

HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes

Basement Conference Room City Hall

May 20, 2009

12:00 pm

Members:

Charlie Armstrong

Peter Loach

Chris Murray

Richard Spurzem

Sasha Farmer

Staff:

Melissa Celi

Teresa McCoy

Ebony Walden

Others:

Bob Gross

Brian Plum

Meeting began at 12:15.

Introductions: Introductions were made.

There was a brief discussion among the four members present at the beginning of the meeting about how best to proceed with such a small attendance. There was concern that the Housing Report is very important and needs to have a larger group to discuss it. It was decided that the meeting will continue informally with no decisions being made.

Update from the Chair: None.

Update from Staff: Update on CHF funding process. Members would like staff to provide them with an update of what happened at the May 18 Council meeting and what programs have been funded. There were concerns about the CHF process and how it can be approved. It was suggested that Council needs to be provided with more information and clarity on their projects and the CDBG Task Force's reasoning behind their decisions. One member believed that Council does not have confidence in the CDBG Task Force's ability to recommend funding. Council has taken no action to date that has changed the CHF funding process or the CDBG Task Force's role.

Approval of Minutes: Deferred to June meeting due to lack of attendance. Members present felt that the agenda clearly stated the importance of the discussions and decisions that needed to occur at this meeting.

Discussion of Boulder Model Housing Report: Ms. McCoy provided an update on how the number of currently affordable units was determined. The number includes the number of VHDA or HUD funded properties and the number of Housing Choice Vouchers, minus any overlap that may occur when a voucher is used in an already subsidized unit. These units were counted because they are essentially guaranteed affordable apartments for a set number of years. It is noted that there may be many more

affordable units currently in the City's inventory, but there is no accurate way to record them and no mechanisms in place to ensure they will still be affordable next month. Using a goal of having 20% of the housing stock be affordable, an additional 1,473 units would need to be added to the inventory.

There was a discussion about the achievability of this goal. There were concerns about the reasonability of looking so far out. It was suggested that maybe there is a 10 year vision, but with a five year goal. There were concerns about the number of units that would need to be added each year. It was suggested reducing the percentage goal of affordable housing to 15%. Members wanted a definition of guaranteed affordable housing added to the report. There was a discussion about whether affordable housing only means subsidized housing; and if so how can we really know if the city is adding affordable, non-subsidized units. Staff suggested that another goal could be set to reduce the number of households paying more than 50% of their income to housing by a certain percent by the 2020 Census. It was recommended that the count of current affordable housing include the number of down payment assistance deed restrictions held by PHA and the number of Habitat houses that have not been sold, as these also are guaranteed affordable units. It was recommended that the housing goal break down the number of new units created to new units physically created (construction) and new units created in existing units through opportunity (ie. downpayment assistance). It was noted that going forward it would be easier to keep track on non-guaranteed or non-subsidized units. It was suggested that the best approach is to work backwards, for example, looking at the actual stock and where they fall in terms of affordability.

Discussion of Bylaws: Moved to next meeting.

Discussion of SRO Zoning Text Amendment: Ebony Walden, Neighborhood Planner, discussed a proposed zoning text amendment that Council asked the Planning Commission to draft that would incorporate language regarding Single Room Occupancy units, which are studio apartments with support services. There needs to be a definition and regulations on how to govern the use of SROs. The use of SROs is being proposed in zones that allow multifamily units and by SUP. The text amendment is scheduled to go to Planning Commission for public hearing in June. Mr. Walden was looking for input from people who are involved in affordable housing for any concerns or clarifications or suggestions. She provided clarification that these would only be permitted in multifamily zones and would be subject to BAR approval if in an Architectural Design District. Ms. Walden explained that an on-site manager is key to the success of an SRO, but that the services may not have to occur on site. Some members wanted to know about the flexibility in the size, scale, and density of the SRO. Ms. Walden explained that the scale and mass would be based on zoning, and Council would approve density on a case by case basis as it is directly related to each unique site. The minimum and maximum sizes are included in the report and are driven by building code requirements. Members wanted to know how this differs from a boarding house. Ms. Walden explained that boarding housings are one unit with many bedrooms and shared bathrooms and kitchens, while SROs are efficiency apartments with private facilities. Members wanted to know if a developer could use SRO zoning for building

dorms. They could if they meet the other support services requirements. Ms. Walden further explained that the goal of SROs is to provide small affordable units, and a developer could already build an all efficiency unit apartment so there would be little benefit from them trying to use this ordinance to build student apartments.

Other Business: Mr. Armstrong would like to reiterate his request that this body be provided with lunch to help increase attendance which has steadily been falling off. He believes that it is hard enough for a committee made up of volunteers to come and, in many cases, miss work to be at the meetings, but to have to worry about lunch on top of that is a large disincentive to come.

Meeting Adjourned at 1:25.