



# HOUSING SOLUTIONS NETWORK

**Tuesday, January 13 2014**

**9:00 – 11:00 a.m.**

**Networks Northwest 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room  
600 E Front St, Traverse City**

*Anyone interested in affordable housing for Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, and Wexford Counties is welcome to attend.*

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## AGENDA

**A. Welcome and Introductions**

**B. Consideration of Agenda and September 2014 Meeting Minutes**

**C. County Updates**

**D. Appointment of Housing Solutions Network Chair**

**E. Housing Outreach**

Discussion on opportunities for housing events, education, and awareness in 2015.

**F. Housing Solutions Network 2015 agenda items**

Discussion on potential agenda items for 2015.

**G. Roundtable Discussion and Announcements**

*This is a chance to share experiences and best practices with other affordable housing stakeholders. Feel free to bring brochures, flyers, and other materials for distribution.*

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The purpose of the Housing Solutions Network is to provide a forum for interagency and intergovernmental communication and coordination related to housing issues in Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, and Wexford Counties. This meeting is open to all who wish to attend. If you are not planning to attend this meeting, but would like to have input in the discussion, or provide handouts to the group, please contact Sarah Lucas, Northwest Michigan Council of Governments at (231) 929-5034 or [sarahlucas@nwm.cog.mi.us](mailto:sarahlucas@nwm.cog.mi.us).



## **HOUSING SOLUTIONS NETWORK**

### **DRAFT Meeting Minutes**

### **Tuesday, September 23, 2014**

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**Present:**

Gary Howe, City of Traverse City  
Emily Syrewicze, Northwest Michigan Supportive Housing  
Wendy Irvin, Habitat for Humanity  
Tina Allen, Greater Grand Traverse Area Continuum of Care  
Jennifer Kowal, Traverse Area Association of Realtors  
Michael Estes, Mayor, City of Traverse City  
Carol Moorman, Goodwill  
Julie Courtade  
Pat Hess, Northern Health Care  
John Sych, Grand Traverse County  
Virginia Coulter, Grand Traverse County  
Sarah Lucas, Networks Northwest

**A. Welcome and Introductions**

V. Coulter called the meeting to order at 9:10 and led introductions.

**B. Consideration of Agenda and May 2014 Meeting Minutes**

The agenda and minutes were accepted as presented.

**C. County Updates**

J. Kowal noted that TAAR is hosting a fair housing workshop today; they are hosting a barbeque prior to the event which begins at 1 p.m.

**D. Intergovernmental Housing Task Force**

Traverse City Mayor Michael Estes discussed the formation of a joint intergovernmental housing task force, which came out of the idea that elected officials need to be involved in order to facilitate some of the projects that housing stakeholders come up with. There is a housing need up and down the scale;

more and more people want to live closer to Traverse City. We're hopeful that this will develop into something positive that will address housing on a regional level. The first meeting is scheduled for October 23. Representatives include himself, Commissioner Gary Howe, Garfield Township Supervisor Chuck Korn, Grand Traverse County Board member Herb Lemcool, and an East Bay Township representative. Once the group meets, we'll discuss other key representatives to participate. The biggest issue is, what can government do to facilitate affordable housing projects. The City has had some excellent experiences with public-private partnerships, and we hope there will be more opportunities to do that. A lot of the background work will come from the County.

John Sych stated that they have been working closely with City and Township staff. He handed out a proposed framework for the Task Force. One thing that's important is that this didn't come from staff, it came from elected leadership. When we look at housing there are four different parts to move it forward, and leadership is one part that has been quiet. The other parts are communication/outreach, planning and policy, and investment/financing, which is another area where we haven't had a lot of activity. Leadership has been supportive for the most part when it comes to plans and studies, and to some extent projects, but it hasn't really stepped out in front. One of the complaints we've heard about the Task Force to date is that it's too focused on the County's urban areas, but the membership right now reflects where the greatest need is. It doesn't necessarily need to end there, but for now it's focused on the greatest need.

M. Estes stated that he and Herb Lemcool initially discussed two county commissioners to ensure county-wide representation. It will likely evolve over time, but right now representation covers at least 75% of the county.

Gary Howe stated that he's really interested in housing. He has a lot of concerns about the transportation end of the issue. He noted that housing and transportation issues aren't connected so much to where people work, but to all of the trips associated with amenities like shopping, etc. So it's about density and about having housing where people want to spend their time and live their lives. He added that he's interested as to how we can continue to supplement our plans, etc. with new data and information.

J. Sych stated that continued engagement and ongoing communication between leadership and others is important to ensure that we know what types of housing we want and to make sure that it gets built. It's a long process to get something built, and we need to have ongoing communication.

T. Allen asked what the expectations for the task force are. M. Estes stated that there's a lot of money out there. When we collaborate, we go to the top of the list – so this could be an opportunity. Everyone has pursued projects individually, but if we work together it will be easier to have projects materialize.

C. Moorman stated that she's hopeful that it will lead to more than one project at a time. She added that the local units of government have always been very supportive and helpful; coming together there may be an energy going that might result in greater success.

M. Estes referred to the Depot Project, and noted that without cooperation between the County, City, and developers, the project wouldn't move forward.

J. Kowal referred to the new jobs occurring in outlying areas, i.e. Meijer, and asked how the City and Task Force planned to address the housing needs from that development. M. Estes stated that townships each have their own planning and zoning, and that's why it's important to take a regional approach with County representation. J. Sych stated that we have to work with those communities too – there are opportunities in those townships – but we want to focus on urban areas first, and then hopefully other areas will want to join in. Acme is going to be a bit of a challenge, due to the need to have a lot of workers out in that area and there are not a lot of housing options out there. We'd like to partner with the townships if they're interested; we don't want to force them, but do want to support them.

G. Howe stated that we should also consider partnerships and relationships with other counties, villages, etc.

J. Sych hopes that we're also talking about our capacity in these discussions and how to build capacity so we can address this regional issue. He commented on the need for private sector engagement and noted that we haven't really marketed ourselves to developers for affordable housing. He discussed some of the mechanisms that could encourage or incentivize the private sector, such as brownfield incentives or simplifying the development process.

V. Coulter noted that the timing is great, because the Framework is just coming out, and there is a lot of data to show the way.

Members discussed how to best communicate between developers, nonprofits, and resource providers/partners like the County. J. Courtade discussed how to bring developers to the table to be a part of the discussion – they will be driving a lot of this but how do we get them here? What is the message that we should bring to the Home Builders Association?

E. Syrewicze noted that the discussion keeps coming back to homeownership, but there is a huge need for rental and supportive housing. G. Howe stated that we'll have to rely on staff to ensure that we're addressing all parts of the spectrum. E. Syrewicze stated that it's important to have, right at the get-go, clear definitions of the different types of housing that we need.

J. Sych stated he sees that the Task Force will be focusing on questions such as, what are we missing to make development happen? How do we get development to happen?

T. Allen said that there are certain housing issues that are in a crisis situation. Discussion on keeping lines of communication open to ensure that messages don't get lost.

G. Howe stated that politicians don't know what we don't know. Our primary role is getting attention to these issues – we're already getting media attention. He doesn't think the Task Force is a complete solution but it should be an ongoing discussion. He discussed some policy changes to allow homeowners

to generate income from their homes through options like AirBnB, and also by streamlining the accessory dwelling unit process.

E. Syrewicze discussed the need to educate the community on the types of housing that are needed, particularly those that are most in need. J. Sych agreed that it's important to clarify the wide array of the types of housing, but the goal is to work on a number of types of projects at one time - to address the full array of needs. What he's looking for in the government sector is support. We've had some projects that have been shot down, and we want to be sure going forward that if the projects are good, that they have the support needed to go forward.

C. Moorman said she wants to know from the development community on what they need to get something done.

### **E. A Framework for Housing in Northwest Michigan**

S. Lucas reviewed the housing chapter of the Framework for Our Future: A Regional Prosperity Plan. Members discussed potential changes and additions to the homelessness goals.

### **F. Roundtable Discussion**

T. Allen noted that the Continuum of Care is merging into a ten-county Continuum. We'll maintain a local working group. The larger group will meet four times a year. In between, the local work groups will continue to work on their particular issues.

W. Irvin updated that there will be an open house at the Depot Project this fall.

E. Syrewicze stated that there will be a music fundraiser for NMSH at Chateau Chantal, as well as a TART Trails Ride for Dignity on October 11.

C. Moorman stated that Goodwill is finishing due diligence for Carson Square and hope to begin construction this fall. It will be 36 units of supportive housing.