



HOUSING COMMISSION MINUTES

Regular Meeting
September 5, 2007
5:30 p.m.

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

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Boyle 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 (Chair); Don Brawner; Elza Keet; Elizabeth Lasensky (Vice Chair); Carol Louchheim; Clarice O'Neal.

Housing Commission Members Absent: Anne Moser.

Staff Present: Douglas Frederick, Housing Manager; Megan Nee, Management Analyst.

A. PUBLIC COMMENT – None.

B. BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Consideration of Work Plans and Timelines for Senior Housing Needs Assessment and Updates to BMR and PAL Program Guidelines.

The Housing Commission complemented staff on the work plans. Manager Frederick gave an overview of the Senior Housing Needs Assessment work plan (included in the Commission's Agenda Packets). The Commission asked Manager Frederick if he had seen the City of Palo Alto's senior needs study and he said that he had. However, he said, Menlo Park's study will be primarily housing related whereas the Palo Alto study touched on amenities and other issues as well. He commented that years 45 to 62 are the "Baby Boom" ages and said it was interesting that from years 1990 to 2000 the "Baby Boom" population decreased in Menlo Park. He said this suggests that the community survey needs to look at why this is. He added that the survey will also look at rental versus homeownership rates for Menlo Park seniors.

As identified on the work plan under Literature Review, Chair Boyle asked if Menlo Park currently has any cottage style housing developments. Manager Frederick replied that he didn't think so. Chair Boyle inquired if Menlo Park has zoning for cottage housing developments. Manager Frederick responded that the City currently has zoning in place for cluster housing, which is similar, but not for cottage housing per se. Manager Frederick distributed copies of a sample community survey put together by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). He also explained that the community survey will be available online through services

such as Survey Monkey, which can be linked to the City's website. Vice Chair Lasensky asked if Survey Monkey has something that uniquely identifies each survey respondent and Manager Frederick responded that there probably is some way to do this if necessary. Commissioner Keet commented that the sample AARP survey seemed too long and Commissioner Louchheim agreed and added that it seems like something that a government agency would be asking a City. She said she wonders what questions the Palo Alto survey asked because its orientation seemed to be more along the lines of "what do YOU want and/or need?".

Chair Boyle made a comment on behalf of Commissioner Moser who was unable to attend the present meeting. She said that Commissioner Moser had asked her to suggest that the Commission and staff work with some of the local churches with large senior populations, as well as Veterans' Administration (V.A.) clinics and medical service waiting rooms. Vice Chair Lasensky commented that we're only surveying Menlo Park residents so we may want to hand out information pieces at churches, etc., rather than the survey itself. Commissioner Louchheim suggested that the survey should ask residents what they want rather than testing them on what the City offers, as it seems in the AARP sample survey. Chair Boyle said that she is concerned about the timeline and that a completion date of November 30th for the survey seems too soon. Manager Frederick responded that the survey will be submitted to the Housing Commission for approval at the November meeting and then the survey will be finalized in the following three weeks. He explained that the survey will assess the current senior housing resources in Menlo Park, followed by community meetings. Chair Boyle asked where the community meetings will be held and Manager Frederick replied that they will need to be spread out geographically within the city.

Chair Boyle suggested that perhaps realtors will have some information as well because they track trends in the housing market. Commissioner Louchheim said to check with former Housing Commissioner Wendy McPherson, manager of the Coldwell Banker office in Menlo Park. Commissioner Keet inquired about the financial solution to the senior housing needs situation and Manager Frederick replied that financial solution(s) will be detailed in the final report. Regarding the section of the work plan entitled Analysis of Related Issues, Chair Boyle commented that the issue that Menlo Park always has is not having enough land. Manager Frederick continued to walk the Commission through each step of the Senior Housing Needs Assessment and then the discussion was concluded.

Following the discussion on the Senior Housing Needs Assessment work plan, Manager Frederick presented the work plan on Updates to BMR and PAL Program Guidelines (included in the Commission's Agenda Packets). There was no discussion on the BMR and PAL Program Guidelines workplan.

Following the presentation of the workplans, Manager Frederick told the Commission that once they are well underway, staff and the Commission can focus on the Housing Element. He said that Menlo Park's current housing production number for the Housing Element is 993, which represents an increase of twenty units. Chair Boyle commented that in the past the housing production numbers had to do with a jurisdiction's employment numbers/levels. She asked if the housing

production numbers likewise include jobs that have left jurisdictions and Manager Frederick said that he does not know. Chair Boyle said that Duane Bay of San Mateo County would be a good person to ask. Commissioner Brawner commented that the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), which typically sets the housing production numbers, undermines local governments.

2. Approval of July 11, 2007 Minutes.

M/S Louchheim/O'Neal to approve the July 11, 2007 minutes;
6-0-1 with Commissioner Keet abstaining.

C. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Update on Housing Activity (report from staff).

Manager Frederick began by explaining that the Police Department is having trouble with recruitment and retention of officers and the Police Officer Mortgage Assistance (POMA) Program has not been well used. He said that the City Manager and the Police Chief are currently working on a proposal that may include housing incentives. Manager Frederick also reported on the status of the Habitat/Terminal Avenue project. He said that the City/Redevelopment Agency and Habitat are in the process of renewing the Exclusive Negotiating Rights Agreement (ENRA), as well as redesigning the project plans to accommodate the loss of 100 feet of land that the nearby Beechwood School would like to use.

Per the request of the Housing Commission at a previous meeting, Management Analyst Nee distributed copies of a report on the status of the current/updated BMR Housing Waiting List and verbally summarized the report. She explained that as of September 5, 2007 there are currently 219 names on the BMR Waiting List, which includes all household sizes and those who want to rent as well as purchase BMR units. As identified in the written report, she explained the number of households per household size, households who want to rent versus those who want to own or both, as well as number of households who live and/or work in Menlo Park.

Additionally, Management Analyst Nee distributed copies of a report entitled Hamilton Park Buyer/Owner Profiles that includes general categorical information on buyers and owners that does not reveal the individual identities of said buyers and owners. She verbally summarized the report, which identifies the number of buyers/owners (total of 20) and groups them according to the three phases of the project. Categories included in the report include close of escrow date, city of residency when applied, city of work, preference group, length of time on waiting list, household size, income level, loan financing, PAL loan amount (if any), and cash down payment (if any). She noted that of all buyers/owners to date, only two had pre-purchase live/work situations that required long commutes and that a majority (53%) were Belle Haven residents. She also noted that 15 out of 17 buyers/owners had applied to the BMR Waiting List in year 2000 or after, with the person who had been on the list the longest having applied in 1991. Finally, she reported that of 15 buyers for whom she currently has household income information, one is considered very-low income, six are lower income, two are

median income, and six have incomes at the 110% of median level (the maximum for the BMR Program).

2. Report from the Chair.

Chair Boyle reported that she went by the Hamilton Park sales office and sales staff told her that they still have five market rate units left to sell. She handed out a flyer on Housing Element training and announced that the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) conference/training and Housing Leadership Day will both be held on October 26, 2007. In conclusion, she said that she had spoken to the Planning Commission and they said that it would be a good idea to have the Planning and Housing Commissions hold a joint meeting to talk about common issues.

3. Commission Member Reports.

Commissioner Louchheim distributed handouts on a co-housing project in Peterborough, New Hampshire.

D. INFORMATION ITEMS:

1. Monthly Report on the Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program for June 2007.

Manager Frederick went through the written report that was included in the Commission's Agenda Packets. He also explained that the City's rehabilitation loans are now being funded through the County's rehabilitation loan program. He said that the County program stipulates maximum loan amounts of \$75,000 for amortized loans and \$30,000 for deferred loans, compared to the City's loan program which had a maximum loan amount of \$80,000 that could all be deferred. Chair Boyle asked if the City can reapply for County funding in its program next year and Manager Frederick responded no, the County will not fund the City's program again. Commissioner Louchheim asked why this is and Manager Frederick said that the County says that other municipalities are envious of us and our ability to apply for and receive direct funding from the County for administration of our own program. He added that this doesn't make sense, however, because these municipalities (under the County's program) are not currently utilizing all of the program funds. He concluded that program staff are currently talking to the City Manager about starting a self funded loan program that would utilize Redevelopment Agency funds, for instance.

E. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 6:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Megan Nee
Management Analyst