

KENTWOOD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
MINUTES
January 22, 2024

Members Present: Deluccia, DeBruyn, Tyson and Swoboda.
Coughlin, Blubaugh, Clements, Gaffin (joining from remote location)

Members Absent: Green, with notification

Others Present: Lisa Golder, Economic Development Planner, Keith Morgan,
Wyoming/Kentwood Chamber of Commerce; Shay Gallagher, Deputy
Administrator; Terry Schweitzer, Community development Director;
Brooke Oosterman, Housing Next

1. Roll Call
2. Approval of Minutes:
Motion by DeBruyn with support from Swoboda to approve the minutes of December 2023.

--Motion Carried--

3. Financial Report

No financial report this month.

4. Presentation by Brooke Oosterman, Housing Next

Brooke Oosterman introduced herself as the Executive Director of Housing Next. She said that goal of Housing Next is to provide market driven supply solutions for housing by providing housing data, technical assistance, building community will, and providing advocacy for zoning reform. She said that there is a housing shortage in Kent County of approximately 35,000 housing units in 2022, and housing demand is up 59% in Grand Rapids and 54% in Kent County. Of the 35,000 housing units needed to meet demand, 20,593 are units needed outside of the City of Grand Rapids (in the rest of Kent County).

Brooke said that the shortage of housing impacts every household differently. For example, a shortage of smaller sized homes would make it difficult for a senior citizen to sell their family home and downsize. She reviewed the 2022 vacancy and availability rates of market rate rental, subsidized rental housing, market rate for-sale housing and homes for sale that are \$200,000 and less. She reviewed how many rental and for-sale units would be needed between 2022-2027. This is the housing gap.

It was noted that while there were a number of permits issued for both single and multifamily units in the County, this does not translate into housing that is available for sale or for rent. The demand in West Michigan is high because the Kent County population continues to increase, while other areas of the city are decreasing. Also, there was a decrease in construction due to

Covid, fewer builders and people working in the building trades, and high cost of building materials.

Brooke reviewed some of the programs that have been designed to ease the housing gap. These include:

- Kent County Homes Fund: Can be used for the preservation of affordable housing.
- Kent County Zoning reform grants: funds available to assist communities in re-writing zoning regulations.
- Tax abatement programs for housing.
- NEZ (neighborhood Enterprise Zones) PILOT and TIF for residential development.
- Housing Readiness report Grants.

The EDC members discussed the MSHDA Housing study that was also included in their packet. The MSHDA Study predicted the housing gap for smaller geographic areas. The area that best describes Kentwood also includes a large part of Gaines and Cascade Township. As such it may misrepresent the need/availability of developable land in Kentwood's jurisdiction.

Housing Next will have a tool that is available in April or May to show municipalities how the various tools can assist them with providing the type of housing that is needed in each community. She offered to discuss further at a future meeting.

There was discussion regarding the data provided and the rate of housing ownership for people of various ethnicities, access to infrastructure in outlying areas, corridor strategy, the benefits of mixed-use development, the reason for the lack of housing supply.

The next meeting of the Kentwood EDC will be February 19, 2024. Randy Thelen of The Right Place Inc. will be presenting.

Meeting adjourned.