



GOVERNOR'S
EMPOWER RURAL IOWA
INITIATIVE

Governor's Empower Rural Iowa Initiative
Investing Rural Iowa Task Force Meeting Agenda
Youth Inn, Iowa State Fairgrounds
Des Moines, Iowa

Monday, August 12, 2019
10:00 a.m.

1. Roll Call:

Present:	Lt. Governor Gregg	Sandy Ehrig	Jim Thompson
	David Barker	Hunter Callanan	Nathan Katzer
	Joshua Merchant	Shannon Erb	Sarah Thompson
	Mark Reinig	Nick Sorensen	Tim Ostroski
	Terri Rosonke		

2. Approval of Minutes

Draft minutes from the July 2nd meeting had been previously distributed for review. Nathan Katzer motioned to approve the minutes and Tim Ostroski seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

3. Welcoming remarks from Lt .Gov. Gregg

The Lt. Governor thanked the Iowa Rural Development Council, The Bill Menner Group, Barker Companies, and the Blue Ribbon Foundation for sponsoring today's meetings and reception. Provided an overview of the day which is to include individual meetings for all task forces, a joint lunch and an afternoon reception at Jake's Club in the Jacobson Building at 5:00. The State Fair was chosen as a central location and very representative of rural Iowa. Informed members there will be more time this fall than last year to work on next steps and provided a review of the meeting agenda.

4. Co-Chair Sandy Ehrig remarks

Sandy thanked sponsors and members and the Lt. Governor for the ongoing partnership with the IRDC. Informed members there has been some transition in task force leaders. With the retirement of Sue Cosner, Jim Thompson has taken over the Investing task force and James Hoelscher has taken the leadership role for the Growing task force. Let members know that plans are well underway for the 2020 Iowa Rural Summit which will be held April 29 – May 1 at the Hotel Kirkwood on the Kirkwood community college campus to showcase value the

community college network brings to rural Iowa. Will incorporate field trips to surrounding communities. Also, as Center for Rural Community Revitalization program manager, Liesl has been appointed as an ex-officio member of the IRDC leadership team.

5. Rural Innovation Grants Update - Liesl Seabert, IEDA

Each task force has \$100,000 to grant for innovative, scalable, replicable programs. Rules will need to be written and approved, which takes about three months. Hoping to have them written by early October, with a launch at the 2020 Iowa Rural Summit. Content will be broad, looking at big ideas that are creative and non-traditional. May not necessarily be tied to housing, broadband, or leadership. In the process of putting a subcommittee together and to help review rules. A draft of rules will go out to all task force members.

6. Housing Needs Assessment Grant Update - Liesl Seabert, IEDA

The legislature appropriated \$100,000 for housing needs assessment. We will want to be sure we are utilizing the programs already exist and not duplicating, so will look at a partnership and enhancements. Looking at the same timeline as the rural innovation grants, with the launch at the Iowa Rural Summit.

7. "This is Iowa" Briefing - Jacque Matsen, IEDA

Jacque provided an overview of the new "This is Iowa" campaign which uses tourism attributes to draw people and businesses to the state. Campaign was based on research performed on the perceptions and motivation of people to move, and how to reach those who may be thinking of moving. The survey was taken by people primarily outside of Iowa.

8. ISU Extension Assessment Readiness Tool Briefing - Gary Taylor & Jon Wolseth, ISU Extension

Gary gave a broad overview and background of the Assessment Tool and turned it over to Jon. Information was distributed (attached). Many communities are not quite sure what type of housing they need. The Assessment Tool can help get communities become better informed on needs.

Housing assessments are a data driven exercise looking at info such as income, household size, etc. This Assessment Tool takes a broader look at nine topic areas on local factors that impact housing which are things a community can control, such as zoning and code enforcement.

The ISU Community and Economic Development staff can assist communities with the process through an initial educational workshop, instructions on data gathering, and an implementation workshop. There needs to be vested community engagement. They will be working with IFA and COGs so there is coordination of other existing resources. The Tool can be downloaded and is free. If the community can complete themselves, they can, but if not ISU will help.

Questions:

Rand: Where will workshops be? Jon: At a community level. Would a housing task force be important for a mayor to put together? Jon – yes, either an existing committee or new.

Lt Gov: What is the appropriate role for the state to take? Gary: Funding would help. Thinks they will find some cases where tweaks to the state policy could be made to help facilitate housing, as we see common challenges among communities there might be code recommendations.

Sandy asked Tim and Nick for thoughts. Nick: Using TIF districts can help with down payment assistance; free lots; workforce housing tax credits help the purchaser.

Tim: Every two years he needs to re-educate after elections. Everyone wants things done during their administration and new leaders have different goals. Communities don't want to participate in process. Isn't sure what a city will do if they use it. Gary: every community won't do it – has to be community driven.

Lt Gov: How many communities have used the Tool? Gary: None, program just launched. Have a few pilot communities starting this winter.

Jim: This is a good place to start because at local level not all on same page. The Tool can get people at the right place to start. Not all COG's are the same, they all have different strengths as it relates to housing assessments. Once a community knows what they have, they can move forward. Each community will be different.

Jon: There needs to be a housing group that consists of a broad base of community members, not just leadership as they will change on elections. A broad group will have consistency.

Gary: This is where Invest and Grow task forces align.

Mark: What will the fees be so we can align with the grants. Gary: Still working that out, will depend on what each community needs.

Jon: This is not a housing assessment, this is a tool for communities to look at policy at the local level and gain education.

Lt Gov: This is where the two task forces merge. The leadership is necessary for sustainable projects. One of our recommendations was the doubling of small city set-aside. A prerequisite is a housing needs assessment. We need to help communities be eligible to participate.

9. IFA Tool Presentation – Terri Rosonke, IFA

Tool launched in May 2018. Contracted with Western Economic Services to create. Intends to take the management of data from the shoulders of communities who don't have data expertise. Online dashboard for visual data that is downloadable. Also have pdf reports (up to 5,000 pages). Statewide reports and for 51 different regions. COG regions, Housing Trust, etc. Can also customize regions. Have data on all 99 counties and for 28 largest cities.

How can the Tool fit with a housing needs assessment or community readiness survey? Approximately 70% of data needed for a housing needs assessment can be found on the profile. Public surveys are missing, complete CHAS (Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy) data not there yet, and assessor data not available yet.

Need to note that regardless of a needs assessment, developers will likely want to do their own marketing study. However, the housing needs assessment prepares the community's knowledge on what they have.

10. "Homes for Iowa" Program overview - Dan Clark, Iowa Prison Industries and Mike Norris, HFI Board Member

Dan: More than 90% of all inmates will be released. They provide job training to better the options for assistance when they get out. Help them learn how to work and they are less likely

to recommit. Was approached by Mike to see if they could develop a program to create housing. Worked together to create the program, which was then approved by the governor announced. The program will be at the Newton Correctional Facility, where homes will be built and trucked to communities across the state.

Three primary goals: Increase the supply of affordable housing in rural areas; prepare men and women with a skilled trade; and increase the supply of skilled tradespeople in the state. They will use the apprenticeship program within DOC. The apprenticeship is portable so if they haven't completed when released they can continue through an employer program. Training in the areas of carpentry, construction, plumbing, and electrical.

Homes for Iowa is a 501(c)3 and is based on a private/public partnership. Managed by nine board members from across the state. They make the decisions on number of homes to build and where they go. The program has great support from the Governor's office, Sen. Lofgren Director Durham. IFA provided \$1.2M or \$60,000 each for first 20 homes.

They are building four homes in 2019. Target market is young professionals, older Iowans, families. The cost will be \$75,000 and they will sell at a loss until they can scale. The non-profit (c)3 status allows them to seek private donations. Looking to build 1,000 houses over the next ten years. Next year projecting 18 builds, the following year 36, and on up to over 100 per year. Substantially modeled on a similar program in South Dakota which has had some great outcomes.

11. Task force discussion and Q & A

No questions.

12. Public comment

No comments.

13. Wrap up and next steps

Next meeting will be on Sept. 9th in Vinton. Will discuss what can we do with vacant buildings and highlight a program they are doing. Members should think about the tools we learned about today as to part of strategy.

14. Adjourn

Dave made a motion to adjourn, Nick seconded. All aye. Meeting adjourned at noon.