

Agenda
Ottawa County Housing Commission
West Olive Administration Building – Conference Room E
12220 Fillmore Street, West Olive, MI 49460
Thursday, June 6, 2024, 10:00 am



1. Call to Order
2. Establish Quorum
3. Approval of the Agenda for the June 6, 2024 Meeting
4. Approval of the [Minutes](#) from the May 16, 2024 Meeting
5. Election of Officers

Motion: To nominate _____ as President

6. Old Business
 - A. RLF Implementation Update (Standing Agenda Item)
 - B. Housing Brownfield TIF Legislation

7. New Business
 - A. [MicroHomes Concept](#) Work Group Formation and Membership:

Motion: To approve the formation of a subcommittee to explore the viability of Microhome Development Concept that initially includes two (2) members of the Housing Commission, two (2) County Staff, two (2) citizen advocates, and one (1) local township official.

Motion: To appoint [Jared Schuitema](#) and [Pat Harmon](#) as representatives of the Ottawa County Housing Commission to serve on the newly established MicroHomes Work Group, as well as [Paul Sachs](#) and [Kylie Vosburg](#) to represent County Staff, designer [Nick Rolinski](#) and housing champion [Peter Kooshian](#) to represent citizen advocates, and _____ to represent local township officials

8. Public Comments
9. Other Business/Discussion Items
 - A. Next Meeting: July 11, 2024 (10:00 a.m.)

10. Adjournment

11. **Optional:** Hom Flats in Holland (24th Street); Groundbreaking Event (11:00 a.m.; *exact location details to follow*)

UNOFFICIAL MINUTES

OTTAWA COUNTY HOUSING COMMISSION

DATE: May 16, 2024

PLACE: Ottawa County Fillmore Complex, Conference Room F

PRESENT: Jon Anderson, Holly Cole, Pat Harmon, Klynt Marcusse, Jared Schuitema

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Cheryl Clark, Becky Huttenga, Paul Sachs, Pam Vanden Heuvel, Kylie Vosburg

PUBLIC: David Barnosky, Jacob Bonnema, Josh Brugger, Annie Deater, Chris Uhl, Don Wilkinson

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President Schuitema called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. A quorum was present to do business.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

HC 24-14 Harmon moved to approve the Agenda for May 16, 2024. The motion passed.
UNANIMOUS

HC 24-15 Harmon moved to approve the Minutes from April 11, 2024. The motion passed.
UNANIMOUS

PRESENTATION

Becky Huttenga presented on Housing Brownfield Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Legislation.

OLD BUSINESS

Chris Uhl (IFF) presented an update on the current Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) projects located within Ottawa County.

Sachs briefly reviewed the MicroHomes Concept and recommended that this commission develop a proforma of what this looks like on paper. Sachs suggested forming a work group to spearhead this concept that would report to the Housing Commission. Sachs recommended including Nick Rolinski as a member of said work group.

HC 24-16 Harmon moved to create a study group comprised of community members that are interested in the microhome development concept; and whose charter would be to identify who we are solving the housing problem for, what is considered affordable, and what are the design/build options.
Motion supported by Schuitema.
The Commission discussed the concept, the need to form a study group and determined to create a more generalized motion language for the next meeting.
Motion was tabled.

UNOFFICIAL MINUTES

Harmon will draft motion language for the next meeting. Sachs proposed next steps regarding building momentum and awareness of the MicroHomes Concept. These next steps included distributing a press release, updating the Ottawa County Housing Commission's webpage, distributing a survey within the press release garnering local interest in living in a MicroHome, and determining technical partners to include in the study group. Staff will distribute the proposed press release/survey and proposed webpage changes to the Commissioners later this week.

NEW BUSINESS

The Commission discussed the timing of electing a Housing Commission President now that the vacant seat has been filled and agreed to hold the election at the next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments were made by the following:

1. David Barnosky

OTHER BUSINESS/DISCUSSION ITEMS

Vice President Schuitema noted there are articles included in the packet for review.

Vice President Schuitema stated that the next Housing Commission meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 6, 2024 at 10:00 am.

ADJOURNMENT

HC 24-17

Schuitema moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:50 a.m. The motion passed.

UNANIMOUS



Ottawa County

Where Freedom Rings

Press
Release

For Immediate Release | 05.28.24

Press Contact: [Department of Strategic Impact](#) | 616-738-4852

Ottawa County Housing Commission Exploring MicroHome Development Concept

West Olive, MI - This is not new news: Ottawa County is facing an ongoing housing crisis. The average sale price of a home is around \$400,000, which is more than double what most residents can afford. Because the entry point into homeownership is so expensive, many of Ottawa County's first-time, prospective homebuyers are remaining in rental units and consequently unable to acquire financial equity. In addition to first-time homebuyers, much of the County's workforce and retired residents are also impacted by soaring house prices. These members of our community are being forced out of Ottawa County, away from their families, communities, and workplaces, in order to find more affordable housing in neighboring counties.

The Ottawa County Housing Commission (OCHC) remains dedicated to identifying solutions to combat the rising cost of housing in the County. One potential solution is to focus on constructing smaller footprint homes, i.e. the MicroHome. The Commission's MicroHome Development concept would seek to realistically increase the supply of 'starter' homes that are missing from the existing housing ecosystem. "I've toured several microhome dwellings that are absolutely stunning at both 600 square feet and 350 square feet; you'd be amazed the potential for emerging young professionals and aging seniors," stated Paul Sachs, Director of Strategic Impact for Ottawa County. "My first house in Ottawa County was an adorable less than 1,000 square foot single family home. I want my employees, friends, my friends' kids to all have that opportunity too; it just doesn't exist anymore."

The standard American home is 2,800 sq ft on average and has been on a trajectory of increase for many years. At less than 1,000 sq ft, the MicroHome Concept could be a practical and affordable solution to meet the needs of residents today.

In addition to large home sizes, zoning requirements with local jurisdictions

can also contribute to current prices for housing. The OCHC intends to facilitate this Project by connecting with local officials to help talk through and overcome zoning and policy barriers that impact cost as well as the ability to construct smaller footprint homes. The OCHC also intends to build support from residents, businesses, and other stakeholders to help advocate for more sustainable workforce housing.

One of the ongoing questions among the Housing Commission is why don't we have more starter homes being built? "Unfortunately, it's a common misconception among the general public that smaller homes translate into a lower property value in the surrounding areas. We need to reverse our thinking on this. We need housing stock for the most amount of demand, and that's folks working in Ottawa County. The MicroHomes project provides an opportunity for home ownership to build equity and grow their financial freedom to realize the American Dream," commented Jared Schuitema, Local Realtor and Vice-President of the Ottawa County Housing Commission.

If this is a type of home you would want to live in, please visit the following link and let us know!

[Feedback Survey](#)

The ability to scale the MicroHome Concept quickly to meet resident demands for housing is largely dependent on whether high-quality design and construction can be achieved without a reliance on government tax subsidies and/or grants. That is a critical piece of this complex housing supply and demand puzzle that the OCHC is diligently working through.

The Commission has several specific objectives they'd like to accomplish as part of this Pilot Project. These include but are not limited to 1) Build support for the Concept among prospective homebuyers; 2) Solicit partners interested in assisting with a proof-of-concept; 3) Secure local government approvals to allow (by right) for smaller footprint dwellings and well-crafted MicroHome neighborhoods.

Nick Rolinski, local designer based in Holland, MI, has already stepped up to help support the Housing Commission with this undertaking. “MicroHomes, if done correctly, can not only be architecturally appealing but also functional, enduring, and harmonious within the existing fabric of a community and local neighborhood. The OCHC’s goal of operating without reliance on State or Federal subsidies is lofty but healthy, and worth exploring in the spirit of expanding our local wherewithal to respond to housing crisis. Lessons learned through the process can serve housing projects of all scales, while physical results will also change real lives. The effort will require careful and principled design thinking, creativity, collaboration, and advocacy for this kind of housing and place.”

While still in the concept-development phase, the OCHC is diligently preparing a detailed strategy to launch a formal MicroHomes Development project in a local community. A MicroHomes working group will be formed to dedicate time and resources to develop a comprehensive feasibility plan. Helping residents build equity through homeownership is the strategy needed to help everyone flourish. One of the first steps in this endeavor is to garner support from residents who are interested in this type of development.

Your engagement and support are vital to the progression of this project. Please also visit the County Housing Commission’s [webpage](#) to keep updated on the latest developments of this project and other efforts that are ongoing and/or in the works.