



HOUSING COMMISSION MINUTES

Regular Meeting

May 7, 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), Anne Moser.

Housing Commission Members Absent: Carol Louchheim, Clarice O'Neal (Vice-Chair).

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

A. PUBLIC COMMENT – None.

B. BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Update on Housing Element

Housing Manager Frederick reported that he attended a County information workshop for the Housing Element on April 24th. He said San Mateo County is trying to coordinate the update process and thereby help the County's individual communities. A consultant was hired and will provide participating jurisdictions with background information required for the Housing Elements. This background information will be customized to each community or jurisdiction. He said the County and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) will pay for a majority of the costs associated with the consultant but it may cost Menlo Park five thousand dollars (\$5,000). He said he has started work on Menlo Park's background piece, which means the City will not be utilizing the background material provided by the consultant.

Commissioner Moser inquired if the City needs to participate in the County's program if Housing Manager Frederick can provide the background piece. Housing Manager Frederick responded that the City can still benefit from participating in the County's program. He noted that the background piece is rather basic and the County can help with some other things. He said that if the County was only providing the background information the City would not participate in the program. He concluded that the City budgeted \$200,000 for the Housing Element update and, since a Request for Proposals (RFP) will not be issued, it won't be a problem.

Chair Lasensky inquired about the schedule that Housing Manager Frederick provided at the previous Commission meeting. Housing Manager Frederick said it was a staff schedule.

Housing Manager Frederick also noted that homeless beds will not be counted toward meeting ABAG's Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) figures. Commissioner Boyle noted that Clara-Mateo Alliance, currently housed on the Menlo Park Veterans' Administration (V.A.) campus, has to find a new home. Housing Manager Frederick reported that the Fire District had given them a month to vacate their building, which is in very bad condition, but agreed to a monitoring arrangement to guard against potential fire hazards. The V.A. has given them about a year to find a new space.

2. Report on BMR Completions

Housing Manager Frederick reported on the completion of BMR units, beginning with a condominium unit on Pine Street. The Pine Street development consists of apartments (townhouse style) that have been converted to condominiums and includes one two-bedroom BMR unit. Housing Manager Frederick said the BMR unit the developer has presented is not the correct unit, as indicated in the BMR Agreement and the project drawings. Housing Manager Frederick inspected the units and found that the unit the developer wants to have designated the BMR unit is not comparable to the other (market rate) units. However, the unit that the BMR Agreement and plans show as the BMR unit was beautifully remodeled. Housing Manager Frederick told the developer that this unit is the correct BMR unit and will be designated as such. He reported that the developer's lawyer has contacted the City Attorney to protest the decision.

Housing Manager Frederick also reported on two BMR units completed at 996 Willow Road. He said that they are beautiful. He said the developer, Clarum Homes, went ahead and put in the high-end stainless steel Boesch appliances even though they were not required to be included in the BMR units. In addition, Clarum mistakenly installed upgraded bamboo floors in one of the BMR units and then allowed them to remain as a free upgrade for the BMR buyer.

Housing Manager Frederick said staff additionally inspected two BMR units and a market rate unit at the Linfield development (Morgan Lane). He said they also did very well and passed inspection.

Chair Lasensky said it is fascinating and that she did not know that Housing staff conducts inspections of new BMR units. Housing Manager Frederick responded yes but that he doesn't think they were done for the Hamilton Park development.

3. Status of the Senior Housing Needs Assessment

Housing Manager Frederick said Community Development Director Heineck is working hard on next year's budget and will review his draft report soon. He explained that the report's conclusion is that seniors seem to prefer aging in place so we will probably focus on that. Commissioner Moser asked Housing Manager

Frederick to explain Universal Design, which he did. He added that already new apartment developments must include universal design standards in first floor units. He concluded that, while there have to be other things as well, the literature review suggests the emphasis should be on helping seniors adapt their homes in order to age in place.

Commissioner Boyle suggested that a lot of literature also says seniors will downsize, freeing up larger homes for new families and hopefully allowing seniors to age in place once they've moved. Housing Manager Frederick added that some literature suggests senior downsizing could cause problems in the housing market. Commissioner Moser commented that it seems the Commission should talk to the Transportation Commission, since seniors have expressed concern about getting around as they grow older. She said the local bus system could be improved.

4. Approval of April 2, 2008 Minutes

The Commission complemented Management Analyst Nee on the minutes.

M/S Moser/Brawner to approve the April 2, 2008 minutes as presented; 5-0-0.

C. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Update on Housing Activity (Report from Staff)

Housing Manager Frederick reported on the Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program. He said that the Johnson's project is starting but there are some major issues, including code violations that must be fixed now that they've been found (as a result of rehabilitation/construction activity on the house). Due to the increased project cost that will likely result, staff may have to request additional money from the County, which provides Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for the program.

On a separate note, Commissioner Boyle asked if the City can expect any commercial linkage fee payments soon. Housing Manager Frederick responded that a City Council study session on 389 El Camino Real is coming up. Commissioner Moser inquired if the proposed project is a modification of a plan from about two years ago. City Council member Richard Cline said that nearby residents are not very happy about the proposal.

Commissioner Boyle asked about the status of the Beltramo project proposal. She said she read that the site has contamination and requires additional clean up. Housing Manager Frederick replied yes, they received a two year extension for clean up. City Council member Richard Cline added that the contaminants found were dry cleaning chemicals.

2. Report from the Chair

Chair Lasensky reported on the progress of the El Camino Real Steering Committee. She said the session tomorrow night will be the last opportunity for the

steering committee to give the consultant input. She noted the item will go to the Planning Commission on May 19th. Chair Lasensky said that during the input process housing came up many times in various forms, including senior housing. She said the community input phase of the project is winding down and following the Planning Commission the item will go before the City Council in June.

Commissioner Boyle asked about Stanford's participation and City Council Member Cline replied that Steve Elliot is involved. City Council Member Cline said he told Mr. Elliot that medical uses would be a long shot. Chair Lasensky commented that we need to remind Stanford that they are putting in a lot of new square footage and the employees will need housing. Commissioner Boyle said it is estimated that 3,000 new jobs will be created. Commissioner Brawner inquired if the Stanford Park Hotel is still looking to expand and/or add a conference center. City Council Member Cline said he had not heard. He added that a fiscal impact analysis would be needed. The City Council is looking for a Fiscal Impact Analysis model for all new projects, he said.

Chair Lasensky announced that as part of Affordable Housing Week (May 10-17), the Housing Endowment and Regional Trust (HEART) of San Mateo County is having a lunch and policy discussion on May 13th. Commissioner Boyle added that following this there will be a State Housing Trust Fund Stakeholder meeting and Lynn Jacobs will be the keynote speaker. She distributed a hand-out on the event.

Chair Lasensky said the San Mateo County Housing Leadership Council (HLC) is also holding a breakfast on May 16th. She said that unfortunately she cannot attend and asked that anyone who goes report back at the next Commission meeting. Commissioner Boyle said she plans to attend.

3. Commission Member Reports

Commissioner Boyle reported that the Sustainable San Mateo County report card is out. She distributed information from the report pertaining to housing affordability and said it is interesting that Burlingame is now more expensive than Menlo Park.

Commissioner Boyle also made an announcement about HEART's new Opening Doors Program, a home purchase loan program targeting middle-income workers in San Mateo County. She distributed a hand-out on the program.

D. INFORMATION ITEMS

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

The Commissioners accepted the report.

2. Chair Lasensky announced that the next Commission meeting is June 4th. She also reminded the Commission that the July meeting will be held on July 9th, which is not the normal meeting date.

E. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Megan Nee
Management Analyst

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