

**PEQUOT LAKES HOUSING TASK FORCE MEETING  
MINUTES FROM 9/29/2020**

**Attendees:** Pat Smith, Mark Pietig, Collin Jacobs, Sheila Holley, Bill Brekken, Mark Jurchen, Michelle Lelwica, Robert Ritter, Chris Lindholm, Angie Duos, Ross.

**Current Market:** Mark shared that he had checked Zillow and only about 3 homes were for sale in the city of Pequot Lakes. Demand is high with sales made days after listings at usually sold for more than the asking price. Mark P. indicated that empty lots are not selling at near the rate of existing or spec homes. Mark P. also shared that purchase considerations are being made based on lifestyle more than cost.

Pat said that he had observed a diminishing desire for custom homes, but rather the purchaser seeks turnkey homes which may be spec homes. Both Mark and Pat indicated a need for single family, one level houses. The group concurred on the observations made. Michelle shared that she had been informed the stock of rentals may be sufficient at this time but again, there is a need for all types and prices of homes which address the need for first homes, larger higher priced homes, and houses that fit the needs of the retirement sector of the market.

**Challenges:** The general consensus centered on challenges involving shortage of builders and sub contractors to build the types of homes needed along with the rising cost of materials and land. Also discussed were shortage of available lots with infra-structure which are marketable and ready to go for development and/or redevelopment, and financing both the initial start-up costs along with the structure itself. Fees, regulations, and zoning issues were discussed as potential areas to address to expedite the process. A formal plan and facilitator is needed to address the functionality of the group's efforts and process.

**Housing and Lot Inventory:** Mark J. shared with the group that an inventory of existing lots with some form of infrastructure within the City of Pequot Lakes had been done. It still has additional properties to be added and needs to be reviewed with Planning and Zoning to address the feasibility of utilizing the properties as well as any potential changes to be considered for the existing ordinances. Properties will need to be identified as to marketability and the timeline for rehabilitation or new construction. Aggregating lots for multi-family dwellings was also discussed.

Bill Brekken shared that many communities offer tax forfeited lots at a discount or for free. Pequot Lakes has only 1 lot that is tax forfeited and Bill emphasized that having control of the

property, such as tax forfeited, facilitates incentives for builders and investors. Acquiring lots would need to be addressed by the City if this type of approach was to be utilized.

Properties on both sides of Patriot Avenue in the south part of town were identified as areas that should be considered for rezoning for residential or mixed use. As an example, a property on the north end of Patriot Avenue, near Sibley Lake, currently being marketed for commercial use could be an excellent parcel to begin an additional development without large front end investment for infra-structure.

**Players to be involved in housing efforts:** Financial Institutions, builders and contractors, HRAs both County and Pequot Lakes, City Officials and Staff, Architects, Employers, Planning and Zoning, Home buyers, Real Estate Agents, Developers, School District, Suppliers, Investors, Initiative Foundation, Region 5, and Landowners.

**Objectives and formal plan:**

1. Engage the Brainerd/Crow Wing HRA along with the Pequot Lakes HRA to determine their role and assistance they would contribute to the effort.
2. Inform and open discussion with the existing and newly elected City officials and staff on the need and current efforts underway in the area of housing. (Mark J. and Michelle)
3. Establish a plan to rehabilitate existing homes and acquire vacant lots in the city. Identify and contact those properties that may be sold or transferred in the near future as initial properties to utilize in the process. (Mark J. and Sheila)
4. Create Housing incentives for redevelopment at the City and County level for building middle income homes/duplexes/townhomes. (City Officials)
5. Explore various financing options for builders and investors for redevelopment. (Pat and Jim Kraft)
6. Continue to build a formal committee with sub committees addressing the various aspects of the housing issues in the community. Meet on a regular basis as needed.