



# CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Richfield, Minnesota

## Joint City Council, Housing and Redevelopment Authority, and Planning Commission Work Session

### April 15, 2024

<b>CALL TO ORDER</b>
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Chair Vrieze Daniels called the work session to order at 5:45 p.m. in the Heredia Room.

*HRA/EDA Members Present:* Gordon Hanson, Sean Hayford Oleary, Mary Supple, Erin Vrieze Daniels

*Council Members Present:* Sharon Christensen; Simon Trautmann; Ben Whalen

*Planning Commissioners Present:* Stephanie Hollman, Eddie Holmvig, Cole Hooey, Ben Surma, Brett Stursa,

*Staff Present* Melissa Poehlman, Community Development Director; Julie Urban; Assistant Community Development Director; Hillary Lovelace, Housing Specialist; Sam Crosby, Planner; and Katie Rodriguez; City Manager

*Guests* Johnny Opara

<b>ITEM #1</b>	<b>PRESENTATION TO CITY COUNCIL AND HRA ON THE LOCAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING AID</b>
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Assistant Community Development Director Urban gave the presentation covering the following about the Local Affordable Housing Aid (LAHA) program: background and overview of the program, deadlines, eligible uses, income restrictions, priorities, uses in Richfield, and new program ideas.

Planning Commissioner Hooey spoke about using the funding for rental assistance instead of code enforcement costs.

Commissioner Hayford Oleary asked if the 100% AMI requirement could be raised to 125% for flexibility purposes. Urban stated there could be flexibility.

Council Member Whalen spoke about the possibility of creating new city-owned housing. Community Development Director Poehlman spoke about the difficulties with creating and managing public housing in the city.

Hooley and Urban spoke about program priorities with the HRA.

<b>ITEM #2</b>	<b>PRESENTATION BY JOHNNY OPARA, JO DEVELOPERS, OF A PROPOSED AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FOR 6501-25 PENN AVE SOUTH</b>
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Mr. Opara gave the presentation and spoke about his company and past projects. He also went over the proposed development on Penn Avenue.

Commissioner Hollman stated she liked that the project was affordable and asked if there was any possibility of turning it to mixed use. Opara spoke about tax credits and the difficulties in finding investors for commercial spaces.

Commissioner Hanson stated he liked that the project was affordable and had multi-room units. He further stated an interest in mixed-use but would support this if mixed-use wasn't possible.

Commissioner Hayford O'Leary stated he preferred mixed-use and spoke about the outdoor parking spaces. He further stated that if there was no mixed-use, he would want excellent urban design that gave the residents a reason to walk outside.

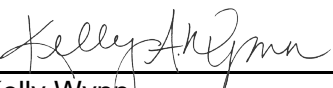
Council Member Whalen stated he did not see a need for mixed-use. He further stated that after a string of past denials, he really wanted to see something get approved and really liked the proposal.

There was a conversation between staff, Opara, and commissioners about the difficulty in finding investors for commercial uses in the current climate. They also spoke of the need of more residential units in the area.


<b>ADJOURNMENT</b>
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Chair Vrieze Daniels adjourned the work session at 6:57 pm.

Date Approved: May 14, 2024

  
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 Kelly Wynh  
 Interim City Clerk

  
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 Mary B. Supple  
 Mayor

  
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 Katie Rodriguez  
 City Manager