

HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes
Basement Conference Room City Hall
May 15, 2013
12:00 pm

Attendance Record	Present	Absent
MEMBERS		
Bob Hughes		X
Carmelita Wood	X	
Charlie Armstrong	X	
Chris Murray	X	
Connie Dunn		X
Dan Rosensweig	X	
Frank Stoner	X	
Joyce Dudek	X	
Jennifer McKeever	X	
Joy Johnson		X
Kaki Dimock	X	
Kira Drennon		X
Kristin Szakos	X	
Mark Watson	X	
Nancy Kidd	X	
Ryan Jacoby	X	
Wes Bellamy		X
NON VOTING MEMBERS		
IMPACT		X
Ron White		X
Vicki Hawes		X
STAFF		
Kathy McHugh	X	
Melissa Thackston	X	
OTHERS		
Jen Jacobs - AHIP	X	
Stuart Hutter - TJHD	X	

The meeting began at approximately 12:00 PM with lunch provided for those in attendance. Kathy McHugh advised that she would start the meeting off; however, if Chairperson Johnson arrived that she could take over.

The March 15, 2013, minutes were then considered with Kristin Szakos asking for a revision on page 5 third paragraph to remove reference to use of general fund for reserves. A motion to approve was made by Charlie Armstrong and a second by Jennifer McKeever. Vote was unanimous to approve.

Kathy then introduced Mr. Stuart Hutter an Epidemiologist with the Thomas Jefferson Health District (TJHD). Mr. Hutter proceeded to present a PowerPoint on Lead Exposure with specific focus on issues geographically in our area and for children who are exposed to lead. He started off discussing a case study in the State of Rhode Island where they studied 3,400 rising kindergarten students where they looked at reading readiness and lead levels. They found a direct correlation between these two factors. The study also looked at spoken language skills and socio-economic information.

VDH identifies areas in Virginia at risk for lead exposure as those with more than 27% of homes built before 1950 and/or those with an increased prevalence of children with elevated blood lead levels (EBLL). An elevated blood lead level in a child is defined as 10 or more micrograms of lead in a deciliter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$) of blood. Within the City, the zip code considered to be at risk for lead exposure is 22903. In Albemarle County, the “at risk” zip codes included 22901, 22931, 22937, 22943, 22947, 22959, and 24590.

Kristin Szakos asked if the zip code is the lowest level of reporting that can be done. Mr. Hutter responded that this is the way the state is doing it currently, so yes this is the lowest level data available.

It was noted that the City has typically had a higher number of cases with EBLLs during the time frame from 2002 to 2011; however, 2004 was exceptional in that 13 cases were reported in the City. Mr. Hutter did not provide any details on this, but rather stated that it was related to a specific “event” and that there is information on file in Richmond regarding the matter. Mr. Hutter also noted that the PowerPoint slide numbers are incorrectly coded, as TJHD data shows that Charlottesville has roughly double the number of cases as Albemarle County.

As for how testing is done, the Code of Virginia, sections 32.1-46.1, requires all children determined to be *at risk* to be tested for elevated blood lead levels at the age of one year (12 months), again at the age of two years (24 months), and between the ages 36 -72 months if never tested previously or are exposed to a new risk factor. All Medicaid enrolled children must be tested at age one year (12 months) and again at 2 years (24 months) regardless of any risk factors. This periodic testing is both a federal and state requirement. Further, all laboratories are required to report blood lead results electronically within ten days. Lead poisoning is a reportable disease and completion of the Epi-1 form is required. Effective July 1, 2001, regulations require the reporting of all lead tests performed on children under 72 months of age. The number of children tested each year is influenced by several factors that include the number of children born in Virginia each year, migration of children into and out of the state or to a different locality, and the number of children tested in compliance with the regulations.

At risk is defined as being on Medicaid/WIC, living in a high risk zip code, if an adult asks for it, if the residence is targeted for renovations, or if someone else in the home has a known high level of lead. Jennifer McKeever added that Head Start required testing also.

Based on local data, Charlottesville is averaging 3 cases/year, with 1 - 2 of these being imported from other countries (refugee program). Hutter noted that there is a local problem with refugee children who come here from other countries, also imported toys can also be a source of lead contamination as manufacturing is un-regulated.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is currently recommending that the EBLL be changed to 5 versus 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ of blood. If this happens (based on local data already reported to the TJHD but not released publically) the number of cases would double locally.

Kristin Szakos asked if the numbers support the City taking action. Mr. Hutter responded that it is hard to say because there are not a lot of numbers / information available; however, EBLL cause permanent neurological problems which is a very serious issue.

Ms. Szakos also asked how AHIP deals with lead. Joyce Dudek responded that they presume the presence of lead and follow lead safe paint practices. Also, they ask on the application if anyone in the home has known elevated blood lead levels.

Kathy McHugh noted that the subcommittee on lead will discuss potential ideas/ next steps, including the potential for referring elevated cases to AHIP for remediation work.

Concluding the presentation/discussion, Kathy then thanked Mr. Hutter for coming and he left. She then introduced the idea of using a GIS-based suitability model to help objectively inform affordable housing decisions by looking at factors such as existing affordable units, income levels, school based factors, property values, etc.... Specifically, Kathy indicated that she had looked into the use of the Iowa City, Iowa example that is based off spatial criteria including: 1) distance to existing assisted housing, 2) three elementary school related variable, 3) crime density, 4) median household income, and 5) change in residential sales price. Kathy explained that she felt this tool would have merit in Charlottesville and that she wanted to have a HAC discussion regarding this matter.

Mr. Dan Rosensweig interjected asking “what’s the end game and what do you want from us!” Kathy responded that this could be a useful tool and that her intent was to discuss local measures that could be used. Dan quickly added that this gives him heartburn on many levels and that he is already concerned about the lack of land already. He pointed to page 35 (third column) of the APA article entitled “In the Right Place” beginning with “One notable drawback of this approach is that fewer properties are eligible for housing assistance funds ...” as proving his point that use of the suitability criteria added time and costs to affordable developments.

Dan also explained that it is not fair to blame poor performing schools on poor kids, to which Kristin Szakos countered that it is routinely accepted that children living in high poverty tend to be downwardly mobile. She also added that school factors could be taken out, but that other factors (such as distance to existing affordable units) can be good measures and that we also need to consider location to services (e.g., bus route, etc...) and what we want to see in our locality.

Chris Murray asked if elderly/disabled persons were considered in the model. Kathy advised that this was not included in Iowa City, as they were focused on impacts to schools. She also added that we can tailor our model to local issues and do not have to focus on schools specifically. Jennifer McKeever noted that single room occupancy facilities do not impact schools either.

There was a brief general discussion that we do need a rubric to use locally to help inform our decisions. Dan Rosensweig stated that a qualitative assessment for affordable housing would be hard to do, but that everything comes back to land and the fact that we don’t have enough of it. He also referenced the land use map, stating that there are no opportunities to do affordable projects in certain areas of the City.

Kathy McHugh noted that Iowa City makes a determination of whether a project is suitable or unsuitable, with no in-between or gray areas. This is what they wanted and it works for them, but Charlottesville needs flexibility and the suitability model could be utilized as a tool to help inform decisions in a number of different ways.

Jen Jacobs stated that she can see the allure of the system, but is concerned about it being capricious and that by removing subjectivity from affordable development that we would inhibit creativity. She worried that that is would make building affordable units even harder than it currently is.

Chris Murray noted that it could have “unintended consequences” and that since land is our most limited commodity that the impact of such a system would be to increase the cost of land. He noted that Belvedere units averaged \$90k whereas Timberlake units averaged \$160k, so the cost difference for affordable housing is already substantial.

Jen added that we are already building good quality development projects, not just dumping poor people in an area and cordoning them off.

Frank Stoner commented that if you build affordable units in expensive areas that you will need more subsidy, if all else is equal. If left alone, developers will always develop where it is cheaper. He asked if there is a middle ground where subsidy could be pro-rated depending upon expense.

Dan Rosensweig stated that we need to look at land use. With so much land currently zoned R-1 and the unwillingness to change it, this limits what can be done. He noted that we will have to kill some sacred cows before things will change.

Charlie Armstrong added that we don’t want to add layers of regulations and that we currently evaluating SUPs and rezoning matters based on merits anyway. He stated that on the whole, that he thought that the suitability model would make projects more expensive.

Kristin Szakos said that she is intrigued by the idea of using information to determine incentivizing development in more expensive areas, as concentrating poverty is never good even if we can house more people with less subsidy. Specifically, she noted that we need to do what we can to encourage development in other areas of the City.

Dan Rosensweig added that if we are spending more to get affordable housing in higher income areas of the City that this means we will not meet our 2025 housing goals. He noted that this is not a zero sum game and that until we vastly change the zoning map that we are not going to reach our goals.

Frank Stoner explained that at the State/Federal level (e.g., LIHTC), that concentrated/efficient development is encouraged.

Dan suggested that we incentivize qualitative things such as community centers, jobs, transit options, head start program access, etc... and not just income. He noted that development is generally either placed in an area of concentrated poverty or it is not in keeping with the character of the surrounding development.

Kathy explained that in order for us to do quality GIS analysis of any factors that we need updated address level information (providing us with a 100% count of residential units or as close as we can get). Chris Murray requested that the HAC be provided input or any criteria and weight of proposed factors. Kathy stated that there are many different ways to structure the suitability model and make it work for us, but that we need basic data first.

Chris commented that this information would help us map our affordable units, to which Kristin added that it would be helpful to see the units mapped so that we can see the degree of concentrated poverty and how this looks at a neighborhood level.

Jen Jacobs asked if there has been push back locally from our own schools. Kristin Szakos responded yes, but it has been limited to hiring implications.

Dan Rosensweig then shared an example that he described as the “best example he had seen.” Drew Elementary School was a problem school with high poverty that received investment and was changed into a charter school that went on to become one of the best in the Atlanta area.

There was some discussion that the group was fearful that use of the suitability model could feed into bias on the part of City Council. Further that the group wants to look into workforce housing as well as environmental aspects of housing.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:30 PM by Kathy McHugh as Chairperson Johnson was unable to attend the meeting. The group was reminded that the next meeting will be on July 17, 2013.