

**Meeting Minutes – Indiana Native American Indian Affairs Commission (INAIAC)**

**Housing Subcommittee**

Friday, July 10, 2015

Via Conference Call

The Housing Subcommittee meeting was called to order at 11:12am

**Commissioners Present:** Erin Oliver, Nathan Underwood, Dave Liebel

**Staff Present:** Kerry Steiner, Executive Director

**Agenda Item: Section 184 Lending Program**

Nathan Underwood provided a brief overview of the program, mentioning that it's a guaranteed loan and it has a very low default rate (less than 1%). He said it's not prominent in Indiana but since the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians are present in the state, enrolled Native Americans in Indiana are eligible for it.

Kerry Steiner added that to date there have been 24 loans written in Indiana under the Section 184 program and Nathan Underwood added that another benefit is that there is no PMI (Private Mortgage Insurance). Dave Liebel asked what percentage of a home's value can be borrowed and Nathan Underwood responded that it was \$164,000 and in his case, he could have put down 3% rather than the 10% he was required to put down when he purchased his home.

Erin Oliver asked what other states are seeing and what, if any kind of advertising are the Pokagons doing. Nathan Underwood explained that the Pokagons have their own housing department so most of the people there know about the program. He added that in Michigan there have been 530 loans written under Section 184, 11,000 in Oklahoma and 6,900 in Phoenix, but that these numbers were because of the higher population of Native people in those areas. Kerry Steiner mentioned that lenders have received training in those states and Nathan Underwood explained that Wells Fargo has received the training but that no one knows about it and that if a person checks the box on their application that they're Native American it should be presented as an option but it isn't.

Erin Oliver asked if INAIAC can do a press release through the Indiana Civil Rights Commission or other media outlets to help inform the public and Kerry Steiner agreed to do that. Nathan Underwood added that if someone walks into Wells Fargo and asks for Section 184 that Wells Fargo should know about it but they don't, and if they did write the loan it would be transferred to the Wells Fargo Native American lending location and the local lender doesn't get the money so there's no incentive. Dave Liebel added that the borrower could then say thank you to Wells Fargo and that they'll be finding someone else to write the loan who knows about it.

Nathan Underwood added that Section 184 can be used for refinancing and multiplex units and Kerry Steiner added that it can also be used for undeveloped land and remodeling projects. Dave Liebel said that lenders often ask if a person is a veteran but don't ask if they're Native American. Nathan Underwood said that since the INAIAC has been dormant for so long lenders haven't been approached. He added that if you look at the HUD Section 184 website page it states training is not being offered at this time but another page on the same website states training is available to interested lenders. He also said that going into a small mom-and-pop lending agency he was told there is an extensive computer program that's needed but was

informed by another source that that's not the case. There has also been some discrepancy as to whether there's a \$500 application fee.

A member of the public asked if the Feds have a pre-approved application that can be filled out in advance and Nathan Underwood responded that he doesn't believe that exists. In his personal experience, Nathan Underwood said he contacted Bank2 out of state and that within 24 hours he had been approved and that it was a lot easier and less stressful than using a conventional lender.

Kerry Steiner added that the INAIAC website offers a link to Bank2 under the Resources/Housing page and Erin Oliver asked if that might give the appearance that INAIAC is endorsing Bank2. Dave Liebel suggested running this past the ethics officer and/or legal team. Nathan Underwood reported there are 33 lenders approved in Indiana and Erin Oliver suggested it might be safer to put that link on the INAIAC website. Nathan Underwood added that some of the approved lenders are listed by county while some are listed by state.

Dave Liebel said that it's generally considered safe for government agencies to offer resources linked to a .GOV website and that we might want to add some language that says something to the effect of, "Per \_\_\_\_\_ .GOV, the following lenders are approved in Indiana for the Section 184 program." Nathan Underwood added that HUD has not been responsive to calls and emails.

Erin Oliver stated it seems like the next step would be to educate the Native community by doing a press release or flyer that can be shared with the Commissioners for them to pass out at different opportunities, provided at booth events, etc., and that the responsibility will be on the Borrower. Nathan Underwood added that the U.S. Department of Agriculture also offers loans for socially disadvantaged people that are relevant to land, such as loans for farmers.

#### **Agenda Item: Property Tax for Veterans**

Kerry Steiner informed the Subcommittee members about a program that exists for veterans with a disability that allows them to get a reduction on their property taxes and that she has this information already and will post it to the INAIAC website.

The Housing Subcommittee meeting adjourned at 11:53am.