

HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes

Basement Conference Room City Hall

January 15, 2009

12:00 pm

Members:

Charlie Armstrong
Reed Banks
Joy Johnson
Dave Norris
Art Lichtenberger
Natasha Sienitsky
Theresa Tapscott
Chris Murray
Cheri Lewis
Peter Loach

Staff

Melissa Celii
Jim Tolbert
Teresa McCoy

Non-voting Members

Ron White

Others

Edith Good

Introductions: Introductions were made.

Update from the Chair: Regulative action being proposed by Department of Conservation and Recreation regarding environmental legislation. Homebuilders are against the changes, and the changes could affect affordable housing. The new legislation is twice as restrictive regarding run-off on site. The only way the new changes are achievable is through open space, which affects the density of a site and thus its affordability. This is not a bill, just changes in regulations by DCR; as such it does not require legislative approval.

Staff Updates: CDBG and CHF funding RFPs are currently being reviewed by the CDBG Task Force. The City is partnering with Habitat to build the first city-built Habitat house. HAC members are welcome to volunteer their time on the house and can contact Ms. Celii for more information.

Mr. Tolbert briefly discussed the Affordable Housing Ordinance. It has been OKed by the Planning Commission and will be going before Council on 2/2. Part of the legislation getting passed was an agreement for expedited review. This ordinance is going for its second Council review next week. The Affordable Housing Ordinance will also have a 21 day turn around. Ms. Lewis recognized Mr. Armstrong's hard work on helping this review move forward and become reality.

Members had questions about the status of vacant member positions. What will the group look like and how will it get things done as it grows? To date, staff has not received any applications. Members are encouraged to recruit possible new members.

Approval of Minutes: A motion was made, seconded, and approved to approve Minutes from the November 20, 2008 HAC Meeting.

Data Review: Staff reviewed data materials presented at the meeting including monthly market snapshots, list of tax credit properties and Section 8 providers, housing resource guide, and demographics of City public housing and Section 8 households. Members provided comments and suggestions on how to better present and strengthen the data.

There was a brief discussion about the financing of condos. Members thought it is a shame that VHDA is no longer doing new financing for new condos because they are an affordable option for many. Perhaps data can be collected on condos.

There was concern about the consistency between CRHA's consolidated plan and the City's. Members wanted to make sure that goals and activities are consistent between plans as are the numbers. Staff will review consolidated plans for inconsistencies. In the future, the HAC will assist in the City's consolidated and action plan process.

HAC Calendar: There was a discussion about how often the HAC should meet. If meetings were monthly, members could do educational presentations for the benefit of all. Others suggested that the HAC meet every other month or when important issues need to be decided. It was suggested that the HAC needs to report on annual housing goals that have been met. Members felt that the info sharing, updates, and informing people about current matters is very important. Members felt that there is enough stuff and reason for them to meet monthly. Mr. White mentioned that fewer meetings in the County did not improve attendance and slows down the momentum of the group. It was decided that the HAC will continue to meet monthly at the same date and time.

It was also suggested that the HAC have workshops with one possible topic being 'how to have true mixed income developments.' It could include best practices, what it looks like, how to do it, etc. It was suggested that Charles Gardner of Greenville SC be a speaker. There was a brief discussion of who in town is doing mixed income developments. Habitat on Patton St. is one example.

Procedural Issues: The HAC needs to determine and get a set of by-laws and determine what makes a quorum. Members felt that the quorum should be based upon the positions filled and not total member positions. Ms. Lewis volunteered to write the by-laws. The position of Chair will need to be rotated. Mr. Armstrong will continue to serve, but will happily accept nominations for a new chair.

Presentation of Multifamily Apartments: Mr. Loach began a presentation and discussion on multifamily housing and how it gets funded. This discussion will continue at the next meeting.

Other Business: Mr. Norris alerted the HAC to five bills that are going to the house that deal with affordable housing. The bills focus on the creation of a Virginia Housing Trust Fund, incentives for landlords to accept Section 8 vouchers, plat extension, first time

homeowner tax credit, rental assistance pilot program, and livable homes tax credits.
There will also be a Housing Lobby Day on January 27, 2009.

Meeting Adjourned at 1:40.