

Mayor's Housing Quality Task Force Meeting Notes

Housing Quality Sub-Committee

Date: June 29, 2016

Time: 10:30AM-12PM

Location: City Hall, Council Briefing Center

Defining Housing Quality & Setting Standards:

Housing Quality is;

- Adequate and functioning structures and systems to provide a safe and healthy environment for residents.
 - *Adequate indicates that it meets each of the standards.*

Sub-committee determined not to use the definition above but to recommend that the City provide a follow up task force that would define, set standards, and performance measures for Housing Quality.

Standards:

- Housing Quality Standards 24 CFR 982.401
Accessibility to;
 - A. Sanitary facilities;
 - B. Food preparation and refuse disposal;
 - C. Space and security;
 - D. Thermal environment;
 - E. Illumination and electricity;
 - F. Structure and materials;
 - G. Interior air quality;
 - H. Water supply;
 - I. Free of lead based paint hazards;
 - J. Access (ingress and egress);
 - K. Site and neighborhood;
 - L. Sanitary conditions; and
 - M. Smoke and CO2 detectors.
- The City of Spokane Substandard Building definition 17F.070.400
 - The cities standard of Substandard Buildings is much lower than HUD's definitions and set of standards.
 - The Substandard Building definition is of homes that are below inhabitable.
 - Cities standards are life and safety vs. community expectation for select elements.

Recommendation: The City looks into defining Housing Quality and its standards. The definition should consider the cities current housing codes, insurance and lending standards.

HW: Recommendations will be emailed in from the group RE: Housing Quality definitions and standards.
(Alicia – send out HQS definition and standards)

- What is defined as quality housing doesn't have to be the same thing as what the legal threshold is for telling someone they have to tear down their house or start a proceeding to rehabilitate their home.

- There are many homes (rental and owner-occupied) that are on the borderline of being substandard. By imposing a standard to quickly will affect many people immediately.
- Define housing quality and its standards over phased periods so as to not make the requirement burdensome on homeowners, renters, and landlords.
 - Creating strategies to defining and setting standards to what Housing Quality is.
- What would the city recommend be the minimum expectation for people? This may be a process in order for people to have resources to address issues and to have the ability to meet standards.
- The City does not have a method to identifying homes that are above the Substandard Building threshold and those that do not meet the minimum standard of HUD's definition of housing quality. This is due to the fact that there is not a process/ordinance/code...etc. that allows for identification/tracking of interior housing quality, there is no authority given for interior home inspections. There are assumptions that may be made of housing quality on an individual base when using together the information on housing age and the Spokane County Assessor's exterior housing conditions ratings.
- Housing quality and the effort by the group in looking a housing quality must go way beyond the lifesaving/safety and health issues. While life and safety issues are the most obvious and are important when you look around the community there are many homes that one would say, just by using common sense, that there are serious quality issues present but they do not raise to the level of being un-inhabitable or not having utilities services. If the group is going to make an impact on housing quality with what they are imposing they must address the next level of housing quality after what the city proposes is a substandard building.
 - Two lists;
 1. Housing standards
 2. Housing quality standards
- Regarding insurance of homes there is a much higher level of quality that must be achieved in order to be insured. The standards of housing quality need to include the ability to be insurable. What programs could be recommended that allow for homes to remain at a level the keeps them insured?
 - The issue around this concept is when there are emergencies like fire the home is not insured and therefore there are no funds to rehabilitate and/or rebuild. This leads to;
 1. People living in the home no longer have a home.
 2. People living in the home currently have financial hardships and emergency to housing is not something they can financially fix.
 3. The home will not be repaired thus resulting in a blighted property.
- **Recommendation by the HQ sub-committee;**
 - The City should further review HUD's Housing Quality Standard (HQS) in order to clearly define housing quality for the Spokane community.
 - The City should look into the minimum standards used by the insurance and banking industry for loaning and insuring property. Using those minimum standards as part of the definition and standards set forth in the definition of housing quality by the City.
 - The City should identify and include housing quality performance requirements.
- Loretta (SNAP) identifies a set of standards from an insurance company to be included as a starting point to identifying those minimum standards.
 - The City should consider the municipal code for Substandard Buildings (17F.070.400) and the building code, and state law when identifying a definition and standards of

Housing Quality. The definition should rise well above the substandard definition but meet minimum standards set forth by HUD's HQS.

- Additional elements to be included in the consideration of housing quality and standards
 1. Slip/fall/trip hazards
 2. Municipal water & sewer connections
 3. Pest free

Prioritizing Recommendations:

- Identifying available properties and resources (new recommendation)
 - Land banking
 - Urban Renewal
- Housing inspection program that identifies substandard properties (new recommendation):
 - Purpose: identify substandard properties and establish criteria that determine that the home cannot be occupied and determine that the home can rise to a level that can be occupied.
- Combination Recommendations; (* = the lead program)
 - *4, 8, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17
 - **Public/private partnership in neighborhood revitalization**, Home Rehabilitation Program, Neighborhood LIFT Program, Financial Institution funding pool/foundation, small grants to property-owners and/or landlords, rental housing rehab grants/loans, low-moderate income owner occupied housing rehab grants/loans, and utilizing CDBG, HOME, and/or other home funding to provide housing rehabilitation of the purchasing of homes in foreclosure
 - Realigning policies relating to how we spent public money primarily CDBG, allowing its use for rental properties, emphasizing public and private partnerships in order to match grant funding/leverage dollars with a bank loan, use a grant to buy down an interest rate in a bank loan.
 - *6, 24, 25, 27
 - **Create a Community Land Bank**, Review of properties that may allow re-investment or redevelopment in line with community needs of lots and blocks for housing – consider mechanism and funding such as land banking, CDBG funding, or zoning incentives, target home demolition and/or rehabilitation, Identifying blockades to development and ways to fix them.
 - Land Bank Policy – Program to focus on acquiring, hold, and resell property include demolition if needed for neighborhood and public benefit.
 - *9, 17, 26
 - **Education program for developers on how to utilize CDBG and HOME funding to build new housing** Utilize CDBG, HOME, and/or other home funding to provide housing rehabilitation or the purchasing of homes in foreclosure, provide definitions for housing quality and affordability.
 - Education, Communication, and Public Information
 - *12, 10, 11, 18

