

HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
DRAFT Minutes
Basement Conference Room City Hall
January 19, 2011
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		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 12:07 PM with sandwiches provided for those in attendance. An attendance roster and packet of information was available for all.

Welcome: Karen Waters welcomed everyone and then asked that the HAC members review the minutes from 11/13/10 and 12/7/10 and advise of any necessary changes. With no further comments/discussion, the minutes were approved by a unanimous vote of 11- 0.

Updates from the Chair:

Karen Waters updated the group about her presentation to the Planning Commission On December 14, 2010 and she thanked both Joy Johnson and Peter Loach for their support in attending the meeting. .

Dan Rosensweig stated that if the Planning Commission wants to support the 2025 goals, then they need to provide necessary funding. Further, that the City Council can do differently, but that they need to make it known that priorities have changed. He went on to say that Karen Waters did an excellent job of making the presentation and that the Planning Commission appreciated clarification on the matter.

Moving onto a discussion about the HAC bylaws, Karen Waters informed the group that these were initially developed when Cheri Lewis was on the HAC to be very general and provide for operating rather loosely and by consensus rather than through a more structured approach such as Robert's Rules of Order. Further, as to requests for information to be distributed to the entire HAC that she would like for requests to be sent to her directly with a copy to Kathy McHugh.

As to modifying the bylaws, protocols and procedures, the group was informed that this would be a new direction which would require consensus of the HAC membership. Also, that issues such as the meeting schedule have previously been decided by a vote of the group and that the current schedule is to meet as a group every other month and have subcommittees meet during the intervening period.

Kathy Galvin noted that she believes that the current subcommittees are ad-hoc and that if they are standing that officers would be required.

Richard Spurzem stated that he wanted clarity on the matter of whether HAC sub-committees are standing or ad-hoc.

As to this issue, Chairwoman Waters stated that it was her understanding that the sub-committees were standing and that since these groups do not make or adopt policy that it is acceptable to operate without officers.

Kathy Galvin clarified that there would be no need for a new chair for the Affordable Housing Policy Review Subcommittee because the group would dissolve.

Joy Johnson indicated that her understanding is that the groups are ad hoc. Richard then asked Charlie Armstrong "which are they" to which Charlie responded that he thought they were ad-hoc.

Dan Rosensweig commented that sub-committees meet every other month or as needed and that he questioned the importance of the distinction in that if there is no work to be done that no meeting would be necessary.

Given the confusion, it was determined that the discussion of the bylaws and election of a new chair needed to be tabled until the next meeting. **Kathy McHugh is to pull all minutes regarding subcommittees and their formation.**

Karen Waters announced that there will be a joint meeting of the Planning Commission and City Council at City Spaces on 2/3/11 at which time critical slopes will be discussed.

The meeting was then opened up for staff discussions.

Kathy McHugh provided a report on the CHF, reading off the list of funded projects from the City Council resolution provided in the agenda packet.

In response to the report, Dan Rosensweig asked if the awards for the upcoming fiscal year mean that there will not be a competitive RFP for next year, or if there will be an RFP which includes any extra funds (above the \$950,000 pledged in support).

Councilman Huja replied that these projects were determined to have merit and that while the Council had to act now to help preserve these projects, that he was not sure if there will be any extra money.

Joy Johnson then asked if PHA had targeted specific properties owned by Otis Lee, to which Peter responded that this is a scattered site acquisition which will involve renovation of the units.

Chris Murray explained that the funds allocated to JABA would go back into the CHF if the tax credit project is not funded.

Kathy Galvin then asked if this process would normally be more competitive.

Chris Murray responded by explaining that timing is critical for the tax credit application.

Peter Loach stated that Council did not address having a competition with the remainder of the \$1.4 million.

Karen Waters stated that the HAC would like a "heads-up" on decisions such as this and not have to learn about them after the fact.

A question was asked about the number of units involved with each project and it was explained that the Otis Lee project would include 30 units and the JABA project has 28.

A discussion about the timeframe for the CIP ensued and Dan Rosensweig asked Mr. Huja when discussions would begin. Mr. Huja explained that the process as involving a public hearing, then work session to be followed by a decision.

Chris Murray noted that the resolution provided by the Council states that the funding is "subject to appropriations" and as such "is not worth the paper that it is written on" and that this needs to be explored further.

With no further staff reports, the meeting moved to a discussion of subcommittee updates.

Karen Waters reported that Melissa Celi Thackston had arranged for a joint meeting of the CDBG Task Force and the HAC Public Funding and Priorities Subcommittee to be held on March 7, 2011. She also reported about the discussions of the 12/15/10 subcommittee meeting (see minutes in agenda packet) stating that the committee intends on developing information to present to the public and City Council regarding use of CHF dollars. The meeting scheduled for today was cancelled but the group will meet in February.

Chris Murray stated that he had no update since the October meeting. Chairwoman Waters asked Chris if the group had met since October and Chris replied that they had not met but that the group wanted to come up with a single priority. Charlie Armstrong interjected that he felt the group had condensed their concerns down to a short list and he is not sure that the group wants to prioritize only one issue. Chris responded that he meant to prioritize one issue at a time.

Kathy Galvin then provided a summary of the report that she developed on behalf of the Affordable Housing Policy Review Subcommittee back in November of last year. She stated that there are 7 categories with broad inter-related ideas based on ideas that the HAC developed last May. She then read a quote from Shaun Donovan and referenced the policy goals/objectives and strategies on pages 3 to 6.

Kathy Galvin recommended that maybe we break the report in half for 2 meetings to see if there are any suggestions for HAC initiatives. Dan Rosensweig then asked Karen Waters if there is anything on the agenda for March besides the bylaws and was told that there was not.

Dan Rosensweig then suggested that the entire HAC should review the housing section of the Comp Plan as homework for the next meeting; however, Kathy Galvin expressed concern that this might be counterproductive to the work of the subcommittee and that it could be overwhelming for the group and bog down the process.

Joy Johnson stated that maybe we need to bet bogged down and look at these issues while relating them back to the community.

Dan Rosensweig agreed and went on to say that he wants to hear specific discussions on various housing issues, including hearing Chris Murray talk about elderly housing and Jen Jacobs talk about housing rehabilitation.

Kathy Galvin stated that the document produced by her subcommittee was meant as a guide to facilitate conversation / discussion related to the Comprehensive Plan.

Dan asserted that there are other voices and various input that need to be heard also.

Peter Loach agreed with Joy Johnson that we need to hear from the public about how they can get involved.

Dan Rosensweig stated that the current effort is an update and does not involve creation of a totally new document, so the effort will likely not be as extensive as in the past.

Joy Johnson said that the same people tend to be involved every time and that information needs to be further boiled down so that it can be understood by the larger community.

Peter Loach explained that he wants to ensure that there are broad public input opportunities.

Karen Waters advised that once we know the calendar for updating the comp plan that the HAC could host a forum and include NDS, CCDC, etc...

Kathy Galvin indicated that because the comp plan is legislatively required that she is not sure that the HAC (as an advisory group) should be leading the comp plan process.

Karen Waters stated that we are not leading or updating the comp plan but rather making recommendations for updates.

Joy Johnson asked what is being done about the homeless problem in the City and how will this be included in the comp plan.

Karen Waters would like Dan's suggestion to undertake the homework of reviewing the housing chapter of the comp plan.

Kathy Galvin went on to say that she wants to make sure that the comp plan review by the HAC incorporated the document that she developed on behalf of her subcommittee.

Richard Spurzem elaborated that the discussion of the document involves so many things that are inter-related such as density, zoning, etc... that all tie into housing.

Kathy Galvin stated that the critical slopes discussion is a perfect example of the inter-related nature of these topics and housing.

Mr. Huja agreed that reading the housing chapter of the comp plan would be a good idea.

Dan Rosensweig said it would be nice to be disciplined and come up with certain basics to get involved with the process.

Kathy Galvin would like to discuss all of this over the next 2 to 3 meetings.

Mr. Huja stated that any such discussion would need to be facilitated, to which Karen Waters replied that between herself and Kathy McHugh that this could be done, but that everyone needs to do their homework.

Kathy McHugh is to send out the housing section of the comp plan along with a timeline from Missy Creasy.

From this point, discussion moved to consideration of an action item to vote on the HAC's position on critical slopes.

Charlie Armstrong informed the group that the critical slopes discussion is coming up on February 8, 2011. He commended Kathy Galvin for doing a great job of putting together a concise letter (dated 1/12/11) and stated that he would like to use the letter as a model to send forward from the HAC.

Richard Spurzem discussed critical slopes stating that 25 years ago this was an engineering discussion. Current site plans have the information necessary to facilitate decision making; however, the city wants control for certain groups and the fear is that this will be used for non-growth. Engineering should not be an issue.

Charlie Armstrong added that based on his experience that any regulation adds costs and that we need to ask if this is worth what it will cost; and things such as this can be used like a lever (through a thin veil) to get extra things added without extra costs.

Richard Spurzem indicated that the proposed Home Depot in Albemarle County (along US 29) was denied because of critical slopes and that this issue can be used in all kinds of cases and for all types of reasons.

Kathy Galvin mentioned that regulations are not evil but must be balanced because there are a lot of competing factors. The language being used regarding "beauty" is too subjective.

Charlie Armstrong added that beauty is very specific to individuals and too ambiguous.

Richard Spurzem stated that he does not know what having a slope of 25% or greater has to do with beauty.

Dan Rosensweig emphasized that as a Planning Commissioner he is duty bound to hear all comments prior to making a decision and that he is not committing to a vote one way or another. Further that we should encourage every one to come because the discussion will likely raise issues not heard before. Charlottesville is the only community with greater than 20,000 (i.e., not rural) in population with a critical slope ordinance.

In terms of drafting some type of HAC consensus statement to focus on critical slopes, there was a general discussion led by Dan that Kathy Galvin's memo could be used while focusing on size consideration and proximity to streams because stream protection is very important.

Dan Rosensweig explained that the rationale for re-examining critical slopes was to eliminate the need for every issue to have go before the Planning Commission (e.g., Kroger off of Hydraulic Road needing to add an extra gas pump).

Richard Spurzem asked if the planning commission has asked for a report from the City Engineer regarding current mechanics / controls being used to protect streams?

Dan said that none of us are engineers and that site plans contain enough information to make decisions, but that there are some lots that are close to streams that should not be developed.

Chris Murray added that lot size and man made slopes need to be considered in the discussion also because land availability is critical to development of affordable housing.

Dan Rosensweig stated that he is frustrated that the City is about to pass an ordinance that the Planning Commission does not fully understand. Specifically, Dan clarified that he was referring to potential consequences of the ordinance.

Charlie Armstrong indicated that the process will be completed by next week.

Karen Waters questioned whether it is appropriate for the HAC (as a group) to be expressing opinions on critical slopes and that maybe this is better left to HAC members (as individuals) .

Charlie Armstrong recommended that staff work with Kathy Galvin to draft a letter to be signed by the Chair of the HAC.

Richard Spurzem seconded the motion.

Dan Rosensweig mentioned that there are several areas of agreement with the ordinance, but that if it is changed that there should be a minimum lot size requirement.

Karen Waters interjected that she does not understand all of the specifics regarding this matter and is not clear to her if there is already an existing ordinance that is to be changed.

Dan Rosensweig explained that there is an ordinance in place currently and that the current discussion is about proposed changes.

Kathy Galvin said that the new ordinance will provide less definition because the natural beauty issue.

Richard Spurzem can foresee that the new ordinance could stop a by-right development based on the need for a critical slope waiver. He went on to say that this leaves the door completely open and takes away development rights.

Kathy Galvin stated that she needs to leave the meeting and is not in a position to put any more time in on this effort at present.

Joy Johnson asked what does staff want to accomplish and what do developers want to accomplish with regard to the critical slopes issue?

Charlie Armstrong explained that staff wants to go down a list to complete the review prior to deferring to the Planning Commission, whereas a developer wants to avoid discretionary views altogether. He then went on to give an example using Habitat for Humanity and north downtown – explaining that the Planning Commission would hear opposition from the public and be able to deny based on “subjective” nature of the ordinance.

Kathy Galvin stated that slopes should be tied specifically to the health of streams. Adding that she agrees with the science of stream protection, but not with subjective measures.

Peter Loach has an issue with the whole discussion for the HAC, stating that the HAC’s focus is on affordable housing and he does not want the group to be a technical committee. Joy Johnson agreed and Peter added that we need a map which shows all critical slopes so that we can quantify impact.

Karen Waters advised that we are beholden to make comments about funding, but that we need to limit technical advice.

Dan Rosensweig said that it would perhaps make more sense to vote on something more simplistic.

Kathy McHugh mentioned at this point in the meeting that perhaps we should record these proceedings due to the length of the minutes and in-depth conversations.

Karen Waters suggested that perhaps Charlie Armstrong might want to withdraw his motion from earlier and Charlie agreed and then suggested that Kathy Galvin’s letter be modified into a more simple version to send. Richard Spurzem seconded the motion and all agreed.

Karen Waters then suggested that Kathy McHugh and a volunteer work on changing the letter.

Karen then asked if anyone has anything for the agenda next time and Joy Johnson mentioned the inventory for the 2025 report.

The meeting was then adjourned.