



HOUSING COMMISSION MINUTES

Regular Meeting

March 2, 2005

5:30 pm

City Council Conference Room, First Floor
701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Carol Louchheim called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Administrative Building City Council Conference Room.

ROLL CALL

Housing Commission Members Present:

Patricia Boyle, John Donald, Vice--Chair; Carol Louchheim, Chair; Jack O'Malley, Clarice O'Neal

Housing Commission Members Absent: Elza Keet, Anne Moser

Staff Present: Gretchen Hillard, Housing and Redevelopment Manager

A. PUBLIC COMMENT - None.

B. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS – Patricia Boyle reported on the plans for the League of Women Voters (LWV) County League Day for Saturday, March 5. There will be reports on affordable housing developments in the north, central and south parts of San Mateo County. She distributed copies of "The Voter", a LWV newsletter, dated March 2005.

C. BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Approval of February 2, 2005 Minutes Carol Louchheim proposed that Item C.1., last paragraph, last sentence be changed to add the content of the proposal, "out of escrow for each unit as follows: one percent of the sales price for units 2, 4 and 5 and two percent of the sales price for units 1, 3 and 6." John Donald made the motion to approve the Minutes as amended (M/S Donald/Boyle 5-0).

2. Recommendation to City Council concerning use of BMR Fund for PAL Loan Program

Staff provided copies (by email) of Carol Louchheim's and Elza Keet's statements to the City Council on the BMR Fund on January 11, 2005. Carol Louchheim said Elza Keet and Anne Moser were not available to attend the March 8 meeting and asked for two volunteers. Patricia Boyle volunteered. The Commissioners discussed the content of the presentations.

3. Discussion of approaches to address the fact that housing developers mostly develop three and four bedroom units, and as a result one and two person households on the BMR Waiting List must wait much longer for an opportunity to purchase a BMR unit

Gretchen Hillard stated that the requirement that the minimum number of people eligible to purchase a BMR unit had been established at the beginning of the Below Market Rate Program. The purpose was to serve families with children. Patricia Boyle said that today households have a variety of people in them, sometimes two sisters or an elder parent and an adult child, so that policy is out of date. Many people are passed over because smaller units

are not being built. The Housing Leadership Council did not have a position on eliminating the limit. John Donald said it was a good first step. Let's see if it works. There was a discussion of whether smaller households with lower income limits would be able to purchase the larger units, and whether to cover both rental and ownership programs. Carol Louchheim stated that the rental program is so new; that she thought the recommendation should be limited to the ownership program. The Commission requested that staff provide a table of how long different size families have waiting on the Waiting List. John Donald suggested that the effects of the policy be reviewed in a year. There was a discussion of how this change would affect the ability of households in the preference groups to purchase BMR units.

Patricia Boyle made the motion to recommend to the City Council that the Below Market Rate Program Guidelines be amended to remove the minimum restriction on households sizes eligible for BMR for sale units, and that the effects of the policy be reviewed in one year. John Donald seconded. Jack O'Malley asked if there was urgency to take this step. The Commissioners reviewed the history of their discussion of the proposed policy and the Housing Commission's position on preferences. Patricia Boyle volunteered to investigate how other cities approach this subject, including Palo Alto. The Commission asked staff to draft a memo to review at the next meeting. (M/S Boyle/Donald 5-0)

D. INFORMATION ITEM

Discussion of Policy Priorities for the FY 2005-06 Budget

Clarice O'Neal volunteered to present the Commission's position at the Budget Workshop on March 5. The Commissioners reviewed the staff recommendations for projects for the next fiscal year. They agreed that they strongly support the completion of the Housing Element and support its being given higher priority because it makes the City eligible for other things, including HEART funds. They also support the study of PAL loans, including as a way to assist lower income households, and discussed ways that could be implemented.

E. ADJOURNMENT Carol Louchheim thanked the Commssioners for the hard work of the evening. The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 7:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Gretchen Hillard
Housing and Redevelopment Manager