

Housing Meeting May 3, 2022

Present:

Jalyn Birchell, Housing Director with PIA

Liz Cabrera, Community Development Director

Steve Giesbrecht, Borough Manager

Ashley Kawashima, HIP Board President and Behavioral Health Clinician with PMC

James Kerr, Chief of Police

Erin Michaels, Public Health

Kris Norosz

Chelsea Tremblay, Assemblymember

Becky Turland, Community Wellness with PMC

AJ Ware, WAVE Prevention Coordinator

Chad Wright, PIA Tribal Administrator

Received an update from Manager Giesbrecht and Administrator Wright, that it is unlikely Tlingit and Haida has funds for larger development. Hopefully PIA will make progress on a new duplex or triplex in the coming year. They are in communication with the Borough on a possible piece of property.

The group heard an update on Vakker Sted apartments; the majority of units have been rented. As of the meeting there were only two vacancies. HIP has helped facilitate the application and rental process for some individuals who had previously been experiencing homelessness for the new property as well as other properties opening up due to that complex opening. This is part of their pilot program using flexible state funding to help get people housed and out of experiencing homelessness.

PIA rental units are currently at 100% capacity.

An update from Director Cabrera: Working on a plan to present to the Assembly that would expand on utility work already included in the budget to open new lots in Service Area 1, close to downtown. With additional work, using funds from Property development Fund, the properties platted behind Excel, extending Fram Street, could become viable lots for housing.

Chief Kerr expressed interest in the conversation, as the lack of housing opportunities limits who applies for jobs in Petersburg. Also sees the link between affordable housing and issues the police force deal with - if affordable housing were more accessible, would ease tension between individuals and present more options for community members who would benefit from changing situations.

Other themes discussed:

- The overall rigidity of the housing and property market, with property speculators buying and holding land that could otherwise be sold to prospective homebuilders.

- Possible changes to housing code at state level that would make it easier for smaller properties (under 400 square feet) to meet code
- Education and promotion programs for landlords to join Section 8 program