen: Benjamin Sturm is a Program and Systems Analyst with The Cloudburst Group. We have a consulting agreement with them to help us through our five-year consolidated plan process. This comes up every 5 years. We did think it was a good opportunity for this five-year plan with all the changes we’ve had in our neighborhood revitalization program. There’s opportunities to have additional funding that could be used for new types of programs to come in and kind of help us through this process.

Benjamin Sturm: I’m Ben Sturm. I work for a company called The Cloudburst Group. We’re a small business that is focused on creating impact, empowering communities and building resilience. We work with many local and state governments as well as the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), in the development of the five-year consolidated plan and the annual action plans, as well as a bunch of other HUD required reports, documents, procedure manuals, and any documents under the HUD umbrella. The City is undertaking a planning process for its next five-year plan. My presentation today is what we’ve been doing up to this point in developing this plan.

Benjamin Sturm: The three main phases that we have been undertaking this past summer are the 1) Needs Assessment 2) Market Analysis and 3) Stakeholder Consultations and Community Engagement. I want to discuss an
important aspect of the consolidated planning process, which is Community Input. It is crucial to the process. Input relative to priority needs and the primary barriers to addressing the needs, and what the City can do to eliminate the barriers identified is crucial to the planning process. Feel free to provide feedback or ask any questions. All input will be helpful in working on these plans. I’d like to spend my time giving an overview of the consolidated planning process, then getting into the data that we’ve compiled. The city of Des Moines administers three HUD programs: Home Investments Partnership Program (HOME), the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).

Benjamin Sturm: The Consolidated Plan is part of a larger grants management and planning process that’s divided into six phases: 1) determining needs 2) setting priorities 3) determining resources 4) setting goals for the next five years 5) administering the programs and 6) evaluating performances. In Determining Needs, we compile data from the US Census Survey as well as the Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS). The two main parts of determining needs are the 1) needs assessment and 2) market analysis. These feed into the strategic plan, which then moves on to Setting Priorities. We look at the goals we want to accomplish in the next five years, and we Determine Resources we are going to allocate, so that we can fund the activities to accomplish those goals, which leads to Setting Strategic Goals. Each year, the City will develop an annual action plan, which will identify the goals in the strategic plan and set their anticipated outcomes to meet those goals. Then the City Administers the Programs and Evaluates the Performance, which is known as the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER). CAPER is submitted to HUD ninety days after the end of HUD’s program year. This is another annual report that the City submits to HUD each year.

Benjamin Sturm: Citizen participation and consultation requirement ensures that input comes from a wide range of providers, including: citizens, advocacy groups, public and private agencies, and community leaders. This process is a community-wide dialogue with the communities and populations that are served by these programs. Here, you’ll see that we started working on the consolidated plan in July 2019. The past 2 months we’ve been collecting and analyzing data. In August, we conducted resident and stakeholder interviews. This month (September), we will finalize the draft of the strategic plan and we’ll be developing the annual action plan for program year 2020. The City will put the final draft out for a 30-day public comment in October. The plan is due to HUD on November 15. On this slide, the Needs Assessment examines Des Moines’ needs related to affordable housing, special needs housing, community development and homelessness. Here are the key sections. HUD provides a template that we must use as a guide to complete the consolidated plan.

Greg Lewis: Chris, one of the many hats you wear includes Public Housing. Have they talked to the HSB about this?

Chris Johansen: We asked for input from the Public Housing Agency staff. Ben interviewed me and Marcy Fisher. We talked about Section 8 and Public
Housing. We went through our waiting list numbers. We talked about housing needs. How often we open the waiting list. And the last time we opened the waiting list.

Benjamin Sturm: One interesting comment that I got from another stakeholder was the perception of the waiting list, where you have 3,000 plus people on the waiting list. That number was not equal to the amount of people that qualify for housing, which is around 11,000 people. With housing needs assessment, we also looked at income. The median income in Des Moines is $46,290. Adjusting for inflation this represents about a 5% decrease in median wages from 2009-2015. Poverty is also a growing problem. The percentage of the population whose annual income is below the Federal poverty line, which grew by more than 3% between 2011 and 2015.

Greg Lewis: What is the Federal poverty line? 35% of the median.

Benjamin Sturm: 30% of the median. We used the HUD Income Eligibility. Looking at household profiles, the average household size in Des Moines has 2.48 people. During the needs assessment, we looked at housing problems. HUD defines housing problems as: lacking complete kitchen facilities; lacking complete plumbing facilities; cost burden greater than 30%; and overcrowding, which is more than one person per room. In Des Moines, renters are more likely to experience housing problems than homeowners. Both renters and homeowners at 0-30% of annual median income experience one or more housing problems. Cost Burden is the #1 housing problem, which is where the household spends 30% of their monthly income on housing including utilities.

Kelly Kennedy: Do you have information on what the rents are in the area? Just the average one bedroom? Average two bedroom?

Benjamin Sturm: For fair market rent, an efficiency is $597; one bedroom is $708; two bedroom is $875; three bedroom is $1181; four bedroom is $1304.

Molly Hanson: That’s the average in Des Moines?

Benjamin Sturm: For median contract rent, as of 2015, it’s $664. In 2009, it was $575. That is in Des Moines only. You can see that the highest type of cost burden to households is elderly. The number of owner cost burden households exceeds the number of renter cost burden households. There are over 8,300 renters in Des Moines who have severe cost burden. On the next page, we’re looking at the disproportionately greater need, which exists when the racial or ethnic group is at least 10 percentage points of the total jurisdiction. The three categories under disproportionately great need are: housing problems, severe housing problems and housing cost burden. We also looked at some characteristics of homeless “at-risk” and housing instability; which includes what we see on a national level as well as what we’ve seen on the data we analyzed for Des Moines and what we gathered from our consultations with stakeholders. There’s also an increase in homelessness which cannot be served through federal funds, especially if they have a criminal record or are sex offenders, which is a barrier to Public Housing.
Benjamin Sturm: Our data on page 24 came from Polk County Continuum of Care and from the Point in Time Counts (PIT). PIT is a HUD required one-night survey conducted in January, where they do a sheltered and unsheltered inventory of homeless persons. We looked at the 2018 PIT for our draft. We will update the plan once the 2019 data becomes available. They had one survey in January and one in July, which had much higher numbers than in January. Here, under Non-Homeless Special Needs, low income individuals and disabled elderly are consistently at risk of health and cost burdens and having multiple housing problems.

Kelly Kennedy: You previously mentioned disabled for the elderly. How is disabled defined for the elderly when Social Security disability doesn’t apply to 65 and older?

Benjamin Sturm: We pulled these numbers from ACS (American Community Survey) data tables. I will look into how HUD defines it then get that information to Chris. Here, on page 27, the Market Analysis provides a clear picture of the supply, demand condition and cost of housing in the City. On the next page, you’ll see that there are just under 90,000 total housing units in Des Moines. 67% of owner occupied have three or more bedrooms while 24% of renter occupied have three or more bedrooms, which is a barrier that we kept hearing about over again. Home values are relatively low compared to most cities within the US, but has risen faster than the state average since 2012. Affordability of homes is likely to decrease if this trend continues. Here, we see that Des Moines has a largely older housing stock. 82% of owner occupied housing and 71% of rental housing was built before 1980. 27 of the 52 neighborhoods have a higher percentage of bad or deteriorating houses than good or excellent ones, which makes up 70% of the City’s residential properties.

Kelly Kennedy: 70% of the City’s residential properties are listed as bad or deteriorating?

Benjamin Sturm: Yes. Over 25% of Des Moines’ residential properties were built in 1939 or earlier. On the next page, you see that some barriers to affordable housing include achieving major goals in affordable housing has been impacted by the decline of federal housing dollars and the decline in their staff, lack of meaningful metropolitan cooperation to accept affordable housing in the suburbs, inclusionary zoning, low minimum wage rates and the inability of households to qualify for mortgages and decent rental housing. The Economic Development Analysis focuses on the population that lives in and commutes to/from Des Moines and the average hourly wage. In summary, the Des Moines housing market can be categorized as a city of affordable, single family homes of different quality and organized by neighborhoods around a central downtown. There’s newer housing surrounding the city and suburbs. Des Moines is a regional employment center. Des Moines has struggled with lower housing values than its neighboring communities and includes pockets of blight and housing disinvestment. The rental housing market doesn’t currently match the potential for growth in the downtown area for workforce housing.
that could attract jobs and become a vibrant community. We administered a stakeholder survey in August. We held one-on-one interviews and two focus groups.

Greg Lewis: Who did the stakeholder survey go out to?

Benjamin Sturm: We sent it to well over 60 different groups including the Polk County Housing Trust, about 20 neighborhood association members, and everyone on page 36.

Greg Lewis: They were determined by Community Development?

Chris Johansen: Many of the organizations receive funding from us. That’s how we determined stakeholders.

Benjamin Sturm: This slide shows other important input that we received from the stakeholders including on-the-job training, more affordable transportation, and more affordable housing options for 30-50% AMI.

Greg Lewis: Regarding on-the-job training, did you discuss how pretty much every trade union in the City is looking for apprentices? These are jobs that pay well over $11.82 per hour. The first year IBEW apprentice makes an average of $72,000 per year with benefits.

Benjamin Sturm: One of the groups that brought up on-the-job training was the Central Iowa Shelter and Services, who works with Exile brewing and they run a meals-on-wheels program. But that doesn’t mean on-the-job training won’t encompass apprenticeships.

Greg Lewis: Looking at this list of people who are in segregated groups (Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, etc.), I’m wondering if this part of the outreach can be to get those people into being electricians, painters, plumbers? The numbers you gave us were 750 homeless people. There isn’t a union in this city, or in this county, that isn’t looking for people to become apprentices. Can you talk to the building trades? Can you talk to Iowa State?

Benjamin Sturm: I think that’s a great idea. I don’t have that in my presentation but building collaborations between business and community organizations is very important.

Leslie Berckes: I believe this is just a comprehensive plan. Ben’s gathering the data, then the various community partners will take the information from there. Including the unions, including other job placement.

Greg Lewis: But in the gathering of the information, shouldn’t the unions be included in the groups that Ben is talking to?

Benjamin Sturm: I think we should talk with them. I would be happy to talk with them.
Benjamin Sturm: We are now drafting out the strategic plan, setting what the priority needs are and developing goals to address those needs for the next five years. Greg, I would love to get information on who in the unions we can contact. I have my business card here that I will hand out to you all. We will have a full draft of our plan by the end of this month.

Kelly Kennedy: Could you send this presentation to Chris?

Benjamin Sturm: Yes.

Kelly Kennedy: Thank you for your time.

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**Update on NRB Future Role**

Chris Johansen: I did meet with the City Manager today to discuss the NRB’s future role. Where we left it at, there isn’t a date yet set for the joint meeting with the City Council. He’s not ready to do that until Invest DSM is a little bit further along. A couple of things we did talk about are: potentially having a grant program for neighborhood associations. That’s something that he’s currently in discussions with the City Council about. It would be small grants to help neighborhood associations run business. It’s not approved yet. The other item we talked about, and this will be in our budgeting process this fall, is requesting a neighborhood liaison position. That position is going to work closely between the NRB and the neighborhood associations on capacity building. That person would also help implement a grant program, if there is one. But, also, be the designated person that’s in charge of the neighborhood recognition program and process. This is a longer process. I submit a request to a budget committee, they review it and it becomes a part of the City Manager’s recommendation to the City Council for funding for that position. That’s where we’re at right now. I relayed the message that we need to have the joint meeting to make sure we’re heading in the same direction. He understood that.

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**Des Moines Register Article on Property Values**

Kelly Kennedy: Tom has asked for some time.

Tom LaPointe: I just wanted to bring everyone’s attention to the front page of today’s Des Moines Register, above the fold “Historic Property Values Rile Big Polk Employers.” I find it ironic that these people come in, they engage in their expansion efforts and they receive state and city incentives, but when it comes to determining what their assessed value is, they always tend to contest it. https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/money/business/2019/09/03/iowa-commercial-property-taxes-appeal-nationwide-wellmark-principal-kum-go-prairie-meadows-hy-vee/1987321001/
Board Liaison Updates

**Polk Co Housing Continuum:**

Marge Ramsey: We had a discussion on Cedar Rapids and how they’re expanding. They’re having a one-year celebration on September 12 from 4-6pm. They talked about Invest DSM and they gave us a list of who makes up the executive and governance committees.

**Rebuilding Together:**

Kelly Kennedy: I was unable to make the meeting. These meetings are every other month and my schedule has conflicted with the meetings they have had this year. I think it’s time for the board to find someone else to represent NRB on Rebuilding Together. If we expect to have a presence there, we need someone who has a flexible enough schedule. We can put this on the agenda for next month.

**Housing Services Board:**

Greg Lewis: I have copies of the reports from the different housing departments, if anyone needs one. They’re very interesting. We’ve given out our 3,500 Section 8 vouchers. We were audited and we came in just $23,000 off, which is remarkably low. They’re doing a really good job of recouping their money.

Kelly Kennedy: What was $23,000?

Greg Lewis: Bad investment, which means dwelling rental. For example, when a tenant takes off in the middle of the month and we lose that money. Number one was our maintenance charge, which means going into Public Housing units and repainting, recarpeting and getting the unit up to code before the new tenant moves in - which was almost $18,000.

Kelly Kennedy: Do you have any idea of the numbers of the 3,500 that live within Public Housing as opposed to a private landlord?

Greg Lewis: We do. It seems that with the escalating rents, we have landlords coming to us now because they’re not getting renters. If they go with Section 8, that money is guaranteed because it’s coming from the government. Chris, do you have the actual numbers?

Chris Johansen: We have approximately 3,500 units in privately owned housing. Of that 80% are in Des Moines and about 20% are in Polk County. And we have 434 Public Housing units, where the City is the landlord.

Greg Lewis: We did a study last year of landlords that rent to Section 8. The communities who said you can work here but not live here, didn’t have much Section 8 housing. Now, we’re back to the overall problem of transportation and rental costs.
Tom LaPointe: I have a quick question. What was just touched upon in terms of these bedroom communities that don’t take Section 8, is that quantifiable?

Chris Johansen: We know how many vouchers are in each community. The part that is hard to quantify is how many people don’t accept Section 8. In Des Moines, we recently passed the Local Source of Income Ordinance, which prevents that from happening within Des Moines. Unfortunately, the rest of the suburbs can still do that.

Tom LaPointe: When I was in the Maine legislature back in the 70s, we attempted to make the vouchers more universal; break down the barriers. The policy at that time was that you were dispersing the vouchers in the broader population of rental housing and not concentrating them all in one area. At the time, it was a thoughtful policy. I don’t know how you break those barriers down unless you try to get people to accept it.

Frank Owens: I think more of the problems are around the inspections that the landlords must conform to. You have a yearly inspection and there are certain requirements. We have city code inspections but they’re not always as much of a pain as some of the Section 8 inspections are. And the sad part about it is that you’re told that you’ve got this support and some of the funding is guaranteed and so forth. It’s not true. I took Section 8 housing in my little business for a number of years. I had a couple there that I just couldn’t do it anymore. It’s a good program and even allows for home ownership, but somewhere along the line some changes need to be made. Maybe it will be better with what is going on with the new zoning regulations.

Tom LaPointe: Perhaps we can revisit this at a later date.

Marge Ramsey: Chris, in these buildings where they have a so many Section 8 units, is it the housing that says I’m only going to give out so many units?

Chris Johansen: We have a program where the vouchers are tied to the units, like at the Central Iowa Homeless Shelter where there are 26 units. We have a contract with the building owner that they’re always going to be subsidized. The YMCA Transitional Housing program has a housing program. We have maybe 13 units there that are always Section 8. For every other Section 8 voucher, the other 3,400 vouchers in Polk County, are associated with an individual. In the City, you cannot say no we’re not going to rent to you because you have that voucher. But it is up to the property owner if they’re going to accept Section 8 assistance or not.

Marge Ramsey: So, in an apartment complex, they may have so many apartments set aside that are Section 8...

Chris Johansen: That is up to the landlord and up to the tenant. A voucher is tenant based assistance. Every month that could change the number of people who have Section 8.

Greg Lewis: What surprised me is that the voucher is mobile. A person can get
a voucher in Des Moines and move to Kentucky and use that voucher for this amount of money. And the City pays that landlord in Kentucky.

Chris Johansen: We’re paying for someone in Hawaii, right now.

Greg Lewis: That was discussed at the meeting.

**Adjourn the Meeting**

**Motion to Adjourn:** Frank Owens; Seconded by Marge Ramsey

Motion carried (7-0)

Meeting was adjourned by consensus by Kelly Kennedy at 7:07 p.m.