



HOUSING COMMISSION Regular Meeting

Monday, November 3rd, 2025
City Hall Room 110
11:00 a.m.

- MINUTES -

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Staff Liaison Nicole at 11:12 AM.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioner Peterson, Vice Chair Boswell, Commissioner La Rue, Commissioner Hayes, and Commissioner Carroll.

At 11:32 Staff Liaison circled back to attendance once another member of the public body was present to meet quorum, which would then allow the Commission to count those appearing via online attendance as present due to Open Meetings Act allowances for remote attendance.

There are three members of the Commission attending remotely, Commissioner Genzel, Commissioner Sanders, and Chair Shah, who are attending via GoToMeetings. The Open Meetings Act accounts for limited circumstances electronic attendance is allowed under (5 ILCS 120/7). Sec. 7 Attendance by a means other than physical presence. (a) If a quorum of the members of the public body is physically present as required by Section 2.01, a majority of the public body may allow a member of that body to attend the meeting by other means if the member is prevented from physically attending because of: (i) personal illness or disability; (ii) employment purposes or the business of the public body; or (iii) a family or other emergency. "Other means" is by a video or audio conference.

Commissioner Genzel stated that she is attending remotely due to other emergencies. Vice Chair Boswell motioned to allow Commissioner Genzel remote attendance. Seconded by Commissioner Carroll. All in Favor.

Chair Shah stated that he was attending remotely due to employment purposes. Commissioner La Rue motioned to allow Char Shah remote attendance. Seconded by Commissioner Carroll. All in Favor.

Commissioner Sanders stated that she is attending remotely due to employment purposes. Commissioner Carroll motioned to allow Commissioner Sanders remote attendance. Seconded by Vice Chair Boswell. All in Favor.

Under the Open Meetings Act, these would all be a limited circumstance in which electronic attendance is allowed under 5 ILCS 120/7.

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Staff Present: Staff Liaison Nicole Morrow.

There is currently an opening on the Commission, and the Commission is waiting for the Mayor's office to appoint someone new.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: September 8th, 2025

Motion to approve the September 8th minutes made by Commissioner Muehlbauer. Seconded by Commissioner Peterson. All in Favor.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There were no members present from the public at this time that wished to comment.

The Commissioners went around and introduced themselves to the new Commissioner.

V. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. Planning and Zoning Monthly Summary Report

Commissioner La Rue asked if there was any pushback against the special use permit for the group home. Staff Liaison shared that there weren't any that she was aware of. The property was originally zoned for the Adams Street Living Center, and it was owned by the Human Service Center, and the property has been vacant for a little over two years.

B. City Council Update

Councilman Riggensbach was unable to be in attendance today, but Staff Liaison shared that Councilman Riggensbach is still very interested in staff pursuing locations for Tiny Homes as well as a potential location for winter sheltering options. The current shelter capacity is already at its maximum, but they will always find rooms for individuals to be in lobbies, vestibules, as well as the faith-based shelters open chapels. City staff will continue to explore if there's an opportunity to get individuals indoors. There are currently 50-60 individuals that are unsheltered and are engaged in outreach but not any services through the formal shelter care system.

Commissioner Carroll asked how many tiny homes are being built. Staff Liaison shared that it would depend on Dream Center Peoria, which is the nonprofit that has been working with a company called Pallet Shelter who's currently doing the consulting and then would be assisting with the construction. The amount of tiny homes being built would ultimately depend on the size of the lot, but the hope is about 30 tiny homes. Staff have found that the code makes it allowable for the tiny homes not to have actual facilities. There is another company that has a similar tiny home model that does have a small restroom facility, which would make the tiny homes a little more self-sufficient, but there would still be larger showering and community use rooms. Staff are leaning a little more towards this model because it also has a front and a back door for the safety. The structure that Pallet Shelter is proposing is typically able to be popped up quickly without any water, whereas this other company would not be looking to do that. Pallet Shelter has been used historically in disaster zones as a response to hurricanes, when running water isn't an option.

Vice Chair Boswell asked if these tiny homes will be a location where these individuals will now have an address or if they will be housed there temporarily. Staff Liaison shared that the goal of the tiny homes is that

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they would be transitional, so mainly for individuals that cannot or won't engage with the existing shelter congregate settings, but this would not be a permanent address. These individuals would still be utilizing the address of one of the service providers, but the goal would be to have their stay be extremely temporary and lead directly to permanent housing, but it will be up to the service provider on how they structure it. There are communities where they actually do tiny homes that are a little larger with more square footage, have all utilities, and it's almost like a rent-to-own option after they've been a resident for so long and paid faithful rent. Vice Chair Boswell shared her concern for how these tiny homes will look in five years' time. Staff Liaison shared that the shelf life for these homes is typically ten years or less, and knowing these tiny homes are transitional will mean that there will probably be a lot of foot traffic.

Commissioner Muehlbauer entered the room at 11:32 AM.

The only action steps that have been taken thus far was during the June policy session that staff had specifically around housing where there was a presentation by Dream Center where they showed what they're envisioning with Palette and the tiny home community, but since then staff has put together some recommendations for Council and is awaiting additional guidance. Council's concern right now is location.

C. Staff Department Update

i. Flex Rent Expenditures

This program works specifically with individuals that are in the homeless care system that have income and assists them with lifting them up and out into new housing opportunities. These are individuals that don't qualify for any of the other existing permanent housing programs due to the nature of their self-sufficiency. Most of the programs target individuals that are at a higher risk and have a need for ongoing staff and financial guidance. These funds come from the American Rescue Plan that came through during COVID and have to be used by December 2026 and so far, only 50% of the one-million dollars that was allocated has been utilized. Fifty-six families have been housed with these funds, but the Commission will probably see in the next couple of months some potential utilization of those funds as still relating to housing and likely still relating to the homeless care system to weigh in on because the ARPA funding is use it or lose it. Staff is looking to utilize the funds to be contributed to either get individuals into housing or making some housing stability and potentially looping landlords into that as well.

Commissioner Carroll asked if getting landlords involved would be having landlords accept homeless people if they have space available. Staff Liaison Nicole shared that it could possibly be. Bloomington-Normal has a landlord incentive program where if landlords are willing to work with housing agencies/non-profits who assist with housing, then the landlords would have access to risk mitigation.

ii. RJE Update

The Subcommittee will be focusing on a Community Land Trust and on a landlord report card in 2026.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Code Enforcement Discussion

Rental registration is about to be renewed, so notices are going out to the registered properties. The focus is on life and safety and ultimately a big picture asking what code enforcement is doing that is helpful and also what could be harmful. The City is always thinking of ways to improve rental registration and the current code enforcement processes. There will be a service report coming to the Commission early next year regarding

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targeted enforcement with properties that had ongoing violations and then other properties owned by the same owner or management company.

Commissioner Hayes shared that he thinks through code enforcement and Peoria Cares that the City is basically performing the duties of a Homeowners Association. Commissioner Hayes shared that the code is too much and there is no way to apply the code equally. Commissioner Hayes shared thoughts that there should be a whole house inspection every three years, provide the landlord with something showing the inspection, and then it's an equal application of the code. Commissioner La Rue stated that she is a strong proponent of life, health, and safety. She stated that she isn't sure if three years is the right interval and thinks there's an opportunity for an accelerated interval for properties that are having a lot of violations. La Rue stated that the accelerated intervals for properties with ongoing violations will help protect renters who may not otherwise call due to lack of just case protections in our area. La Rue stated that Peoria has a very affordable housing stock, which is great, but there is also a lot of deferred maintenance. There are individuals who are essentially just extracting all the money that they can from a property until it's nothing and there are others that are interested in investing in their communities who might take on a property that has some deferred maintenance, understanding that it's going to be a long road to getting it fixed. La Rue would like to make sure that the slumlords are being held to account, but also that the code enforcement is working with property owners and homeowners to remedy violations on properties that are taken on.

Commissioner La Rue had received a violation notice when she was 40 weeks pregnant for her old garage that had peeling paint on it. La Rue knew it was a violation, but there was also a hole in the deck floorboards that she wanted to address prior to fixing the peeling paint issue. La Rue thinks that if the code was more standardized in its application that it would be fairer as well as increased communication prior to scheduled housing hearings.

Vice Chair Boswell shared that if she has to call Peoria Cares to place a complaint, that's fine with her considering the amount of money that she's paying in property taxes.

B. Affordable Housing Plan Updates

About a year ago, the Commission did some focus groups looking at what housing plan recommendations would be. There is a one-page document that discusses some of the limitations of the housing plan as it exists and the next steps on what needs to continue to be updated. At the next meeting, the Commission will be looking to tie the affordable housing plan as it relates to the City's strategic plan. There are multiple components in the City's strategic plan that don't specifically address housing but fall underneath the different challenges and goals of each of those six improvement areas that the strategic plan is focusing on from 2024 through 2029.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Housing Trust Fund presentation

From the last meeting, the Commission requested more in depth information on two cities that were similar in size to Peoria. Also attached is the Community Foundation's impact investing flyer, which is very specific to housing. The Commission is exploring a trust fund and where the funding would come from. Part of the discussion was related to whether there was a fund that could be started so that people could donate to. Commissioner Peterson asked where the landlord registration money goes once collected. Staff Liaison shared that the money goes back into code enforcement staffing; some of code enforcement staff is funded through the Community Development Block Grant which is federal and is allowed to be for neighborhood improvement, and then remaining funding comes from general funds. Commissioner Peterson stated that maybe if the code

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enforcement policies were able to be reworked, then maybe some of that money can be used to start the trust fund.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There were no members of the public present at this time that wished to comment.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Carroll made a motion to adjourn at 12:27 PM and this was seconded by Commissioner Hayes. All in Favor, meeting adjourned.

Next Regular Meeting: Monday, December 1st, 2025 at 11AM