

**City of Moorhead
Committee of the Whole
Meeting Minutes
February 21, 2012 at 5:30 PM
City Hall Council Chambers**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a regular meeting of the Committee of the Whole was held in the City Hall Council Chambers, on February 21, 2012, at 5:30 PM.

Roll call of the members was made as follows:

1st Ward Council Member:	Luther Stueland	Present until 7:12 p.m.
1st Ward Council Member:	Nancy Otto	Present
2nd Ward Council Member:	Heidi Durand	Present
2nd Ward Council Member:	Mark Altenburg	Present
3rd Ward Council Member:	Mike Hulett	Present
3rd Ward Council Member:	Brenda Elmer	Present
4th Ward Council Member:	Mark Hintermeyer	Present until 6:30 p.m.
4th Ward Council Member:	Steve Gehrtz	Present
Mayor:	Mark Voxland	Absent

Committee of the Whole Meeting

1. [Housing Update - Market Study and Communications Plan](#)

Minutes: Mary Bujold, Maxfield Research, provided a summary of the Moorhead Housing Market Study and clarified the following in response to questions of the City Council:

- There are more people living in new housing units in Moorhead than Fargo or West Fargo.
- Moorhead could exceed projected housing demand figures if there is a focus on promoting Moorhead's strengths to attract new residents to the community.
- Minnesota currently has a competitive advantage over North Dakota property taxes. If there is the elimination or gradual decline of property taxes in North Dakota, Moorhead should be ready to implement initiatives in response to this change.
- Moorhead's two-year property tax abatement program is viewed as a positive tool among area realtors.
- State of Minnesota budget problems has created home buyer misperceptions on the projected level of home appreciation values between Moorhead and Fargo or West Fargo.
- Utility rates are not substantively different between Moorhead and Fargo or West Fargo.
- Fargo and West Fargo have managed to build numerous rental units at very competitive rental rates.
- Young people typically like to live near retail and entertainment venues.
- There could be a convenience factor in which Moorhead students would be attracted. Many students are looking for rental units that are

new, in close proximity to campus, and/or allow pets.

- Landscaping, trails, proximity to schools, and parks are amenities desired by homeowners.
- Conversion of single family homes into rental properties near campus areas provides convenience and affordability to renters. Conversions are occurring in cities near college campuses throughout Minnesota.
- Once a single family home converts into a rental unit it becomes an investment property and is valued in terms of its use as an investment. In turn, the value of these properties tends to rise substantially.
- The value of homes near a conversion property depends on whether rental units near that home are being maintained and monitored. The value may increase if the single family home is sold as another investment property to be converted into a rental unit.

City staff clarified the following:

- In 2010 Moorhead was the only Minnesota city that showed increased home appreciation values.
- The City plans to host a builder-developer forum in 2012.

Chris Hagen, Flint Communications, provided a report on a Moorhead Marketing/Communication Plan and clarified the following in response to questions of the City Council:

- Ownership of the website would belong to the City of Moorhead.
- Previous marketing efforts have produced measurable outcomes.
- Marketing strategies will intend to capture the hometown spirit of Moorhead.
- Moorhead would implement marketing efforts in coordination with the Fargo-Moorhead Convention Visitors Bureau.

City staff clarified the following:

- In addition to the current development of the marketing/communications micro website, there are future plans to update the City's general website.
- Marketing efforts will include elected officials, city staff, educational institutions, and many other partners across the community.
- Customer service will be prioritized.
- City staff will continue to foster relationships with the existing development community and utilize their feedback to maintain competitiveness in the metro area.
- New construction and remodeling incentives will be provided wherever possible.
- First time homebuyer programs and strategies will be developed.

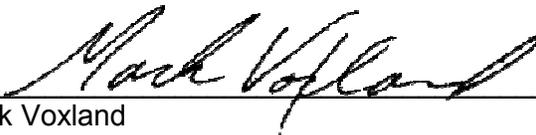
- The City will be attempting new and unique ways to make connections with home buyers, builders, and developers.

The City Council noted the following:

- It will be important to listen to the insight of area Realtors in guiding Moorhead's marketing plan.
- Marketing efforts should reflect the full diversity of individuals in Moorhead.
- Marketing could include college students, arts/culture, historical venues, faith community, seniors, outdoor spaces, employers/businesses, neighborhood variety, and local heroes.

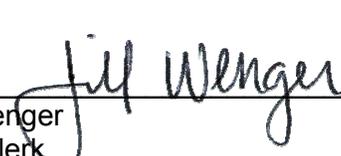
Meeting adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

APPROVED BY:



Mark Voxland
Mayor

ATTEST:



Jill Wenger
City Clerk

The proceedings of this meeting are digitally recorded and are available for public review.

Respectfully submitted by:
Jill Wenger, City Clerk