

HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DRAFT Minutes

Quality Community Council

December 7, 2010

12:00 pm

Attendance Record	Present	Absent
MEMBERS		
Art Lichtenberger		X
Charlie Armstrong		X
Chris Murray	X	
Dan Rosensweig	X	
Jennifer Jacobs	X	
Joy Johnson	X	
Karen Waters	X	
Kathy Galvin		X
Peter Loach	X	
Randy Bickers / Amy Kilroy	X	
Reed Banks		X
Richard Spurzem		X
Ryan Jacoby	X	
Sasha Farmer		X
Satyendra Huja		X
NON VOTING MEMBERS		
Ron White		X
Vicki Hawes		X
STAFF		
Kathy McHugh	X	
Melissa Thackston	X	
OTHERS		
Edith Good		X
Marnie Allen		X

The meeting began at 12:10 PM with cookies and drinks provided for those in attendance.

Welcome: Karen Waters welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming.

Report from the Chair and Discussion:

Karen Waters advised that there had been much confusion regarding CDBG and HOME funding being included in the City allocation toward affordable housing.

Chris Murray asked for clarification regarding the matter.

Karen Waters discussed the background of the 2025 Goals for Affordable Housing report and what constitutes supported affordable housing. Also she discussed the fact that it is difficult (in the report) to distinguish what is CHF, HOME and CDBG.

Going forward we have the opportunity to distinguish which funds are used and how much leverage is involved.

Peter Loach mentioned that the group (including Melissa Celi) spent hours and hours crunching numbers for the report.

Melissa Celii-Thackston then referenced page 12 of the housing report and stated that the distinction (between CHF, CDBG and HOME) was deliberately kept vague using terminology such as "City Investment". Nevertheless, that the HAC should advocate for maximum funding for affordable housing.

Karen Waters followed up by indicating that at the time she voted, she did not understand that no distinction was being made.

Peter Loach acknowledged that this issue was confusing and that the staff memo to the City Council allowed for the option of using a combination of City and other funding. Also, that is important to look ahead and not behind.

Dan Rosensweig stated that people thought they (HAC members) were voting for full funding through CHF and not using Federal dollars.

Chris Murray went on to discuss the need to advocate for use of CHF to go toward specific affordable housing and that money should not be stripped / siphoned away from the fund without input from HAC. Also, that the City Council never had a choice to consider any other options besides those presented by staff. Funds should be looked at (hard) to see if the funds are being used to build new affordable units. He stated that the decision should not be left up to Jim Tolbert.

Peter Loach agreed with Chris Murray but emphasized that the issue of pulling out "one-third of the CHF" (from competition) is a separate issue.

Karen Waters advised that it is the City Council's prerogative to make decisions about final funding.

Dan Rosensweig agreed with Chris Murray adding that the HAC needs to be more influential in how funds are spent.

Karen Waters added that it is hard for the average tax payer to get their heads around how these decisions are made and that when things are funded "williy-nilly" that it is not clear what we want. The process needs to be clear and transparent.

Peter Loach informed the group that when Mr. Huja was in office that he had a slush fund that would go to PHA, Habitat for Humanity and others to provide help with small projects; however, with Mayor Norris's direction, we need a clear / transparent process because we now have significant funding available. The City needs to be able to say that we need "x" dollars to do what we want and then go to the CIP to tap into the funds that are available.

Amy Kilroy stated that slush funds should be kept separate and still serve a useful purpose.

Karen Waters followed up by informing the group that we do not want to go back to the days without transparency, but we need to be able to address needs (fluidly) when opportunities arise.

Peter Loach said that NDS can do what they want, but HAC is supposed to be allowed to have input.

Karen Waters added that staff could use CDBG / HOME funds at their discretion, but CHF funds should be directed toward HAC-identified priorities.

Peter Loach referenced the Dice Street CDBG application for streetscape improvements, mentioning that this type of project should be directed toward the CIP and not CDBG.

Melissa Celii-Thackston stated that the group should be careful (politically) about making this argument and Kathy McHugh added that most states spend the majority of their CDBG funds on infrastructure and not housing.

Karen Waters said that housing should be considered to be infrastructure and that the HAC needs to advocate for the maximum amount of funding for housing that can be achieved.

Dan Rosensweig stated that he believes that the housing report supported the use of local funds only.

Melissa suggested that (for the sake of reporting) the group needs to be careful about pulling CDBG/HOME funding out because it was included in the report (see table on page 12 of the report).

Dan pointed out that the HAC needs to look toward the future and that CDBG / HOME funds (in the past) have not been adequate to meet the level of need. Further that perhaps we could amend the 2025 report ... asking Melissa if changes would impact CDBG.

Melissa responded that this would not be a problem.

Karen Waters advised that the projections in the report only work if we are able to leverage funds at a rate of 10 to 1 and that perhaps this is not a reasonable expectation.

Karen then distributed a memorandum that she had drafted and asked if this would be acceptable to use as the basis for a HAC resolution.

Chris Murray mentioned that the 2nd paragraph is not clear.

Dan Rosensweig stated that we should modify the CIP table to reflect table 8 (page 17) but that the City can not commit what they do not have.

Melissa added that the CIP (from 2011- 2015) should reflect the numbers in Table 8.

Dan Rosensweig suggested that maybe we should ask that the entire table be added to the CIP.

Dan then made a motion to approve the memorandum (with some wording changes) which clarifies the intent of the housing report regarding the source of CHF dollars and Chris Murray seconded the motion.

A vote was then taken which was unanimous in support of the motion. Note that Art Lichtenberger's proxy was used to support the decision.

After asking for a volunteer to take the matter to the Planning Commission – and finding none – Karen Waters volunteered to undertake the task and to send a memo to Missy Creasy.

Joy Johnson stated that we need to articulate the need for transparent use of CHF and CDBG funds.

With no other comments, the meeting was adjourned until the January 19th meeting.

HAC Specific Actions

Karen Waters is to attend the Planning Commission meeting on behalf of the HAC and present the memorandum.

Other Business: None