



HOUSING SOLUTIONS NETWORK MEETING

Tuesday, November 8, 2011

9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Members Present

Barb Lemcool, Grand Traverse County Collaborative
Cheryl Naperala, GGTA CoC
Pat Hess, NHCM
Jeff Vitton, Grand Traverse County
Pam Doty -Nation, Habitat for Humanity
Kevin Cranson, HomeStretch
Julie Gardner, MSHDA
Rachel Kuntzsch, KBS
Jason Ball, KBS
Jodie Willobee, MSHDA

Cindy Eveleigh Goodwill
Bob Long, USDA RD
Ron Crummel, Leelanau County
Bill Merry, HomeStretch
Dee Wilkinson, Area Agency on Aging
Patty O'Donnell, NWMCOG
Cathy Odom, NMCAA
Mike Powers, SEEDS
Virginia Coulter, Grand Traverse County
Emilee Syrewicze, Foundation for Mental Health
Tom Edmiston, Great Lakes Capital Fund

Staff Present

Sarah Lucas, NWMCOG

A. Welcome and Introductions

B. Consideration of Agenda

The agenda was accepted as presented.

C. Consideration of November 8, 2011 Meeting Minutes

Bob Long noted a correction to the name of Bayview Apartments, which is now Patterson Apartments. The minutes were accepted as modified.

D. County Updates

Bob Long noted that USDA RD is still making loans, but 504 funding is slow.

Bill Merry noted that Homestretch and Habitat have been working with the City of Traverse City on purchase agreement and other details of the Depot project. The City Commission will discuss the project at their meeting on January 23.

Cathy Odom announced that Val Stone, NMCAA, is retiring, and there will be a retirement party on January 31.

E. Great Lakes Capital Fund

Tom Edmiston of the Great Lakes Capital Fund discussed programs and services. The GLCF is a Community Development Finance Organization with a focus on the low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC) program. It was created by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) to bring more investment into Michigan.

Later it expanded its scope of services/programming to include economic development as well as community development. The service area now includes Indiana, Illinois, upstate New York, Minnesota, and Wisconsin as well as Michigan. He reviewed services including tax credit investment, lending, title services, predevelopment loans and grants, and community leadership. Tax credit investment activities, which include aspects of the project such as financial packaging, asset management, construction management, etc., focus on smaller projects, distressed communities, and special needs populations, in partnership with nonprofits. He explained the New Market Tax Credits and Federal Historic Tax Credits programs.

Members discussed Capital Fund services and activities. Ron Crummel asked what percentage of LIHTC applications are approved. T. Edmiston answered that about a third of them are awarded.

F. TC Saves and Weatherization

Mike Powers of SEEDS explained SEEDS activities and programs. They are an environmental engineering firm with programs including energy analysis for municipalities, schools, etc.; afterschool programs; and the Youth Conservation Corps. He explained the TC Saves program, which is funded by a grant awarded to the City of Traverse City as part of a partnership between the City, SEEDS, and MLUI, with assistance from NMCAA and the Traverse City Housing Commission. The program covers the Oak Park and North Traverse Heights neighborhood. It offers a \$1000 energy assessment to homeowners for \$100; implementation of recommendations can be covered by a 0% loan. Contractors Brown Lumber and Anderson Builders are working with homeowners to implement the energy efficiency features. About 200 homeowners have signed up for the program. SEEDS will be packaging the data and results from the program; they hope to find additional funding to expand and continue the program. He noted that not a lot of contractors are trained for this type of energy efficiency work; SEEDS is seeking in-kind and cash support for a training program that will prepare contractors, provide materials, etc. for a weatherization program.

G. HUD Regional Planning Grant

Patty O'Donnell, Northwest Michigan Council of Governments, updated on the HUD Regional Planning grant. The grant is provided through the federal Sustainable Communities program and is for \$660,000 over 3 years. The project will develop a regional sustainable development plan for the Grand Vision region, with a focus on underserved communities/populations. Elements of the plan will include housing, energy, environment, transportation, and land use. We will be looking for the Grand Vision Networks, including Housing, to provide guidance in the development of the plan. NWMCOG is still working through grant approval details with HUD; more details will be forthcoming.

H. Organizational Items

Members reviewed the 2012 meeting schedule. The July meeting is scheduled for Cherry Festival week. The group agreed to move the July meeting to the third Wednesday (July 17). Sarah Lucas asked members to contact her with agenda items or presentations they would like scheduled for meetings.

The group discussed appointing a chair. Due to his role as the spokesperson for the Grand Vision, Kim Pontius is no longer able to serve as co-chair for this group. Consensus for Virginia Coulter to remain in the chair position.

I. Roundtable Discussion and Announcements

Cheryl Naperala updated that the Continuum of Care has received its annual HUD grant of \$660,000. She noted that based on population, the area is only eligible for \$176,000; a number of organizations apply for small group grants through the application, raising the total award amount.

Pat Hess noted that there are still housing vouchers available for non-elderly disabled individuals transitioning out of nursing homes. She noted that several qualified individuals are waiting for accessible housing opportunities; and others are not able to find single-person homes/apartments, and the voucher will not cover a two-bedroom or larger home for a single-person household.

Sarah Lucas noted that the registration for the January 19 Housing Partnerships workshop is full. There's a waiting list and people are also signing up for the events scheduled on February 9 and 23.

Pam Doty-Nation updated that Habitat for Humanity has completed a home in Kalkaska and is looking at an opportunity in Kingsley.

Julie Gardner stated that MSHDA staff and consultants will be meeting with Leelanau County staff and others regarding possibilities for MSHDA's new placemaking/strategy requirements. Rachel Kuntzsch of KBS stated that Kuntzsch Business Services is acting as the technical assistance provider to MSHDA as they transition the county allocation programs into a targeted program. She noted that based on discussions today, this area is already targeting areas – i.e. TC Saves. Leelanau County will be one of the first counties to move through this transition, which puts this area at an advantage, as they will help to shape the process overall. She stated that because the county allocation grants are fairly small, there is a desire to avoid onerous requirements. She expects that there will be a framework for the new requirements within 6 months.

Jodie Willobee of MSHDA stated that this is a significant change for the county allocation program, but noted that it is the last MSHDA program that is not targeted. She added that she's glad that Leelanau is one of the first areas to go through this as there is a good understanding of placemaking concepts here which should help us through the process.

Cindy Eveleigh noted that in addition to the housing workshops for landlords scheduled through February, there are workshops scheduled for the third Thursday of each month through June. IST members are working on coordinating the events.

J. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11 a.m.