

Village of Skokie
Housing Sub-Committee of the Plan Commission

Monday, January 8, 2024

7:00 P.M.

Skokie Village Hall, 5127 Oakton Street, Skokie, IL, Conference Room D&E

- I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUOURM
- II. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 11, 2023
- III. DISCUSSION OF DRAFT OUTLINE OF HOUSING CHAPTER THEMES
- IV. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DISCUSSION
- V. NEXT STEPS
- VI. PUBLIC COMMENT
- VII. ADJOURNMENT

The next regular meeting of the Housing Sub-Committee of the Plan Commission is scheduled for **Monday, February 12, 2024 at 7:00 P.M.** in CONFERENCE ROOM D & E at Skokie Village Hall, 5127 Oakton Street, Skokie, IL.



Housing Sub-Committee of the Plan Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: Monday, December 11, 2023

Skokie Village Hall, 5127 Oakton Street, Conference Room D/E

SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Scott Berman, Jeff Burman,
Joe Maschek, Melissa Ponce,
Charles Saxe, Michael Shiner,
Abigail Stone, Hersh Friedman

SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Peter Ousley- Chair,
Scott Gendell,
Johnathan Lavin, Vijai Gupta

STAFF PRESENT:

Johanna Nyden, Community Dev.
Director
Justin Malone, Neighborhood &
Housing Coordinator
Jose Acosta, Planning
Coordinator

(I) CALL TO ORDER

In Chair Ousley's absence, a motion to make Scott Berman the Temporary Chair for the Sub-Committee was made by Jeff Burman and seconded by Charles Saxe. The votes were 8 in favor.

A quorum being present, Temporary Chair Scott Berman called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

(II) APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to amend the minutes of the November 7, 2023 meeting to include a ranking of the previously discussed themes was made by Scott Berman, seconded by Jeff Burman. The votes were 7 in favor, with Abigail Stone voting opposed.

A motion to further amend the minutes of the November 7, 2023 meeting to include a public comment from Gail Schechter was made by Jeff Burman, seconded by Charles Saxe. The votes were 7 in favor, with Michael Shiner voting opposed.

(III) DISCUSSION OF DRAFT OUTLINE OF HOUSING CHAPTER THEMES

Committee members discussed ways in which the communication of ideas could be better organized and shared between staff and members of the Sub-committee. Including separating staff comments in the outline from the Sub-committee's input, giving sub-committee members more time with materials, and color-coding comments and input in order to differentiate items from last meeting comments, new additions, and what was talked about at today's meeting.

Sub-Committee discussed topics in other Village documents that may or may not be incorporated such as encouraging density and affordability and how the recently disapproved Inclusionary Housing Ordinance relates to the work that the committee is doing.

Sub-Committee reviewed the outline of themes and walked through each one to review staff input and introduce other ideas.

Hersh Friedman stated that there is a conflict between zoning standards and character and that more restrictions on development can lead to projects being more expensive. Mr. Friedman stated that more flexibility within the housing standards is necessary.

Charles Saxe stated that current building requirements and subjectivity are difficult to deal with as a resident and they should instead be more objective and predictable. Mr. Saxe also stated that the process should be less prescriptive and currently Skokie is restrictive.

Johanna Nyden stated that form-based zoning could be an option to consider in the future.

Hersh Friedman stated that under the Flexibility category could be the term "predictability" with looser regulations.

Charles Saxe stated that clarity is very important, not necessarily "looser". Mr. Saxe stated that what Skokie was originally built for doesn't exist anymore and that more adaptivity would allow more than what is currently allowed in resident's spaces.

Johanna Nyden stated that one example under Flexibility is that housing is not used in the same way today as it was before, such as work from home and turning a bedroom into an office.

Jeff Burman stated that standards for safety are still necessary as a response to the conversation of "looser" regulations and noted that some

regulations are set in place not to be specifically restrictive but serve the purpose of ensuring safety standards.

Johanna Nyden stated that the Plan Commission can look at specific policies separately, such as height and setback requirements.

Joe Maschek stated that expedited and streamline policies would help with development approval.

Hersh Friedman stated that a streamlined process would be less onerous. Johanna Nyden stated that a phrase similar to “look to continue making the permitting process better” could be an option to the chapter.

Johanna Nyden stated that Staff is striving to create a document that is accessible with language that is easy to understand but also trying to stay away from a “staff-driven” plan.

(IV) COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DISCUSSION & SELECTION OF DATES

The Sub-Committee debated on when is the right time to begin community engagement and whether or not the need for a fully-fledged document is finished before presenting to the public.

Charles Saxe stated that open-ended community input is preferred, therefore a completed document is not needed.

Scott Berman stated that a document with at least some conclusions, such as guidelines, should be completed prior to beginning community input.

Abigail Stone stated that smaller and more intimate group engagement methods are more effective.

The Sub-Committee would like Staff to present ideas on some examples and best practices for community engagement.

Date of January 29 or 30 established to begin community engagement

(V) NEXT STEPS

Next meeting for the Housing Sub-Committee of the Plan Commission is scheduled for Monday, January 8, 2024 at 7 PM.

(VI) PUBLIC COMMENT

Debbie Cohen stated that she wants to ensure that inclusive and affordable housing is at the forefront of the Housing chapter, that the Chapter remains flexible, so the demand meets the needs of the demographics of the community and would like to see specific examples relating to pathways to homeownership. Ms. Cohen stated that in terms of community engagement,

she prefers in-person, breakout style meetings in order to get buy-in from more residents for a win-win situation.

Gail Schechter stated that the key value for an “inclusive and diverse community” is missing from the chapter themes. Ms. Schechter also suggested looking at the Village of Northbrook’s Housing Plan to mimic some of their ideas and use as a lens for Skokie. Ms. Schechter also stated that community outreach should incorporate all communities in Skokie.

Isaac Rubenstein stated the need for clarification as to why there is a push for affordable housing and its overall importance.

(VII) ADJOURNMENT

Temporary Chair Scott Berman made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Joe Maschek. Meeting adjourned at 9:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by:

Justin Malone, Neighborhood & Housing Coordinator

Memorandum
Community Development Department

TO: Plan Commission Housing Sub-Committee

FROM: Johanna Nyden, Community Development Director
Justin Malone, Neighborhood & Housing Coordinator
Jose Acosta, Planning Coordinator

DATE: December 5, 2023

SUBJECT: **Update on themes for the Village's Housing Chapter from the Housing Sub-Committee of the Plan Commission**

LEGEND: Sub-Committee Input (Nov 7) – Light Blue

Staff Input – Purple

December 11th Additions - Brown

This memorandum provides an expanded outline of the themes that were discussed during the November 7th, 2023 meeting of the Housing Sub-Committee of the Plan Commission for updating the Comprehensive Plan as it relates to housing (2nd meeting).

Themes discussed for housing chapter update:

- Flexibility
- Character
- Reasonable Standards
- Protect and Conserve

Within these themes, the sub-committee identified topics they'd like to see addressed in the updated housing chapters:

Flexibility:

- Increase housing supply to meet demand of growing population
 - Skokie's population has been steadily growing since 1990. Reaching a total population of 67,824 in 2020, a 4.7% increase in population from 10 years prior.
 - The total population in Skokie has grown disproportionate to the number of housing units. From 2010 to 2020, the population increased by 4.7% while in that same 10-year span, the housing stock only increased by 0.76%.
- Provide a variety of housing types and sizes within Village constraints
 - The Village housing stock is comprised of 61% single family homes and 38.7% 2 or more-unit, multi-family homes. (CMAP, American Community Survey).
 - The housing costs in Skokie are much higher than the Cook County averages, 55.5% of Skokie residents spend more than \$75,000 on housing costs, which

accounts for 20 to 30 percent of their income, despite being more affordable than further up the North Shore.

- Encourage pathways to homeownership
 - Examples
 - Chicago Housing Authority offers programs to encourage homeownership
 - HOME (Home Ownership Made Easy) offers two pathways to homeownership
 - 1. Choose to Own Program (CTO) allows qualified Housing Choice Voucher (HVC) and Public Housing families to use their housing subsidy to buy a home and receive monthly assistance with a portion of their mortgage payment. (Through CTO, more than 800 households have purchased their own home)
 - 2. Down Payment Assistance (DPA) program, in partnership with Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago, assists first time homeowners who meet eligibility requirements with a grant of up to \$20,000 to aid with down-payment and closing costs.
 - Community Partners for Affordable Housing (CPAH)- Homebuyer Education Classes and Counseling, Down Payment Assistance, Financial Counseling, Foreclosure Prevention
 - Community Land Trusts
- Encourage adaptive reuse for housing options for non-residential buildings
 - Identify areas of the code that may not support housing development
 - West Chicago Comprehensive Plan includes Adaptive Reuse with policies and implementation strategies ([WestChicago Plan.pdf \(dropbox.com\)](#) page 70)
 - Implement and coordinate “Showcase” events to show interested developers’ potential locations in West Chicago.
 - Review existing design guidelines for residential properties and update as needed, and create new commercial storefront guidelines, to support adaptive reuse and redevelopment
- Improve accessibility and walkability
 - Promote housing design that prioritizes pedestrian space and not car space
 - Encouraging homeowners and developers to use design practices that allow for increased walkability in residential areas by creating policies and standards that enforce this.
 - Example: (2023-14P) New Ordinance prohibiting new curb cuts for driveways in residential zones if lot is abutting a public alley. (relief may only be granted for mixed-use, business and industrial properties)

- Age-friendly development
 - Sullivan, Maine
 - Age-friendly Sullivan “Comfortable Home”
 - [Sullivan-Age-Friendly-Guide-FINAL.pdf \(sullivanmaine.org\)](#)
 - Program from MDI/Ellsworth Housing Authority that helps senior residents live more independently by offering home improvement opportunities to increase accessibility standards for the homes of older residents at no cost to them. (may not be applicable but home improvement programs like these might interest a range of Skokie residents)
- Encourage Sustainable practices/standards
 - Village of Skokie 2022 Environmental Sustainability Plan Actions
 - Reducing the share of population living in high energy poverty from 15.4% to 10% by 2030
 - Identify and publicize additional options for building improvement programs for both owner-occupied and rental properties that would reduce energy consumption for vulnerable populations and those living under high energy burden through added insulation, air sealing, passive energy systems, heat pumps, and higher efficiency equipment
 - Use grant, state, and municipal funding to implement an income-based payment system to allow low-income and fixed-income residents to participate in energy efficiency and weatherization programs at little to no cost.
 - Update community plans, zoning, and design standards to increase housing and community resilience to the impacts of climate change, including flooding, heat island, and extreme weather particularly for populations most vulnerable
 - Study changes to zoning ordinances to allow businesses such as restaurants, grocery stores, and medical facilities in or near residential areas.
 - Study the zoning ordinance to allow higher density development. Ordinance revision should consolidate and revise residential zoning categories to allow for an increase in housing density in all areas of the community.
 - Support neighborhood-based plans for all neighborhoods to encourage neighborhood identity, engagement and development. Plan goals should be to increase housing density, options, affordability, and equity while furthering the goals of the Sustainability Plan.
- Biking infrastructure installed at Howard Street, Main Street, Old Orchard Road, and Skokie Valley Trail ([Village of Skokie Comprehensive Plan Transportation Chapter](#))
- Sidewalk gap program

- Present items within the Village code that offer flexibility for both residents and Village Staff
- Study ability to implement Inclusionary Housing Ordinance
- Zoning Code changes to allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs)

Character:

- Appearances and character of new construction and significant remodeling
- Placemaking / creating sense of place and community
 - Neighborhood identity signage and wayfinding (directional signage)
 - Accessibility, Comfort, Social Spaces, Open spaces with programming (opportunities to sit and relax, eat, socialize, shop, etc)
 - Promoting native plantings and rain gardens among residents (for their own homes)
 - Creating a neighborhood/community garden
 - Establishing “Free Libraries” within neighborhoods
 - Connect residents to programs
 - Example: Chicago’s “Roof and Porch Repair Program” home repair assistance for low-income residents
- Continue incorporating Complete Streets ideas to improve walkability and pedestrian friendly environments as well as access to multi-use paths
 - Village of Skokie’s Complete Streets Policy (2016) [Complete Streets Policy \(2016\)](#)
 - Prioritizing pedestrian, bicycle, and transit modes of transportation for people of all ages and abilities. Context sensitive design standards means there is no “one size fits all” mindset in terms of street design.
- Good Urban Design
 - Sustainable building practices
 - Use of different building materials
 - Study potential of use of form-based code
 - Energy efficiency
- Protect neighborhood character by providing opportunities for existing residents to continue living in their neighborhoods
 - Assisting low-income residents with housing costs
 - Promote and encourage new housing developments to grow housing stock in our neighborhoods.
- Promote trees
- Guide growth to areas of change and ensuring context sensitive infill in such locations as designated redevelopment areas, corridors, and infill sites
- Zoning Standards
 - Building for today’s housing needs
 - Lot size
 - Consider smaller lot sizes for housing in R1 and R2 zoning districts

- Articulation of buildings
 - Zoning maximizes lot and creates extra bulk. Consider zoning changes that promote more aesthetically pleasing design.
- Recognize residential zoning district nuances

Reasonable Standards:

- ~~Clean, safe, dry (standards) to address home weatherization issues correlated with energy efficiency and energy poverty~~ (Remove? Duplicate comment)
- Increasing housing types to meet demand
 - Allow for a range of housing options to cater to diverse needs of families of all sizes and residents of all ages and socioeconomic levels
 - Ensure sustainable and high-quality developments [Green Globes](#) certification system that evaluates the environmental sustainability, health & wellness, and resilience of structures or single-family homes
 - [Fitwel](#) certification for new or existing buildings for added value, risk mitigation and data-driven reporting
 - [ENERGY STAR Home Upgrade](#) - crafted set of high-impact, energy efficiency improvements for existing homes to deliver energy and cost savings and a cleaner, healthier, and comfortable home (including single-family homes)
- Pedestrian friendly development ([Complete Streets](#))
 - [Smart Growth America Complete Streets Guide](#)
 - A complete street may include: sidewalks, bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders), special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible public transportation stops, frequent and safe crosswalks, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, narrower travel lanes, roundabouts and more.
 - The context and needs of users are different in rural, suburban, and urban communities, and streets will look different as a result, even when using a Complete Streets approach.
- [Village of Skokie's Complete Streets Policy \(2016\)](#)
- Placemaking
 - Establish an identity and theme in neighborhoods to create a sense of place
 - (e.g. Timber Ridge, Salem Village neighborhoods)
 - Create safe access and accommodations for different user experiences
 - Different zones for motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians
 - Use gateway features and signage to define the space
 - Establish the outer limits of the identified space
 - Wayfinding signs to let people know what services and attractions the area offers
 - Incorporate amenities to encourage people to increase their enjoyment of the area
 - Programming activities within spaces (passive versus active spaces)
 - Outdoor seating, trash receptacles, bike racks
 - Create a vision based on community needs and input as well as best practices

- Creating development guidelines (universal design and age-friendly)
 - Concept of Visibility:
 - Barrier-free access to buildings and houses
 - Allow for wider passages to accommodate wheelchairs, etc.
 - One bathroom on the main floor you can get into in a wheelchair
 - APA Planning for Equity Policy Guide
- Sustainability and energy efficiency Local Housing Solutions- Energy-Efficiency Standards
 - In built-out communities with little available land, requirements that apply when buildings are sold may be a more effective way to reduce residential energy consumption (required energy rating for attic insulation, low-flow toilets, setting targets for updated heating systems)
 - Some state and local energy codes may require reporting of energy usage to track consumption and encourage making efficiency improvements
- Resiliency in housing Build Change Guide to Resilient Housing
 - Disaster resistant
 - ~~Healthy & Secure— with adequate water, sanitation, ventilation, light, access, space, and security~~ (Remove? Duplicate comment)
 - Adaptable- can be expanded and adapted to growing populations, shifting demographics, and emerging technology
 - Scalable- able to meet the needs of families through a combination of policy change and access to finance and technology
 - Zoning code modifications to facilitate the use of lower-cost housing variations
 - Flexible height and setback guidelines when changing the footprint of the existing dwelling (through conditional uses or variances)
 - Allow the use of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in appropriate zoning districts (both internal and external)
 - Revisiting density zoning within existing single-family residential zoning districts
- Referencing previous plans when creating new policy
 - Skokie's Environmental Sustainability Plan (November 2022)
 - Complete Streets Policy for the Village of Skokie (March 2016)
- Clear implementation strategies
- Incorporate concepts from previous Skokie plans and use approved goals and strategies from them
- Reference equitable development policies EPA Smart Growth and Equitable Development
 - Draw on environmental justice, creating opportunities and regions where residents of all incomes, races, and ethnicities participate in and benefit from decisions that shape the places where they live
 - Emphasize that all residents should be protected from environmental hazards and enjoy access to environmental, health, economic, and social necessities such as clean air and water, adequate infrastructure, and job opportunities

- Reduce health and economic inequalities among localities and improve outcomes for low-income communities while building healthy metropolitan regions

Protect and Conserve:

- Encouraging homeownership and the development of existing uses and housing types
- Improving existing housing
 - More cost efficient
 - Avoids relocation
 - Investment in long-term residents
- Incentivizing affordable and attainable housing [Local Housing Solutions- Incentives to Encourage the Development of Lower-Cost Housing Types](#)
 - Streamlined permitting processes, reduced parking requirements, density bonuses, other variances
- Promoting partnerships with businesses and non-profits to assist with housing needs
- Strengthen repair programs for existing homeowners / Pride of ownership
- Study the feasibility of establishing a land trust
- Create a Housing Stock Registry to evaluate existing conditions of homes in Skokie
- Repurposing underutilized parcels [Brownfield / Greyfield Redevelopment Toolkit](#)
 - Adaptive reuse of buildings
 - Creative Public Finance (TIF or special purpose tax districts)
 - Sub-Area Plans (corridors, neighborhoods, etc.)
 - Infill Development (targeting vacant and underutilized land and building new structures that blend seamlessly within their context)
 - Mall-Suburban Corridor Retrofits (including older office parks, malls, strip centers, or older commercial development)
 - Redeveloping these spaces from single-use, auto-oriented developments into transit and pedestrian-friendly mixed-use centers that include housing to meet the current market demands and improve the tax base and physical vitality of the community.
 - Land Use Modeling / Scenario Planning
 - Consider how different growth patterns impact local priorities
 - Creates more informed decision making and coordination of local planning

Memorandum
Community Development Department

TO: Housing Sub-Committee of the Plan Commission

FROM: Johanna Nyden, Community Development Director
Justin Malone, Neighborhood & Housing Coordinator
Jose Acosta, Planning Coordinator

DATE: January 5, 2024

**SUBJECT: Village of Skokie Housing Sub-Committee of the Plan Commission
Community Engagement Plan**

This memorandum provides a guideline for the Housing Sub-Committee of the Plan Commission's goal of gaining public input toward the update of the Village's Housing Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan through community engagement practices.

Members of the Housing Sub-Committee and Staff will conduct a public meeting to gather qualitative information regarding resident's concerns, goals, and ideas to contribute to the updated Housing Chapter of the Village's Comprehensive Plan. Each meeting will start with a 15-minute introduction presentation by a combo of Housing Sub-Committee members and staff relaying the overall goals of the update to the Housing chapter and the role of the Sub-Committee. Staff will spend the majority of the meeting facilitating participation and making surveys available in order to obtain resident feedback.

The proposed plan is to hold two (2) public meetings:

- **Tuesday, January 30 from 6:30-8:30 P.M.** at the Devonshire Cultural Center (4400 Greenwood St.) in the West Program Room (2nd floor)
- **Wednesday, January 31 from 9-11 A.M.** (tentative) at the Skokie Public Library (5215 Oakton St.) in the Business & Community Center Room (2nd floor)
(Both locations are ADA Accessible)

Staff proposes the following meeting schedule format:

- Presentation- *15 Minutes*
- Facilitated discussion reviewing Housing Sub-Committee themes- *30-40 Minutes*
**May include small group discussion to better understand the concerns/ideas regarding housing in Skokie.*
- Additional discussion/feedback/report back- *20-30 Minutes*
- Next Steps- *15 Minutes*
- Survey will be offered to Skokie residents

The survey will be around ten (10) questions with both open and closed-ended answers. After the scheduled meetings, the survey and supplemental information will be made available to a broader group of residents and Skokie worker in order to receive additional feedback. Staff and Sub-Committee members will strive to make sure the community engagement methods are inclusive, transparent, and respectful, making sure that everyone is able to provide feedback. Staff will then summarize feedback into the Housing Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan and present the completed chapter to the Plan Commission for their comment and approval.

The Village will generate information to engage and promote the event to both residents and workers in Skokie.

Staff's presentation will include information regarding the current concepts within the Housing chapter of Skokie's Comprehensive Plan (Accessibility, Choice, Location, and Change in Development Patterns). Since the implementation of the Housing Sub-Committee in October 2023, additional concepts have been identified as key components to include in the updated Housing chapter. These additional themes (Flexibility, Character, Reasonable Standards, Protect and Conserve) will be among those presented at the introduction of these public meetings.