

HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Notes
September 20, 2007

Present:

Art Lichtenberger
Karen Waters
Charlie Armstrong
Mike Heckman
Jennifer Jacobs, AHIP
Dave Norris
Noah Schwartz
Peter Loach
Overton McGehee
Natasha Sienitsky
Joy Johnson
Angela Vanderhoof

Absent:

Ron White
Reed Banks
Cheri Lewis
Carol Clarke
Theresa Tapscott
Vicki Hawes

Guests:

Richard Price
Tom Twomey
Edith Good

Summary of Meeting Notes:

- Meeting was called to order at 12:10 and began with several announcements from staff:
 1. Review of spreadsheet with Letters of Intent submitted for the Charlottesville Housing Fund. Application packet information was mailed out and final applications will be due to staff on Wednesday, October 17th by 5:00 pm. Task Force will be reviewing them in October and November with recommendations being sent to Council for Dec. meetings.
 2. Announcements of two housing related events being hosted by the Piedmont Housing Alliance. Fliers for each event were distributed by e-mail to all committee members.
 3. Update on the Joint City/County Housing Task Force – need to fill second seat on TF. Karen Waters already volunteered for one seat, Charlie and Art will take the second seat and alternate meeting attendance based on their schedules. Group will hopefully begin meeting by the end of October.
- Richard Price gave a presentation on opportunities in the community for providing workforce housing. Primary interest is to provide units by the private sector while partnering with City to use some of their land. Richard is looking for HAC advice/guidance on possible next steps.
 - He has already spoken with Peggy VanYahres on the School Board about possible use of school-owned land, but has not yet spoken with Superintendent or other School Board members.
 - Housing product type will be matched to what the market is looking for in these units.
 - City would remain in control of the land during the partnership
 - Possibly looking at undeveloped green spaces which could be transformed
 - Sustainable development is Richard's primary business, and these technologies would be incorporated into the project

- Doesn't want this to be another project lobbying for already limited City funds, develop a working partnership
- Perhaps best way to move forward is to do a comprehensive analysis with staff and zero in on potential sites. Then choose a specific site and make a proposal.
- Possibility of involving A-school students either through work-study program or a studio course devoted to the topic
- Makes the most sense to choose a location where there is going to be least opposition for the pilot demonstration

A summary of points/comments raised by members of the committee are as follows:

- Noah – Will this be only units for sale or will it include any rental units? Strong emphasis on the provision/inclusion of rental units into the project
- Dave – Due to difficulty of recruiting and retaining teachers, would there be a way that we could reserve some units for school staff (not just teachers) so they could live closer to where they work? There is no state-level dispensation for what the City does with its land, we administer it internally.
- Overton – What is the intended definition of “Workforce housing” and who are the intended clients? Would schools be able to reduce their total acreage of land from the state? Would non-profits be able to submit proposals to provide additional options? Would like to schedule a meeting with local non-profits to do some collective brainstorming.
- Natasha – Thinks it is a great opportunity to put housing near work, knows of some already successful examples in Montgomery County, MD with units on city land, Do we need to check at the state level to see what kind of permission we need?
- Peter – Why start with schools' land? Parents might not want people living so close to where their children go to school, employees might not want to live that close to where they are working. Possible parking and density issues. Need to learn what the targeted market can afford – already difficult for some teachers to buy even a townhouse. How to work on the longer-term affordability of these units? Will want to think about partnering with non-profits.
- Karen – Can we look at ways of reducing the amount of impervious surface and excess parking that we have as opposed to developing green space? There could be a certain amount of opposition from the already formed special interest groups in town. No place for folks needing transitional housing to live, which adds another level of complexity because they are below the cut-off for qualifying for workforce housing.
- Mike – What happens if other developers catch wind of this idea? Would we be putting this out to a larger competitive bid?

NEXT STEPS: Richard and Amy will put together a listing of possible sites and will work on narrowing down the list from there.

- Charlie gave a brief overview of the Community Land Trust articles that were handed out several meetings ago and of some of the obstacles in implementing this model:
 - We need to get a better handle on what the legal obstacles are since we are a Dillon rule state.

- There are financial issues with underwriting because they are not fee-simple mortgages.
 - The Land Trust model is a way to reduce the overall cost of a project because it separates out the land costs from the construction/building costs
 - Homeowners who purchase a unit through the Land Trust will not gain a limited amount of equity on the unit when they go to sell it
 - Would the Land Trust and its land holdings be eligible for tax exemption?
 - We need to have the VHDA comfortable with the idea in order for it to move forward
 - Suggested that we invite Bill Edgerton from the Oak Hill Fund to our November meeting to give an update on his research as well as where the Steering Committee is in performing the feasibility study.
 - The name of the consultant, hired by the Oak Hill Fund to perform this feasibility study, is Burlington Associates. Their website is: www.burlingtonassociates.com/ Please visit the website to review some of the great background materials they have listed about the Community Land Trust model and the variety of ways it can be assembled.
- Charlie next gave an overview of the City's Proffer Luncheon that was attended by City staff, members of the Blue Ridge Home Builders Association, local developers, non-profit representatives, City Councilors and Planning Commissioners.
 - City is looking to gather feedback and information to help inform its direction when developing proffer/developer incentive related policies
 - Current policies/programs are not mutually beneficial
 - Land Trust model was mentioned as a possible tool to use – proffered units could be sent to the Land Trust for development/holding
 - Habitat's equity-sharing model was mentioned as a way for the City to recoup its investment when the unit is sold and recycle the funding for future units
 - We need to revise our code to give more traction for accepting cash and affordable housing proffers
 - Currently in Albemarle County there are four different ways that their affordable housing criteria can be met
 - HAC can make a series of recommendations to City Council and Planning Commission about the direction of the City's Proffer Policy – we need a portfolio of options to solve our affordable housing obstacles
 - Art mentioned a few administrative items that he would like to see get addressed. The primary one is the development/maintenance of the City's website – more specifically developing a Housing page for resources, information sharing, access to information/documents etc. Someone mentioned that the Design Center has a comprehensive list of organizations/resources available that we might want to incorporate.
 - Charlie raised a question about a phrase that concerned him in last month's meeting notes: *“Within the project, provides for a wide variation of income (within the range of 0 – 60% AMI) towards the creation of mixed-income neighborhoods, to reverse our long-standing practice of concentrating poverty and segregating our citizenry by race and class.”* Where did this language come from and is there a way to alter it so that the message is different?

- Items for next month's agenda:
 - Begin a budget discussion in case HAC wants to make recommendations to Council for funding,
 - Joy would like to do some research into Mixed-income community models and has been looking into some South Carolina examples to get started,
 - Follow-ups / Next steps discussion on Proffer Policy and Land Trust ideas presented

Meeting adjourned at 1:30.

- **Next *REGULAR* meeting date is set for: Thursday, October 18th @ 12:00** (Location: Basement Conference Room of City Hall)