

## **RICHLAND COUNTY CHAPTER 980 COMMITTEE**

**April 8, 2020**

A meeting of the Richland County Chapter 980 Committee was held at 1:30 p.m. on April 8, 2020 via WebEx <http://richlandcounty.my.webex.com/richlandcounty.my/j.php?MTID=me073a6ccf67dae93524c60d056909df8>  
Meeting number: 622 405 995 / Password: Richland / Join by phone +1-408-418-9388 United States Toll / Access Code: 622 405 995

Members Present: Tracy Thorsen, Mike Bindl, Lynn Newkirk, Benjamin Southwick, and Mary Collins Johnsrud.

Members Absent: Scott Timm.

Others Present: Meghan Rohn, Dane Knable, and Clint Langreck.

Approve Agenda and Posting: Motion by, Benjamin Southwick seconded by Mike Bindl to approve the agenda and proper posting. Motion carried.

Approve March 23, 2020 Richland County Chapter 980 Committee Minutes: Tracy Thorsen declared the March 23, 2020 Richland County Chapter 980 Committee Minutes approved.

Consideration of Housing Options for Impending Release of Sex Offender Richard Sugden: Benjamin Southwick reported that he submitted a request for a 90-day extension to the court, however he has yet to receive a response regarding if the extension is being granted. It was also reported that counsel from Mr. Sugden has also submitted a request to the courts that sanctions be pursued against the County.

Follow-up discussion was held regarding the property located at 29629 County Hwy B. It was noted that while the property does meet the qualifications, there is concern if the judge will take issue with its proximity the mobile home park and see it as a reason not to approve the property. It was asked what Mary Collins Johnsrud's opinion was in the matter and she stated that as long as the property meets the qualifications set forth in the statutes, they had no say on the issue. Discussion was held regarding the potential for more public outcry regarding this placement. It was noted that there will most likely be push back on any property that is chosen, however it will be up to the judge to determine if the property poses a true safety concern. A timeline of the County acquiring the property was reviewed and Benjamin Southwick stated it was his recollection the County would be taking ownership of the property sometime in June.

Benjamin Southwick discussed other parcels that the county has ownership of or will be taking ownership of in the future. He also reviewed the timely process involved when the County acquires a property. It is unclear at this time if there are any other properties that already have an existing home on site that could be considered. Discussion continued regarding the possibility of acquiring a vacant parcel of land and incurring the cost of putting some type of mobile home on the property as well as water and sanitation system.

Benjamin Southwick emphasized the seriousness of the situation and voiced his concern that with the spring election will come a fluctuation in local leadership. He stressed the importance to impress upon the County Board Supervisors the seriousness and urgency of this matter. Clinton Langreck expressed his willingness to assist in relaying this message, however he too is unsure of the solution.

The option of the County exercising its power of Eminent Domain was reviewed by Benjamin Southwick. While not an easy process, as legal counsel it is an option he needs to make the County aware of. If this option were pursued, ideally a vacant property would be obtained and the County would need to pay to make it habitable by putting a mobile home, water and sanitation system on the property.

Tracy Thorsen reported she has not received any feedback from any of the vendors for the last two months. Discussion turned to the County owned property located on Comar Ln, in Richland Center, and the question was raised if the sale of this property was past the point of no return. It was the impression of those in attendance that the sale of the property had not been finalized. The question was then raised if it would be worth returning to the Finance and Personnel Committee to make another proposal and hope that with the turnover in leadership the committee will reconsider retaining the property instead of selling it. It was noted one of the reasons the committee wanted to sell the property was to avoid becoming a landlord to various tenants. Benjamin Southwick noted that those who are currently occupying mobile homes on the property could be evicted if the County chose to do so.

Further discussion was held regarding the two options before the committee and which option would be more appealing to the Judge. After consideration it was determined if it is approved to retain the property located on Comar Lane in Richland Center then both options should be presented to the Judge for consideration. Motion by Benjamin Southwick, seconded by Mary Collins Johnsrud to recommend that the property located on Comar Lane in Richland Center and the property located at 29629 County Hwy B be referred to and considered by the Finance and Personnel Committee as potential housing options for a released sex offender. Motion carried.

The next meeting was scheduled for April 22, 2020, at 1:30pm. Due to the recent Public Health Emergency, this meeting will be held via WebEx.

Adjourn: Motion by Benjamin Southwick, seconded Mike Bindl by to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Meghan Rohn

Confidential Administrative Secretary