

HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Notes

Basement Conference Room City Hall

October 16, 2008

12:00 pm

Present:

Charlie Armstrong
Peter Loach
Edith Good
Reed Banks
Karen Waters
Joy Johnson
Overton McGehee
Theresa Tapscott
Chris Murray
Natasha Sienitsky
Kathy Galvin

Staff

Melissa Celii

Introductions—guest/visitors: Brian Plumb, Holly Edwards

Minute Approval: Definition of affordability needs to be mentioned in the minutes and also published somewhere.

Motion to approve meeting minutes from August 21, 2008 deferred until the above changes are made.

Update from the Chair: Council has approved an expedited review process and has asked the Planning Commission to revise the code to shorten site plan and subdivision review turnaround to three weeks for projects that contain more than 5% affordable housing. It is hoped that this will entice many new projects including by-right projects to include affordable housing.

Update from Staff: None.

It was announced that former HAC member Carol Clarke has been diagnosed with cancer. It was suggested that the Chair reach out and offer support to Ms. Clarke on behalf of the HAC.

HAC Membership: This had been on Council's work session agenda, but was not discussed due to lack of time. It will be brought forth at a future meeting. The purpose is to officially add member positions, determine terms for members, and establish who has voting rights.

Discussion of membership led to greater discussion of housekeeping issues. There were questions about the term of the HAC; was it meant to be short term and disbanded or a permanent group? Consensus among members was that the HAC needs to be a permanent group, but requires greater clarity regarding its purpose, mission, and protocols. The HAC already has a charge and goals, but these may need to be revisited. Some members expressed the need for greater continuity and institutional memory for the HAC. Some members suggested that there needs to be a HAC binder or file readily accessible. Some members stated that they would like a staff person of higher authority such as Jim Tolbert present at every meeting.

There was a brief discussion regarding what the HAC's purpose should be. Some members felt that every year the HAC should be recommending budget decisions to Council regarding housing. Other commented that up until now, the HAC has been giving policy advice with is a more effective role for such a committee.

It was commented that in order for the HAC to do a better job, staff needs to provide better research and work. There needs to be data on units that are available, where are they located, how many do we need, how long the waiting lists are, and what should affordable housing look like. The state of the housing report is too regional. Some members wondered how the HAC should pursue getting this information. Is it something to ask Council to get for us or something for a new housing planner to look at? It was suggested that current staff should do the work.

There was concern and discussion about the need for current and accurate information that is accessible to the HAC in order to ensure the best decisions are being made. Data needs to be completed for all income levels 80% of AMI and lower. Some members wondered about the best way to get information either through asking council or asking staff. It was suggested that Billie Campbell or Virginia Tech may have some data from the State Housing Report, but that it may be outdated and too regional. Concern was expressed that it is easy not to follow suggestion if they are not based in solid facts, and that it is also easy to overlook populations when data on them in not present.

Review of Council Work Session: Ms. Celii reviewed the outcomes from the October 9, 2008 Council work session. It was asked that staff get any information, handouts, and minutes from the work Session for HAC members. The HAC wanted to know how were the four housing policies changed and what is the process for them becoming actual policies.

There was a brief discussion about how specific priorities, recommendations, and policies should be. Some members thought the HAC may have given Council too much information. Others thought that it is not the HAC's job to whittle things down, and that it is Council's responsibility to make decisions.

Ms. Edwards reassured the HAC that this whole process is a new way to look at housing in the City and as such there are bound to be some 'growing pains.' She said that it is clear a lot of thought and hard work went into what was presented to Council. She also

said that there needs to be better consensus and representation throughout the documents that were presented.

It was asked that the Charlottesville Housing Fund budget allocation presented by Mayor Norris to the Council at the work session be forwarded on to the HAC. It was suggested that future meetings could serve as education sessions on various housing issues including financing options.

It was suggested that the HAC set the following agenda items to be completed over the next three months:

- Study the issue and possibilities of bond financing
- Be presented with an update on CRHA and its redevelopment process and the implications from the resignation of Executive Director Swartz. This presentation could be given by a redevelopment committee member who is also a HAC member.
- Get data on affordable housing to know what is out there, where it is, and what is needed.
- Get data on money allocations over five years, where it went, how much was spent, what was accomplished.

Motion to approve agenda items was made, seconded, and approved 10-1.

It was mentioned that CRHA is not the only affordable housing provider and should not be treated as such. A counter point was made that they are often referred to as such because they are known by name throughout the community.

It was stated that either Jim Tolbert or Dave Norris (most agreed that both are needed) need to come to the next HAC meeting to provide greater clarity on the HAC's purpose.

It was suggested that the HAC needs to go on a retreat that is facilitated to decide what it should be doing and what its goals are. Some members expressed the belief that it is Council's job to tell the HAC what it should be doing and who's job it is to be on the HAC. There was concern that this mandate was not at all clear. Council needs to clarify what is the authority of the HAC. It was stated that even once the HAC has a clear charge it still needs to decide its goals. Some members thought that it did not need to be a separate meeting or retreat, but could be accomplished at future meetings.

Motion to organize a facilitated HAC retreat to set goals and a calendar preceded by a clear charge and purpose from Jim Tolbert and Dave Norris was made, seconded, and approved.

Review of Joint Task Force Report on Housing: This agenda item was deferred due to lack of time. A meeting has been set up for next **Thursday, October 23 at 12:00 in the Basement Conference Room of City Hall.** All members are asked to read through the report and come prepared with comments.

Meeting adjourned at 1:40.