

HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Notes

Basement Conference Room City Hall

October 23, 2008

12:00 pm

Present:

Charlie Armstrong

Edith Good

Reed Banks

Karen Waters

Joy Johnson

Theresa Tapscott

Chris Murray

Brian Plum

Cheri Lewis

Arthur Lichtenberger

Staff

Neil Currie

Review of Joint Task Force Report on Housing:

The Chair opened the meeting and explained that its purpose was to go through the Joint Task Force Report on Housing and provide comments.

There was a brief discussion about whether the printed copies were the most recent version, reflecting all of the edits and spelling corrections made to date. A question was raised about what edits, other than spelling, had been made to the copy that was sent out over e-mail.

A member raised a question in reference to bullet one on page two of the report, about whether the HAC has established funding priorities. Clarification was given, that the language in bullet one comes from a discussion about whether to dedicate a fixed amount out of the City budget versus another funding structure. A member suggested adding the word "current" before the words "funding priorities." A member suggested adding the words "trust fund." Some members thought this would have unwanted connotations. A member suggested adding the word "long-term" before "revenue." Staff suggested changing the word "from" to "by" to resolve some confusion over the meaning of bullet one.

A member raised a question about the statement on page two, that not all Task Force members agreed to all of the recommendations. HAC representatives on the Task Force explained that UVa was not willing to commit to any new programs. The HAC then discussed the inadequacy of UVa's commitment to affordable housing, and the problems this caused for the Task Force. Members of the HAC wished for the record to reflect that they are displeased with UVa's "woefully inadequate commitment." There was discussion about whether UVa should be named above the bulleted list on page two, if

the reality is that they are not committed to the stated goals. It should be in writing that UVa disagrees with the priorities. HAC members expressed that they would only wish to support something that will actually make a difference, not a proposal that simply sounds good but does not reflect any new commitment. A member proposed that they ask for clarification from UVA about what the University intends to do. Another member suggested that the HAC make actual recommendations about what UVA should do. A member stated that it is most important that UVa help its staff in some way to obtain affordable housing nearby, either through down payment assistance or through compensation for not commuting in single-occupancy vehicles. The committee finds the specific commitments of the University inadequate and would like to recommend other measures, such as the two listed above.

There was some discussion about whether the County should be asked to accommodate some of the student population. A committee member suggested that the University should provide more on-grounds housing for upper-class students. A HAC member felt that the new zoning regulations, which permit greater density near the University, have helped stop the creep of students moving into formerly single-family neighborhoods adjacent to the University.

More discussion followed concerning UVa's unwillingness to consider new programs, such as a housing ombudsman serving University staff.

A HAC member raised the question about whether SROs should be mentioned specifically as a housing strategy. Some HAC members supported SROs as a strategy. HAC members felt that SROs might be a successful strategy, but should not be singled out as the option of choice among a range of diverse solution to housing for people with low incomes. Instead, HAC members proposed that the report list other strategies such as Single Efficiency Units (SEUs) and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). Also, a member suggested expedited review for projects providing affordable housing as a strategy for the County.

A HAC member mentioned that the White House Motor Inn would have been a good location for development of SRO housing, and that there needs to be an inventory of potential properties.

A HAC member wished for the report to include the concept of aging in place. This member stated that this should be included as a priority, specifically for the City. Other members thought this could be adopted as a priority for the County as well, and also the University.

A HAC member pointed out that there was not a bullet in the executive summary that mentioned specific cross-jurisdictional opportunities. They wished that examples of cross-jurisdictional efforts be listed to reflect the spirit of joint effort in the summary. A member suggested that the word "each" on page two be replaced with "each or jointly"

A member questioned why bullet three on page three should specify “multifamily”. This language is unnecessarily prejudicial. The same language is also used under the County’s priorities. The Committee discussed possible changes to the language, in order to make the point more general in nature, and include the idea of supportive services for affordable housing. A member wanted the bullet to apply to new neighborhoods as well as existing.

Staff proposed the following text, taking into account suggestions from the committee: “Support the creation of necessary security and supportive services in new and existing neighborhoods in order to ensure that affordable housing is safe and pleasant.

A member voiced the need for sustainability in affordable housing.

A member pointed out that Chris Murray’s name is misspelled in the October 16 minutes.

A member stated that the availability of land and an expedited approval process for affordable housing are the most important items.

Cheri Lewis requested permission to represent the committee’s comments at the upcoming Joint Work-session between the Charlottesville and Albemarle Planning Commissions. None opposed.

Meeting adjourned.