



HOUSING COMMISSION Regular Meeting

Monday, February 2nd, 2026
City Hall Room 110
11:00 a.m.

- MINUTES -

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Staff Liaison Nicole Morrow at 11:13 AM.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioner Peterson, Commissioner La Rue, Commissioner Sanders, Commissioner Hayes, and Commissioner Carroll.

There are three members of the Commission attending remotely, Vice Chair Boswell, Chair Shah, and Commissioner Spiller, 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 video or audio conference.

Vice Chair Boswell stated that she is attending remotely due to a family or other emergency. Commissioner Carroll motioned to allow Vice Chair Boswell remote attendance. Seconded by Commissioner La Rue. All in Favor.

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

Commissioner Spiller stated that he is attending remotely due to employment purposes. Commissioner Carroll motioned to allow Commissioner Spiller remote attendance. Seconded by Commissioner Hayes. All in Favor.

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

Staff Present: Staff Liaison Nicole Morrow.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: December 1st, 2025

The agenda and meeting minutes will be available online at <https://www.peoriagov.org/572/Housing-Commission>

Motion to approve December 1st minutes made by Commissioner Peterson. Seconded by Commissioner Carroll. 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

The Commissioners did not have any comments or questions that were housing related to the February report.

At the last meeting, the Commission did talk a little about short-term rentals and there was a question about the density that was allowed. For neighborhood associations, 1% of properties within that association can be classified as short-term rental and then anything else that is not part of a neighborhood association is 1% within a .25 mile radius and it cannot be within 1,500 square feet of another short-term rental.

B. City Council Update

There were no new updates from Councilman Riggerbach.

Council did meet on Tuesday January 27th and one of the items that was discussed that had come before Planning and Zoning was utilizing 1924 SW Adams Street. GRO came before Council on three different occasions with a passing vote on January 27th.

The discussion on tiny home development continues to be investigated. There was a policy session last June that has since been tabled with some additional requests for information from Council as well as discussion on appropriate location. This is ongoing.

C. Staff Department Update

An update from the Community Development Department, the Rehousing Program had 12 cases that were open throughout 2025, 8 of them being closed in the year 2025 which means they were successfully rehoused. 2 of these cases were closed in very early 2026. There is still an open housing case with Greenwood Estates, which was the former Village Green. There were multiple units that were deemed uninhabitable due to some structural and sewer related issues. Staff continue to work closely with their property management company, as well as ownership, to make sure that those issues are corrected. All families have been able to return home and no new units that would deem a resident needing to relocate have been identified.

The Flexible Rent Program, since its inception, has housed 69 families. The program started in January 2024 utilizing American Rescue Plan funds and will end in December 2026. In the month of January, staff housed 10 additional families and is also working closely with New Hope Apartments to assist with rehousing some of their residents that have income and meet the requirements for the program.

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The Housing Quality Subcommittee underneath the Racial Justice Commission will be focusing on drafting some policies related to land trusts in 2026. The Subcommittee heard a presentation at their last meeting from Matt Smith with the City Land Bank. They will also be looking at other cities and how they handle landlord accountability and if there's anything they'd like to see moving forward in the City.

Commissioner Peterson asked how much money is left in the Flexible Rent Program. Staff Liaison shared that with the most recent report that was due Friday January 30, there should be about \$350,000 or so for the remainder of the year. There was approximately \$150,000 spent last quarter and 17 families were housed during that quarter. Staff anticipated that there could be funds that would need to be reutilized or repurposed. However, with everything going on at New Hope Apartments, staff anticipates that there will be an influx of individuals in the program that will keep staff on track to spend that money before the end of the year.

Commissioner La Rue asked a follow-up question regarding the City Council Update on GRO housing. Commissioner La Rue stated that she is glad that City Council finally approved the application but wonders if there have been any conversations to assess whether Peoria's current decision-making structure ensures transparency in monetary efficiency for individuals that are trying to do development here. Staff Liaison stated that is a great point of follow-up, but nothing formal in that manner exists outside of planning and zoning code and building code. Commissioner La Rue stated that her concern is more that time is precious and financial resources are precious, but everyone needs to be conscious of making sure that there is a streamlined entitlement process that is fair and robust but also allows a sense of assurance about the project if you're meeting all guidelines and that expectations are also clear. Commissioner Peterson asked if that would be able to be done if a certain organization got a grant from their own grant or would that right be only if there was City participation. Commissioner Peterson doesn't think the political body could go in and investigate a non-for-profit whose money they get from grants and the political body doesn't participate. Commissioner La Rue stated it would be more in the entitlement process. Typically, it's not within the purview of the political body to do a deep investigation into someone's financial records. Staff Liaison Nicole clarified Commissioner La Rue's statement to be relating to the initial process and application to make sure that developers know what the expectation is at the beginning, whether that's Council or Planning and Zoning and also what the expectation is for a project of this nature when it comes to meeting with community neighbors, modifications that need to be requested. Ensuring that the process and expectations are clear and straightforward.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Recap: Federal Funding Proposed Changes, Local Implications, and Necessary Pivots
 - i. Speaker: Kate Green, Heart of Illinois Continuum of Care

Kate Green is on staff with the Heart of Illinois United Way, but leads an organization called Home for All Continuum of Care which is a cross sector network of organizations working to address the needs of those experiencing homelessness in the four county service area of Peoria, Tazwell, Woodford, and Fulton counties. Continuum of Care is also called CoC's, and every part of the country is included in a CoC, and they look and function significantly different based upon where you are. The CoC that Kate works with covers Peoria, Tazwell, Woodford, and Fulton counties and brings together cross-sector partners, not just within their homeless service providers, but looking at other industries and sectors like healthcare, education, and criminal justice. The Continuum of Care just performed their annual Point in Time Count, which is a full census of the sheltered and unsheltered homelessness for the past year. The numbers have fluctuated anywhere from 2009 through 2025 between 201 at the lowest and 635 at the most. This is a number collected on just one night in the last 10 days of January. These numbers went down during COVID times since there was a lot of efforts to keep people housed and to remain in housing during that time. Since those efforts have scrolled back, there has been a steady climb, and very similar trends and trajectory have been seen across the country as a shortage of affordable housing continues to be exacerbated by lots of increasing costs as well. Things around

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utilities, groceries, and medical costs keep rising. Unfortunately, a lot of people are pushed out of affordable housing, especially those that have additional vulnerabilities. When people ask what's the driver of homelessness, the number one underlying factor for everyone is lack of access to affordable housing.

Unfortunately, what is being seen right now at the federal level in terms of the funding to help the CoC's meet these needs on the ground, there's been a significant proposed cut from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to what is called permanent supportive housing funding. The permanent supportive housing is the infrastructure that really supports most vulnerable individuals who, without access to these resources, are barely likely to be able to reach housing stability and to maintain that long-term. Right now, there are lots of permanent supportive housing that has been successful at the federal level with the competition year over year and has been a strongly performing CoC especially around other CoC's across the state, but even nationally. From 2022 through 2025, there has been steady growth in actual grants that were received through HUD. With the proposed cuts, there is a significant drop. There has been a very strong pivot at the federal level to get away from a permanent housing model and more back towards a transitional housing model. Right now, there are just over 500 beds that are dedicated to emergency shelter, very few transitional housing units because they have pivoted away from that model, but a significant amount of rapid rehousing, which is up to two years for individuals and households that are lower acuity and don't need much intervention but still need support to transition out of homelessness, and around 400 units of permanent supportive housing which are the units that stick with someone and also have supportive services and case management tied to that assistance. The proposed cut of \$1.35 million would reduce the permanent supportive housing total portfolio by about 235 units, and so those individuals that are currently living in the permanent supportive housing units would likely be exited to other opportunities in the community, however there is a shortage of affordable housing. They do anticipate a significant increase in homelessness. There is a chance that there could be renewals and won't see that cut this calendar year, but Kate thinks the administration has made it very clear that they want to pivot their policy priorities away from permanent housing and that CoC's should anticipate that if those cuts don't manifest this year, they will likely come at least in next year's funding cycle.

Kate ran a case study to put a strong microscope on what the potential implications of these cuts might be. The New Hope Apartments is a permanent supportive housing project that serves 84 individuals, all with serious mental illness. There has been a confluence of different issues around the capital state and then the infrastructure of that building, but alongside some of the federal funding policy changes. Because of the timing of that grant and some of the issues associated with that, the project is slated to close at the end of the month. Because of how it was rolled out, this is happening in phases. The first phase of individuals that had to exit that project actually took place in December, and because of a data sharing collaborative that Kate has with OSF Healthcare, they were able to track what that intersection then looks like between two industries, the housing sector and then our emergency departments through the healthcare groups, but specifically only OSF. Of the 35 individuals who did exit, there were 10 permanent housing destinations secured for that group and of this group there were no presentations to the emergency department. Kate stated that this is a wonderful testament to the fact that housing is healthcare and it provides stability that individuals need. One client did pass away. Of those 35, 24 other clients have gone to either temporary destinations or to places like emergency shelter or unsheltered homelessness. Of the 24 individuals, in about a six week window, there were 32 presentations to the emergency department, 4 new psych evaluations, and 2 alcohol related admissions all because of the instability caused by this very traumatic event of individuals who were once experiencing homelessness, who landed in a permanent housing situation, and are now exiting back to homelessness. There has been a Statewide Homelessness Morbidity and Mortality Report that was conducted with researchers to identify what some of the real costs of experiencing homelessness are as it relates to personal health and wellbeing. For the 32 emergency department visits, they've been able to put together the median price tag of about \$2,500 per visit. With the 32 visits, excluding the psych evaluations, admissions, or any presentations to Carle Health or any other facility, the OSF visits total \$80,000. This fallout is not only in terms of people and their lives and housing stability, but it will start to impact and have a ripple effect on other systems of care, health care, criminal justice, and other spaces as well.

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Looking ahead to what these changes and these policy priority shifts at the federal level might mean for them, they're starting to understand that there needs to be less reliance on federal resources as it relates to the local strategy and how CoC wants to try to pivot as a community so that there aren't such significant changes and disruptions to the service models. CoC wants to continue to pursue the conversations of a tiny home model and other non-congregate sheltering opportunities. Dream Center Peoria is still very much on board and wants to see this model come to fruition. CoC also knows there's a need for residential treatment and recovery housing. There are also needs for expanded and reimagined mental health services, expanded medical respite capacity, permanent housing investment outside of federal resources, and appropriate housing transitions for elderly and disabled clients. One of the interesting data points in the Homelessness Morbidity and Mortality Report is that individuals experiencing homelessness have a life expectancy of about 20 years shorter than their average housed counterpart.

Commissioner Hayes asked for the particular group of 24 individuals that visited the emergency department if there was any data on how often they were visiting the emergency department prior to being unhoused. Kate Green said that they are trying to do a longer term research study on that and being able to pull historical data because one of the challenges is that many of these individuals have been in New Hope Apartments for years.

Kate shared that one of the areas that they see oftentimes in their space is a lack of housing navigation capacity. There are lots of different avenues individuals can explore to try to access housing, but it's not streamlined and isn't easy to navigate. Finding landlords, completing applications, submitting the costs associated with those, going through the legwork in the midst of experiencing homelessness is a very big lift and would help in terms of prevention and trying to close off the inflow to homelessness. Another of their challenges is that there's wonderful work happening around housing placements, but if you can't stem the inflow, there will continue to be a larger and larger problem. One of the options that Kate mentioned to Nicole in terms of landlords and identifying individuals and entities in the community who are willing to work specifically with the population and potentially those with a housing voucher who are looking for that out in the community. There are different platforms that are landlord databases that streamline the work for the case managers. Kate's emphasis has always been that the case managers should be focused on the client, but when the case managers are also out looking for housing opportunities in the community, that takes away their time focusing on the person they're serving. Kate wonders if this could be streamlined to create more efficiency around having a designated pool of opportunities within the community and having someone like the City of Peoria managing the housing inventory and dovetailing that with something like landlord registration and having that be part of that process.

Commissioner La Rue shared that when she was in California, they established the Landlord Partnership Program that was paired with the Source of Income Protection Ordinance. As a part of this funding for the Landlord Partnership Program, they offered financial incentives to encourage people proactively to rent to individuals with housing vouchers. They were also able to fund a couple part-time positions through non-profit partners to essentially become those liaisons. They also funded someone at the housing authority to perform superior customer service to the landlords who were interfacing with the Housing Choice Vouchers. There was also someone from a nonprofit that dealt with landlord relationship business development, but in a landlord sphere to identify a list of individuals that they could call. These were funded simultaneously through local funds.

Commissioner Hayes shared a perspective from a property manager's standpoint with a time when he participated in housing homeless people thinking he was doing a good thing and then there was an incident where one of them ended up murdering another one. After that, he had to examine and see if that really helped anyone in that situation and who he was putting at risk unnecessarily. Kate shared that she has not heard a story like that in her time doing this work and that it is very difficult. She stated that they see that happen oftentimes for landlords if they feel as though the property damage was extensive, that will be the end of that

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landlord working with individuals that are referred from CoC's programs. There has been talk about some different models to support this as well such as a landlord risk mitigation fund that would go above and beyond a security deposit to make a landlord or a property owner whole from the damages that could have been caused. These funds have not been secured yet, but they are constantly advocating for them.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

Staff Liaison Nicole will be sending out information to the Commissioners. Next month the Commission will be thinking about the 2026 priorities as a Housing Commission. There will also be some data sent regarding the calls that are coming in and what that looks like for the individuals that are reaching out to the City for various types of assistance.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

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

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner La Rue made a motion to adjourn at 12:10 PM and this was seconded by Commissioner Carroll. All in Favor, meeting adjourned.

Next Regular Meeting: Monday, March 2nd at 11AM