

HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DRAFT Minutes

Basement Conference Room City Hall

March 18, 2009

12:00 pm

Members:

Art Lichtenberger

Karen Waters

Dave Norris

Kathy Galvin

Maureen Burkhill (proxy)

Theresa Tapscott

Peter Loach

Natasha Sienitsky

Chris Murray

Staff:

Melissa Celii

Non-voting Members:

Ron White

Meeting began at 12:05.

Introductions: Introductions were made.

Update from the Chair: None.

Staff Updates: Staff reviewed handouts and materials. It was suggested that the data could somehow be incorporated into GIS. It was also suggested that the Rental Monthly Snapshot include data on specific affordable complexes to see what is available at those areas at a given time. There were concerns about complexes with waitlists, since vacant units would not be available to the public. Snapshot will focus on complexes that do not have waitlists.

Staff updated the HAC on the CHF RFP process. The CDBG Task Force has expressed a desire for the funding priorities to somehow be ranked. HAC members thought that what is needed may be more along the lines of goals and concrete visions and strategies. Members felt that now that they have more data available to them, they can make these decisions over the next year. It was pointed out that there may not always be applications or projects that meet those specific goals. Mayor Norris mentioned that the proposed budget for next year is 40% less funding. There was concern about who should be reviewing the applications. The CDBG Task Force is the group whose job it is to review grants. Members felt it would be useful to have a work session between the HAC and the CDBG Task Force. It was mentioned that the CDBG Task Force is planning on having education sessions on the funds available and RFP process. It is hoped that these workshops will better inform the public, possible grantees, and result in more diverse applications.

The HAC expressed a desire in helping to draft and revise the RFP application. There was a brief discussion on whether the two funds should be reviewed for funding at the same time. It was suggested that the education sessions may ensure that applicants are applying for the best funding source for them.

There was a question about whether funding decisions tie back to the City's Comp. Plan. There was a question about when to have the RFPs for CDBG and CHF funds together or at separate times. It was noted that the priorities still need to be prioritized because as of now, there are no benchmarks for the CDBG Task Force to know if their funding recommendations are on line with what the City wants. It was suggested that the Annual Action Plan should include HAC priorities and any local funding source should be listed. It was pointed out that the Action Plan is not about priorities, but more about what is being funded. The Action Plan could be used to illustrate gaps and show where future projects are needed. It was suggested that more objective criteria will help ensure that "watered down" impacts do not occur. It was suggested that instead of funding priorities there be funding percentages, i.e. X percent goes towards rental, Y percent goes towards rehab, and Z percent goes towards pilot programs.

There was also a brief discussion about the new housing position being filled in the City. The HAC expressed interest in having an input into the selection process.

Approval of Minutes: There was a question about the by-laws and their status. Staff reported that a Ms. Lewis has a first draft completed and has a list of suggestions from HAC members. She suggests that City attorneys finalize the by-laws. HAC members would like a chance to see the draft by-laws and make comments. It was noted that the "by-laws" are really more like protocols or guidelines as opposed to strict laws.

Ron White is incorrectly shown as being in attendance. Chris Murray was in attendance, but is not listed.

Motion to approve minutes with corrected attendance made, seconded, and approved.

Discussion of HAC Calendar: Staff presented the HAC with a first draft of the HAC Calendar for the next 18 months. It was suggested that if there were no letters of intent, the process would not take as long. It was further suggested that having a funding workshop where specific funding criteria was discussed could eliminate the need for letters of intent. Members seemed to feel that letters of intent should remain in place until specific funding criteria are established.

It was suggested that the HAC Calendar should have different track headings such as Policy, Grants, CDBG, etc. There was a rediscussion about priorities and how detailed they should be. Some members thought they should be overarching goals. Some thought it would be helpful to have a range of how much of the budget should go to what type of project. It was noted that applications can not just be measured by the people helped; some projects are more intense in regards to impact and not numbers. It was also noted that some projects may have secondary impacts.

One member felt that there will never be enough info or data to make all decisions solely on that; it will always come down to a gut instinct. Members felt that instead of specific funding priorities there needs to be some basic housing goals. Instead of saying that the HAC wants this project or that project, they would rather say we want to see leveraging, and this income bracket served, etc. The goals the HAC comes up with should be community wide, not just funding specific. Members felt there needs to be more clear objectives and performance benchmarks.

Members asked Staff to revise the calendar to have more clear columns. They also asked Staff to assign times for the HAC get different things done in regards to recommendations and reports.

Presentation of Multifamily Apartments: Peter Loach continued his presentation from January's meeting on multifamily financing. He discussed different factors that affect the cost of a project and walked through the tax credit application point system.

Other Business: Mr. Norris made a recommendation for a speaker for April's meeting. Helen O'Beirne from Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Virginia, Inc. is trying to strengthen inclusionary zoning in Virginia and would like input from the HAC. Staff will work on setting this up and advertising it to interested parties.

Meeting Adjourned at 1:40.