



HOUSING COMMISSION MINUTES

Regular Meeting

April 2, 2008

5:30 p.m.

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

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Lasensky called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Administrative Building Conference Room.

ROLL CALL

Housing Commission Members Present: Patricia Boyle, Don Brawner, Elza Keet, Elizabeth Lasensky (Chair), Carol Louchheim, Anne Moser, Clarice O'Neal (Vice-Chair).

Housing Commission Members Absent: None.

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

A. PUBLIC COMMENT – None.

B. BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Update on BMR Guidelines Revisions

Housing Manager Frederick said revisions to the BMR Guidelines are in process. He said that staff may have a draft of the updated Guidelines ready to present to the Commission in a couple of months.

Commissioner Moser inquired if the City's new Community Engagement Manager can come to one of the Commission's meetings. Housing Manager Frederick responded yes, he will try to arrange it. Commissioner Louchheim asked Housing Manager Frederick if he can talk to her about getting the Housing Programs' ad in the City's Activity Guide again. Housing Manager Frederick replied yes.

2. Update on Habitat Housing Site

Housing Manager Frederick reported that the City will reinstate the community engagement process prior to entering into a renewed Exclusive Negotiating Rights Agreement (ENRA) with Habitat. However, he explained, the City has told Habitat that it will not negotiate with anyone else and considers the site to be the "Habitat Site." Commissioner Moser inquired about Beechwood School and Housing Manager Frederick replied that the school previously requested 100 feet of the Habitat site and Habitat agreed to give it to them. He added, however, that the

school had since given up the idea so the school will continue to maintain its present small encroachment on the Habitat site but nothing more.

3. Update on Senior Housing Needs Assessment

Housing Manager Frederick provided an overview of staff's progress on the Senior Housing Needs Assessment. He said he is in the process of writing the report. Commissioner Boyle asked how many paper copies of the Senior Housing Needs Study were returned. Housing Manager Frederick responded that about 20 paper copies were returned, with a total of 60 surveys submitted. Commissioner Boyle asked if we should have gotten the survey out sooner and Housing Manager Frederick replied that the low response rate was probably due to a lack of interest. Commissioner Moser inquired if staff can send a copy of the assessment to Michelle Knapick of the Peninsula Volunteers and Housing Manager Frederick responded that the document needs to be in a more final form first. Commissioner Louchheim asked if staff and/or the Commission can talk to her and the Peninsula Volunteers board about the assessment. Housing Manager Frederick replied yes, but not yet.

Commissioner Boyle said it is interesting that survey respondents ranked public transit and retail services very high, especially given Jeff Warmouth's recent mixed-use development proposal. Commissioner Lasensky commented that it is also interesting that respondents did not feel the need to live near senior centers or churches. Commissioner Louchheim said the people she talked to just wanted someone to take/drive them places.

Housing Manager Frederick said he should have a draft of the report/assessment written by the end of April. Commissioner Moser asked who it will go to and Housing Manager Frederick replied it will be submitted to Community Development Director Heineck and then the City Manager. Commissioner Moser inquired if it will go to the City Council and Housing Manager Frederick responded that he's not sure and that it has to go through an internal review process first. Commissioner Moser commented that the Housing Commission should decide whether or not it goes to the City Council. Commissioner Lasensky stated that she thought the City Council had voted to conduct the Senior Housing Needs Assessment. Housing Manager Frederick said yes they did and they probably will want to see it.

Commissioner Moser said it seems that the assessment should be shared with/communicated to other groups like the Green Ribbon Task Force and the Transportation Commission. Housing Manager Frederick responded that the assessment's recommendations will determine who it goes to.

4. Plan of Action for Housing Element

Housing Manager Frederick began by saying the County recently sent him a very long survey to complete. He noted that Menlo Park does have the capability to put together the Housing Element in-house, unlike many cities. Vice-Chair O'Neal commented that the County is probably looking for a common vision County-wide. Housing Manager Frederick said it may not be this so much as an interest in

providing common background information for San Mateo County cities' Housing Elements. He said that some cities will need help with this. Commissioner Louchheim noted that the Housing Commission has recently been curious about jobs in Menlo Park. She asked if this data would come from the last census. She said it is problematic that the most recent data may be from the 2000 census. In response, Housing Manager Frederick said more recent data is available but that it is County-wide and not broken down by city. Commissioner Louchheim commented that the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) is going to ask us to create housing in relation to these jobs.

Commissioner Brawner said Palo Alto is questioning its housing numbers and ABAG's formula. Other communities like Atherton and Los Alto don't pay attention and don't care, he said. He said that if we don't pay attention we will end up like San Francisco. Commissioner Louchheim noted that it will be interesting to see what Palo Alto does. Vice-Chair O'Neal commented that in San Francisco they are building everywhere, even in Golden Gate Park. It's not what it used to be, she said. Commissioner Boyle commented that Burlingame is doing small, in-fill projects throughout the city. She said it's a different approach because they are not big projects. Commissioner Moser wondered if they are changing their second unit requirements. Chair Lasensky asked how such a development approach is affordable. Commissioner Boyle replied that she's not sure but let's see.

5. Housing Commission Calendar – Possible Revisions

Chair Lasensky noted that in the past the Commission has frequently not held an August meeting. She suggested that this year the Commission might consider canceling the July meeting, rather than the August meeting. Housing Manager Frederick said it is difficult to project what the workload will be at that time. He does not know of any BMR projects coming up that may require Commission review, he said. Commissioner Louchheim noted that she will be having foot surgery in either June or July and therefore may have to miss a meeting. After further discussion, the Commission decided that it will not hold an August meeting. Housing Manager Frederick asked Management Analyst Nee to ensure that the conference room is reserved for the July 9th meeting, since it is not the Commission's usual meeting date.

6. CCAG Transportation Oriented Development Grant Application

Housing Manager Frederick said the City submitted a Transportation Oriented Development (TOD) grant application to CCAG in February and that the grant is for something transportation oriented based on the upcoming Derry project. He noted that Derry is not a party to the application and the funding would not be used in association with the project. He said that the funding, if received, would go to the City for use on a currently unidentified transportation-related project somewhere else. He noted that Derry may think the funding is for them but it is not.

Commissioner Moser inquired as to the amount of the funding request and Housing Manager Frederick responded approximately \$460,000. She asked for further clarification on the use of the grant and Housing Manager Frederick said he only

knows that it will be used for something transportation related and does not pertain to housing. Commissioner Moser asked who is in charge of the grant application and he replied probably Community Development Director Heineck, possibly Public Works Director Kent Steffens. He noted that Community Development Director Heineck's staff wrote the grant application. He said the funding is not earmarked for any particular project and could be used for anything. In conclusion, Housing Manager Frederick said the City was eligible to apply because the Derry project exists but that the funding would not be for Derry.

7. State TOD Infrastructure Grant Application for Derry

Housing Manager Frederick reported that the Derry project's developer, O'Brien Homes, submitted an application to the State Housing and Community Development Department for their TOD Infrastructure Grant Program. The application was written by O'Brien Homes for the City to cover a portion of the expenses associated with infrastructure improvements related to the project. In the application, O'Brien Homes pledges to price the BMR units at a level affordable to low-income households. Housing Manager Frederick said the grant is based on the number of units provided in the development and 15 percent or more would be designated low income. He said the application was submitted as a "placeholder" until the City Council can approve the resolution in support of the application, which needs to be done by May 7, 2008.

8. Approval of March 5, 2008 Minutes

Commissioner Moser commented that, regarding the El Camino Real/Downtown Vision Plan project and community workshops, Associate Planner Thomas Rogers has been most accommodating. She said he sent the notes to her from meetings that she missed.

M/S Louchheim/O'Neal to approve the March 5, 2008 minutes as presented; 5-0-2 with Commissioners Moser and Keet abstaining.

C. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Update on Housing Activity (Report from Staff)

Management Analyst Nee reported that on Friday, March 28, the Housing Loan Committee approved four PAL loans for buyers purchasing BMR homes at the 996 Willow Road and Morgan Lane developments. The BMR homes at both developments are three-bedroom single family detached homes. She noted that one of the buyers is a City employee. She also provided an update on the new, higher Federal Housing Administration (FHA) loan limits.

2. Report from the Chair

Chair Lasensky reported that she attended the Threshold 2008 weekend and distributed fact books from the event. She said participants were surveyed by phone prior to the event and then surveyed again at its conclusion. She noted that

participants' opinions about affordable housing did change as a result of becoming better informed at the event. She said she felt it was very worthwhile. Commissioner Boyle added that she attended the event as an observer and noted that the bulk of participants appeared to be between the ages of 35 and 50. She concluded that the participants were quite vocal and expressive. Chair Lasensky also noted that there was a lot of economic diversity in her break-out group. Commissioner Boyle said the second stage will be an on-line survey, followed by taking it on the road for small group discussions. Chair Lasensky concluded that it would be interesting to see how it could be done as a City-wide event. She said the cost could be prohibitive but the process is very good. Commissioner Moser suggested that the Housing Commission could consider sponsoring something like this.

3. Commission Member Reports

None.

D. INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Monthly Report on the Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program for February 2008

The Commissioners accepted the report. Housing Manager Frederick noted that one loan is going to a City employee.

E. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Megan Nee
Management Analyst