

Application Form--Affordable Housing Citizen Oversight Committee

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Position

On Monday, July 20, 2020 City Council adopted the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Ordinance and Funding Commitments Resolution. The Ordinance outlines the membership roles required for this committee. Please indicate below which roles apply to you.

Role: Community Member , Housing non-profit

Any other roles/affiliations you'd like to note:

Chair for Missoula's Coordinated Outreach Team, Homeless Outreach Team

If you checked Housing non-profit, Field of housing or real-estate and/or Banking and/or finance, please provide the name of the organization:

The Poverello Center

This committee will consist of nine (9) voting members and two (2) non-voting alternates. If you are not selected for a voting position, are you interested in an alternate position: Yes

Background

How long have you lived in the City of Missoula? 6 years
How long have you lived in the State of Montana? 28 years

Pronouns: He, His

What is your current living situation? Renter

What is your interest in serving on the Affordable Housing Citizen Oversight Committee?

My interest for serving on the Affordable Housing Citizen Oversight Committee is due largely in part to my work with The Poverello Center. As an Outreach Worker who's main job is to connect people to housing resources the biggest issue we run in to is a general lack of available, affordable housing for those we serve. Also, being a member of the Missoula community, I have noticed a similar trend in our housing market where prices continue to rise while those who can afford these prices seems to dwindle. This was hallmarked by the housing influx we experienced this year where people were buying rather high priced properties, sight unseen. I would appreciate the opportunity to serve on a committee that is focused on addressing these issues, bringing my experience working within housing and serving those who can't afford it, in order to generate creative solutions that benefit everyone who lives here. Ultimately at the end of the day Missoula is a beautiful place to live and everyone deserves the opportunity to experience this regardless of ability to afford the most basic of human needs; Shelter.

What skills and perspective will you bring to or draw on as a member of the Citizen Oversight Committee? Please include any experiences (lived and/or professional) or familiarity you have with affordable housing, zoning, funding, housing policy, or other relevant skills.

The skills and perspective I can bring to this committee is one of one who works within the realm of always striving to find affordable housing for those who live within the most at risk demographic of Missoula. My work with the Poverello Center consists of coordinating with other agencies to secure funding for housing while also navigating our increasingly difficult housing market. This consists of many meetings including MCES' (Missoula Coordinated Entry System) Oversight Committee, of which I am a member. I myself have experienced homelessness due to an inability to afford my housing in Billings and am well aware of the challenges that can exist for those seeking it.

I am also familiar with many of the housing policies that MHA has put into place and am also well aware of many of the barriers that exist for folks who are unable to abide by them due either to misunderstanding or a general feeling of unfairness. What I mean by this is that, for some, the only desire folks have is to be left alone and treated like a normal resident without having to jump through "hoops" deemed unnecessary.

Describe your vision of a successful Affordable Housing Citizen Oversight Committee.

My vision of a successful committee is one that can generate creative solutions to overcome difficult barriers to housing. This would include active minds that are capable of coming to agreements for the benefit of everyone we are serving. Whether it be securing funding, aligning with city partners, or just frankly calling it like it is and agreeing that something needs to be done, I would appreciate being around motivated folks who are capable of doing the things necessary to make our community a better place for all.

This would include solutions that are put into place with all effectiveness and efficiency.

Why, in your opinion, are people in our community (Black, Indigenous, People of Color, those with lower incomes, young people, elderly people, etc.) being disproportionately affected by the affordable housing crisis in Missoula?

I would say this is largely in part due to the high cost of housing and a general wage gap that prevents people from affording them. As a black man in Missoula, I completely understand the stigma associated with BIPOC and would love to believe that it does not affect people when it comes to housing but this is not always the case.

Please provide a brief summary of your background (such as life, work, educational, or volunteer experience that feels relevant to this opportunity).

My background is firmly rooted in housing as it is a large portion of my job to strive to secure for those who cannot afford it. I also serve on differing committees revolving around MCES' Oversight Committee and am well aware of the format, purpose, and goal of said Committee.

References

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