



HOUSING COMMISSION MINUTES

Regular Meeting
August 6, 2003
5:30 pm

Administrative Building Conference Room, First Floor
701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025-3483

CALL TO ORDER

Steve Bliss called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Administrative Building Main Conference Room.

ROLL CALL

Housing Commission Members Present:

Steven Bliss, Chair; John Donald; Elza Keet; Carol Louchheim, Jane West, Vice-Chairperson

Housing Commission Member Absent:

Wendy McPherson; Clarice O'Neal

Staff Present:

Gretchen Hillard, Housing and Redevelopment Manager; George Starmer, Housing Rehabilitation/Finance Specialist

PUBLIC COMMENT: There was no public comment.

A. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS: Commissioners asked that the following items be agendaized for future meetings:

- Housing Commission priorities
- Past and planned efforts of the redevelopment agency with respect to housing
- Overview of the City's organizational structure and where responsibilities are assigned
- Agency budget, in particular, why the annual budget balance is down by half
- Will the Agency spend the required 20% set aside for low and moderate income housing?
- How to market the City's existing housing programs

B. BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Approval of June 4 and July 16, 2003 Minutes

John Donald pointed out that David Speer's name is spelled "Speer." Also he pointed out that "is" needed to be changed to "may be" in the third and seventh lines of the first paragraph on page 2. Elza Keet made the motion to approve the June 4, 2003 Minutes with the suggested corrections. (M/S Keet/Donald 5-0). John Donald suggested that "and not to increase unreasonably thereafter" be

added to the end of the RECOMMENDATION paragraph, item (4). Carol Louchheim suggested that “some” be changed to “a” in two places, RECOMMENDATION paragraph sections (1) and (5). John Donald made the motion. (M/S Donald/West (5-0-1. Elza Keet abstained, due to absence at the July 16 meeting).

2. Review of comments on proposal for development of Hamilton Avenue park and housing site

The Commissioners discussed the recommendation, as stated in the July 16 meeting minutes. Gretchen Hillard pointed out that a recommendation for workforce housing would need to later be fleshed out with a mechanism for retaining the affordability or direction that a different house type be designed for the 150% of median income group. She also asked if the Commissioners wished to state a reason for recommending the mixture of attached and detached housing, whether it was a design consideration or the possibility of greater affordability or more units. Such information would assist the negotiators to move forward. The Commissioners said it had to do with affordability, and the possibility of producing more units, rather than design.

Steven Bliss pointed out that the original concept for 100% entry level housing at 120% of median income came from the Affordable Housing Action Plan, which is adopted City policy. Two Commissioners expressed a desire to recommend a more specific, larger amount of BMR housing in the development. After discussion the consensus was to stay with the original recommendation, because it had been negotiated with the Las Pulgas Committee. The wording was the result of the discussion with them and included consideration of the Housing Commissioners’ desire for more BMR units. Elza Keet said that she would make an individual statement to the Agency Board to support a greater number of BMR units in the development on August 26.

Steven Bliss stated that staff would present the recommendation to the Las Pulgas Committee at their meeting in two weeks, and then later it would be presented to the City Council on August 26. Previous to that he’d review the draft and it would be circulated to the other Commissioners.

3. Discussion of priority of Multi-family Housing Rehabilitation Program for Housing Rehabilitation funds

George Starmer provided a brief history of the multi-family rehabilitation loan program, and stated that the number of units produced through the program is important because it both bolsters the City’s application for additional funds for the next year. Because multi-family units are usually financially more efficient to rehabilitate than single family, more units can benefit for the same amount of funds. Also multi-family units are more likely to serve families with children in Menlo Park because many single-family homeowners are elderly and living with a spouse or alone. Elza Keet asked, if we didn’t limit the number of multi-family units and a large number of applications came in, could the City handle the workload? George Starmer responded that he could handle such a large

demand. It was noted that this item had been discussed at the May 2003 meeting and the Commission had voted to not specify a preference. The consensus was again to not specify a preference.

4. Proposals concerning the Loan Advisory Committee's charge and Commissioners' participation

Gretchen Hillard explained that staff had been having a difficult time finding Commissioners who would serve at Loan Advisory Committee meetings. Some meeting shad been delayed, and that was difficult for loan applicants. She asked if Commissioners would want to change the Committee's responsibility to reviewing loans with exceptions, and allowing the loans that do not require exceptions to be approved administratively. There was a consensus not to make that change. The Commissioners discussed the second proposals to commit to a certain timeframe for each to be available, taking turns. Jane West made the motion that the Commission adopt the second proposal, with each Commissioner volunteering to be available for one month at a time. (M/S West/Ddonald 5-0) Elza Keet Volunteered for September and February. Carol Louchheim volunteered for December. Steven Bliss volunteered for October. Jane West volunteered for April. John Donald volunteered for November.

5. Minutes of Loan Advisory Meeting of May 7, 2003 This item was tabled because the Commissioners had not had a chance to review them.
6. Report on the Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program for 2003. John Donald noted a missing footnote and asked a question about the tome frame for an estimated number. Gretchen Hillard volunteered to return next month with more information. The Report was carried over to the next meeting.

D. INFORMATION ITEM

1. Belle Haven Community Needs process Gretchen Hillard summarized the process which is gathering information about social services needs in Belle Haven. The City Council has held two study sessions to gather information, and will hold a third on August 26.

E. ADJOURNMENT The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.
(M/S West/Louchheim, 5-0)

Respectfully submitted,

Gretchen Hillard
Housing and Redevelopment Manager