



**ROCK COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY
ANNUAL MEETING
Monday, December 5, 2011 - 9:00 A.M.
P & D CONFERENCE ROOM
SECOND FLOOR - EAST WING
ROCK COUNTY COURTHOUSE
JANESVILLE, WI**

1. **Call to Order:** After confirming that the public notice requirements were met, Chair Brian Christianson called the Annual Meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.
2. **Roll Call of Members Present:** Brian Christianson, Chair; Billy Bob Grahn, Vice Chair; Anda O'Connell; Jackie Wood
Members Absent: Anna Marie Johnson
Staff Members Present: David Somppi, Neale Thompson
Others Present: Paul Benjamin, John Ramstad, Community Action
3. **Adoption of Agenda:** Motion to approve agenda for annual meeting of December 5, 2011 by Vice Chair Grahn, 2nd by Com'r. Wood. Motion carried.
4. **Review of Housing Authority Activities for 2011:** Mr. Somppi noted that 11 projects, treating 11 units, totaling \$90,812.33 were approved. The attached "Agenda" page described these activities in detail. Mr. Somppi noted that emerging census data might change the mixture of owner rehab and Home Purchase Assistance activities.
5. **Available Housing Authority Programs:** The attached sheets presented the goals of the Housing Authority and all the housing programs and expenditures of the Planning Department. Chair Christianson noted that the RCHA handled about 10% of the total overall projects.
6. **Review Potential Uses of Housing Authority Funds from Existing Funding Sources:** The attached sheets presented the goals of the Housing Authority. Mr. Somppi noted the range of eligible activities and Vice Chair Grahn assumed this explanation replaces any "wish list" that might be generated.
7. **Identification of Housing & Community Development Needs:** It was agreed that the goals needed to be discussed given the situation of less money and greater need. For example, the Consortium recently updated the Consortium long-range action plan that was in need of an update. It included discussion of the impact of the recession. Mr. Somppi did talk about this annual meeting with people from the financial institutions and from real estate businesses, but none of those people were able to attend today's meeting. Mr. Ramstad explained that the Merrill Project purchased 26 units and demolished 6 homes to ensure full sized lots. He answered a question about the situation in Detroit compared to Beloit by saying that Detroit had to have a different strategy because that city had lost 40% of its population. Therefore there was emphasis on urban agriculture because of the square miles of vacant land. The effort in Beloit is working to "save neighborhoods" that is a very different strategy. The City of Beloit does more demolition for the reasons of "Asset Management" rather than to try to fix the structures, again a different strategy. The Merrill Project is investing \$800,000 from CDBG and HOME and \$200,000 from the City of Beloit. The \$20,000 from the Housing Authority helped rehabilitate some rental housing to stabilize the Hull Street area. Improvements along with community organization and increased police patrols have helped to reduce the level of undesirable activities with the hope that the chaos will move out as improvements continue. Paul Benjamin then initiated a discussion about how Rock County could identify an effective countywide housing strategy. Mr. Ramstad said that three separate "fiefdoms" exist. It was noted that tightening the budgets along with greater need could offer the opportunity to have greater cooperation. Com'r Wood said it was challenging to implement these ideas and gain any exchange of services. Paul Benjamin proposed under Goal

#4 to establish a Quarterly Meeting in Rock County of people and agencies that have a stake in housing to discuss things and move forward. Information could include effective communications about grant opportunities and about small cities and local areas. One example is the current Small Cities funding where four towns up North got together to apply for such a grant. Other recipients were units of city and town governments. Attendees could include Habitat for Humanity, Real Estate developers, farmers, new housing contractors, County Long Term Services, Mercy and St. Mary's Assisted Care, cities and towns, and Community Action, Inc., etc. Vice Chair Grahn made a motion to support Paul Benjamin's idea of a Quarterly Meeting of Rock County Housing interests. Chair Christianson seconded the motion. The consensus vote then passed. Ideas following included founding members of this new committee, possible speakers say from the Fox Valley and Appleton, and the emphasis to get coverage in the Janesville Gazette and other media outlets, and even a meeting or break-out discussion for "newbies" like clerks, city managers, and junior CDA clerks. It was noted that the Rock Green Realtors meet monthly and the chairperson is Lee Kessler.

8. **Request for Public Comment:** John Ramstad said he had already communicated.
9. **Adjournment:** The next meeting was scheduled for January 9, 2012 in Edgerton. Minutes of this Annual Meeting will be approved at this next regular meeting. Chair Christianson voiced a thank you to the staff of the Housing and Community Development section for the work well done. Motion to adjourn by Vice Chair Grahn, 2nd by Chair Christianson. The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Neale Thompson, Assistant Secretary

(Planning\Housing Specialist\HA Meetings\Minutes\Minutes-AnnualMtg12-05-11)

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