



THRESHOLD
Lexington's Housing Commission
Wednesday, June 26, 2024 - 4:00 P.M
Second Floor Conference Room, City Hall
300 E. Washington Street, Lexington, VA

AGENDA

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Approval of Agenda**
- 3. Approval of Minutes**
 - A. Approval of March 27, 2024 minutes*
- 4. New Business**
 - A. Housing assessment/Windshield survey update.
- 5. Adjournment**

*indicates attachment

MINUTES

THRESHOLD

Lexington's Housing Commission
Wednesday, March 27, 2024 – 4:00 p.m.
Second Floor Conference Room, City Hall

Threshold:

Present: Shadrey Sands, Chair
Nadine Craney
Fred Kirchner, Vice-Chair
Marylin Alexander, Council Liaison
Nicholas Betts, Council Liaison

City Staff:

Arne Glaeser, Planning Director
Angela Greene, Police Chief

Absent: Marisa Charley

CALL TO ORDER:

S. Sands called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. He reported he was not ready to present the white paper on possible initiatives to address homelessness and would share it with the Commission when it was ready.

AGENDA

N. Betts moved to add a discussion of the draft white paper to the agenda. M. Alexander seconded and the agenda was unanimously approved with that amendment.

MINUTES:

The minutes from the January 24, 2024 meeting were unanimously approved as presented. (M. Alexander / F. Kirchner)

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Mapping of City neighborhood boundaries for windshield survey –

A. Glaeser explained that the final windshield survey report would include housing assessment data broken down at a neighborhood level. Referencing the city map provided in the packet, he requested the Commission apportion the City into appropriate areas for neighborhood data reporting. He recommended making the areas relatively large and suggested using Nelson and Main Streets as natural defining lines. There was discussion weighing the merits of data reporting at the parcel level versus the neighborhood level and keeping the public informed of the survey methodology. The Commission then agreed to divide the city into seven “neighborhood” areas: 1) the westernmost part of town from W. Nelson and McLaughlin Streets and from Ross and Rebel Ridge Roads to the City limits to the west, 2) the Monroe Park and Providence Hill areas south of Barger Drive and west of Thornhill Road, 3) the area bordered by Main Street on the east, McLaughlin on the west, the split at Main and Jefferson Streets on the north, and Barger and Oakview Drives on the south, 4) the area south of Nelson Street, between Main Street and the by-pass, 5) the area south of S. Main Street and east of Thornhill Road, 6) the area north of Nelson Street, between N. Main Street and the by-pass, and 7) the area above the by-pass to the north and east.

B. Discussion with Chief Greene about typical police interactions with homeless individuals -

Chair Sands prefaced the conversation by providing Chief Greene with background about Threshold's recent discussions concerning possible initiatives to address homelessness in Lexington. He said he hoped she could share what LPD has been seeing in the community and common police practice when interacting with unhoused individuals. Chief Greene indicated there were two individuals in the City known by the LPD to be homeless, neither of whom have accepted services and both of whom largely abide by the rules surrounding nighttime use of parks. She said there has been an increase in individuals living in RVs parked in residential neighborhoods, and the city also sees a number of transients, particularly off of the Appalachian Trail. LPD is able to offer RARA hotel vouchers to individuals who qualify, and in some instances, officers have paid out of pocket for meals or lodging for people who do not qualify. She added the vouchers are only accepted by two hotels which are in the County, and can only be used during business hours as they must be approved by hotel management. Because the process to receive services through Social Services takes time, police generally direct people to local churches or to RARA. Chief Greene was aware of local churches interested in having an impact in this area and encouraged Threshold to partner with them. She said that because there is nothing local, officers have provided transportation to shelters in Staunton or Roanoke, however those shelters are often full. Responding to a question from N. Betts, she remarked that she had not heard of a particular increase in homelessness in either Buena Vista or Rockbridge County and that transients and homeless individuals have had a negligible impact on crime in the area. S. Sands commented on the effectiveness of the warm shelter in Waynesboro and asked the Chief if she would have any opposition to a similar program in Lexington if one could be undertaken. Chief Greene said she would welcome having more options to offer people - LPD was willing to help and would like to have more resources to put people in touch with. She indicated the biggest issues arise after hours or on weekends when the hotel vouchers cannot be used. Responding to a question about a designated parking area for people to sleep in their car, Chief Greene said she was not opposed to allowing an overnight in the LPD parking lot for individuals unwilling to accept other options, but she would prefer to have them indoors.

C. Discussion of subcommittee draft –

S. Sands invited the Commission to make suggestions for things to be included in the report. N. Betts suggested looking into the five day parking limit and crime statistics. A. Glaeser said additional suggestions should be forwarded to him and he would pass them on to Commissioners Sands and Charley.

ADJOURN:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:13 p.m. (N. Betts / M. Alexander)

S. Sands, Chair
Threshold Housing Commission