

HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Meeting Date: February 26, 2026

Attendance:

Housing Advisory Committee: Justin Horvath, Caroline Moser, BeeJay Robinson, Kurt Peterson, Ted Jenneskens, Jane Dingman, Councilmember Zeke Reister and Councilmember Mike Bedard

Staff: Maggie Boles, Carl Florea and Andrea Fischer

Open Meeting at 3:03 PM

1. Roll Call

2. Review and Approve Minutes

The minutes for January 2026 were approved.

3. Request for Ideas (RFI) – Q&A Time and Review of Submittal by Steven Booher

The committee opened the floor to public attendees for questions regarding the RFI. Keegan Furfaro, who owns the former Catholic church property, stated the approximately 4-acre property at the end of O'Grady Street is heavily impacted by wetlands on two-thirds of the western side, but has potential for various housing developments including townhouses, row housing or cottage housing. The existing church building could potentially be converted into apartments. The Committee confirmed the property is within city limits and discussed how cottage housing regulations could work around wetland restrictions by placing common space in buffer areas. The Committee offered to connect Mr. Furfaro with other potential partners, including Matt Melton who is currently working on a cottage housing development. The goal would be to take advantage of efforts the City has made to create code that will help grow affordable housing.

Staff also stressed that any City investment must ensure perpetual workforce housing rather than units that could be flipped to become second homes, noting the community is already nearly 40% second homes.

The committee then reviewed Syndicate Smith's major proposal to redevelop the municipal golf course when its lease expires in 2034. The 104-acre proposal would create 42 river lots, 80 typical lots, 30 small lots, and 11 acres of multifamily housing, potentially adding over 500 dwelling units with 185 designated as workforce housing units.

Committee Member BeeJay Robinson presented his detailed financial analysis of the proposal, noting that the golf course currently generates \$1.6 million in revenue, but the City only collects \$48,000 (3% of gross revenue) plus some sales tax. Under conservative modeling assumptions for 300 units, the development would represent roughly a 20 percent increase in the City's total housing supply, with approximately 130 units at or below 80% Area Median Income (AMI). The property would generate significant ongoing property tax revenue and onetime lot sale revenue.

Committee members expressed mixed reactions to losing the golf course:

- The golf course was acknowledged as a beautiful amenity for our City but noted other golf courses exist nearby.
- While supporting exploration of the concept, there were reservations expressed about the loss of the golf course and cross-country skiing facility, noting golfers from the west side visit regularly and contribute to local tourism revenue.
- It was suggested to frame this discussion around community gains rather than losses, highlighting potential benefits including waterfront access, trail connectivity, an aquatic center, and controlled development that prevents gigantic market-driven development.
- The committee emphasized the importance of ensuring any development feels like part of Leavenworth rather than a suburb and controlling home sizes to maintain affordability.
- It was suggested to approach this as a community development initiative rather than just affordable housing, leading with amenity gains while ensuring appropriate affordable housing percentages.

Mayor Florea supported the concept, but politically, suggesting a 9-hole course might be more acceptable than complete elimination, and noted water conservation benefits. He emphasized the City's ability to control development standards including square footage limits and permanent residency requirements when owning the land.

The committee agreed this represents a significant long-term opportunity requiring careful community engagement given the golf course's 100-year history. The 2034 lease expiration provides a defined planning window, though meaningful community input would require starting discussions well in advance.

4. Letter to City Council Re: Using Pre-Approved ADU Plans for Bed & Breakfasts

Community Development Director Maggie Boles provided background on the preapproved Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) plan program, noting the City invested approximately \$73,000 total in program development through Syndicate Smith. The program was designed in 2020 to address housing pressures by reducing plan development costs (estimated savings of \$15,000-\$18,000 per unit) and permitting time to encourage infill housing development.

Of five ADUs permitted using preapproved plans, three completed units have all been converted to bed and breakfast operations rather than long-term housing. This raised concerns about the City subsidizing business development rather than housing, since bed and breakfasts require business licenses and the program was intended to address housing supply.

Committee members broadly supported restricting bed and breakfast use of preapproved plans, though they debated implementation approaches. Options discussed included complete prohibition, time-limited restrictions (5-10 years), or financial penalties for early conversion to bed and breakfast use. The committee agreed that people wanting immediate bed and breakfast operations could design their own plans rather than using subsidized city plans.

5. Discussion: Other Land Trust Options (Besides MEND)

This agenda item was postponed to the March 26th meeting due to time constraints.

6. Upcoming Meeting Topics

- RFI Submittals

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:31 PM