

APPROVED
AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MIZELL CENTER – 1409 NW 6 STREET
2ND FLOOR AUDITORIUM
MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2011 – 8:00 A.M.

Cumulative Attendance

Committee Members	Attendance	7/10 through 6/11	
		Present	Absent
Janet Riley, Chair	P	7	1
Jonathan Jordan, Vice Chair	P	7	1
Margie Alexander (8:17)	P	7	1
Jason Crush	P	5	2
Bradley Deckelbaum (8:31)	P	5	3
Peter Henn	A	7	1
Edwin Parke	P	2	1
Brian Poulin	P	7	1
Amanda Spangler-Bartle	P	5	2
Rebecca Jo Walter	P	5	3
Roosevelt Walters	P	8	0

Staff

Susan Batchelder, Liaison, Housing and Community Development
Angelia Basto, Administrative Aide, Housing and Community Development
Jonathan Brown, Housing and Community Development Manager
Barbara Hartmann, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communications to City Commission

None.

The meeting was called to order at 8:10 a.m.

Approval of Minutes: February 14, 2011

Motion made by Mr. Walters, seconded by Ms. Walter, to approve the minutes with any necessary corrections. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Roll Call

Ms. Batchelder called the roll at this time and a quorum was present.

Draft Session on Affordable Housing Plan

Chair Riley noted that the members had been sent the latest draft of the Committee's Implementation Plan.

Ms. Spangler-Bartle distributed copies of her summary of the Plan at this time. Chair Riley asked the Committee to take a few minutes and review the summary.

Ms. Walter suggested that Ms. Spangler-Bartle's summary be used as an Executive Summary of the report. It would appear as a cover page for the full report. Ms. Spangler-Bartle proposed adding the report's introduction to the first page.

The members briefly discussed minor changes to the document. Ms. Spangler-Bartle noted that Habitat for Humanity and the South Florida Community Land Trust could be added to the list of nonprofit organizations on p.6.

Ms. Alexander arrived at 8:17 a.m.

Chair Riley thanked Ms. Spangler-Bartle for providing the Executive Summary. The Committee moved on to discuss what should be done to complete the Implementation Plan at this time.

Discussion on Goals and Work Plan

Chair Riley pointed out that very low-income housing is the most difficult to supply, and said this should be addressed as part of the report. She recalled that the first time Broward County had convened an advisory committee on affordable housing, it had suggested "an incentivized concept of tiers," in which the lowest income group received the most assistance.

Mr. Crush asked what median income Chair Riley referred to with the term "very low-income," stating that some of the Committee's recommendations would not work for individuals making less than 30% of the City's median income, as they did not include plans for fully subsidized housing. Ms. Spangler-Bartle noted that there may be different strategies for different income groups, and advised that part of the Committee's work plan could be to determine strategies for specific income groups.

Mr. Poulin said for individuals with very low income, a rent or other subsidy would be the only way to assist in housing, such as Section 8 housing or affordable housing vouchers. He stated that the Committee could not target this income group, and noted that their efforts were more practical for the 30%-50% median income group, which he characterized as low- to moderate-income housing.

Mr. Walters said if the Committee makes recommendations for affordable housing, they should do so for "affordable housing across the board," which would include the lowest-income group. Mr. Crush said the needs of the lowest income group are already addressed through Federal programs. Mr. Walters did

not agree, and pointed out that while housing for the lowest income group, such as Section 8 housing, is entirely rental-based, it does not have to be.

Mr. Crush said there was “no ownership” in the lowest income group, and noted that Habitat for Humanity, which provides the best opportunity for ownership, cannot provide ownership for persons making less than 35%-40% of the median income. He said while it is Habitat for Humanity’s mission to assist the lowest income group, this is “the most risky” income group to assist.

Mr. Walters asserted that the Committee has to address assistance for the truly needy. He said they could not suggest that the City help people who make 35%-80% of the median income but make no recommendations for helping people who make less than 35%.

Mr. Crush said a plan for the lowest income group would result in a different document than the one the Committee is producing. Mr. Walters said Chair Riley’s proposal of providing an additional strategy for helping the very needy should be considered.

Ms. Spangler-Bartle suggested that the Committee could give the City Commission the existing Implementation Plan and then address very low-income housing as its next task. Chair Riley and Mr. Walters agreed, noting that the current Plan could state that another document is forthcoming.

Mr. Crush said if a trust fund for affordable housing is established, as proposed in the Implementation Plan, some of this money could also be used for rental subsidies for very low-income groups.

Ms. Spangler-Bartle said the Committee could send the City Commission a work plan along with the Implementation Plan, and could state what else they plan to accomplish this year, including a plan for providing or assisting with very low-income housing.

Chair Riley said not only has the Committee not addressed the very low-income group, they have not adequately addressed housing for any income group that may not necessarily become homeowners. Ms. Spangler-Bartle agreed that the City is “very focused on home ownership,” but rentals make a great deal of sense in today’s economic climate as well.

Ms. Alexander said the fact that the Committee has a plan that does not address the needs of the lowest income group was frustrating to her, and that the poor in Broward County were not getting the help they needed from the Committee. She said if the existing Committee did not address what the poorest people need, there should be new members who could do so.

Chair Riley said what the Committee needs to do is make recommendations that are specific to the very poor, as the existing report is not aimed at their needs. She felt they should advise the City Commission that the lowest income group will be addressed as a next step by the Committee.

Mr. Walters asked what income group has been addressed by the work the Committee has done thus far. Mr. Poulin said while this has not been previously specified, it is "set up" to address the needs of people making 30% "or above" of the median income. Mr. Walters asked how far "above" this specification reached, such as the needs of people making 120% of the median income. Mr. Poulin said the existing report did not set parameters on an income level.

Mr. Jordan said it seemed that the category they have not addressed is public housing, which requires different strategies than what has already been considered. He said it will require a better understanding of "what's being done right now and...how to improve it." He said he agreed the existing Plan should be completed and submitted, and very low-income housing should be the Committee's next step.

Mr. Deckelbaum arrived at 8:31 a.m.

Mr. Walters explained his intent was if the existing report did not address the needs of people making below 30% of the median income, then the Committee must tell the Commission that they will address these needs in a forthcoming report. He stated he would not continue to be part of the Committee if these needs are not taken into account.

Chair Riley added that there is also no recognition in the existing report of the need for rental housing in Broward County, which she felt is critical. She said the report should also state that plans are being developed to address this need as well, as the current plan is based on "totally home ownership."

Mr. Poulin disagreed, stating that he felt land inventoried for affordable housing could be used for rental or for sale.

Mr. Parke said Fort Lauderdale is "the homeless capital of the nation," and the Committee cannot address ownership alone, as not everyone in need can own a home. He asserted that the majority of affordable housing, at present, has to mean rentals.

Mr. Walters requested clarification that the existing report suggested "you can't even do rentals" for very low-income individuals. Mr. Crush said very low-income housing required "a different strategy." Mr. Walters said this meant the Committee has not addressed these needs at all in the report.

Ms. Spangler-Bartle said the private market will not help the very needy, who require a public subsidy in order to afford housing. Mr. Jordan said he did not believe the Committee was instructed to “figure out how to do subsidized housing;” although this is a recognized need, he had interpreted the Committee’s charge as addressing “affordable housing for people that can afford to pay rent or buy” and arriving at strategies to assist this population.

Chair Riley said her point was that a segment of the population in need of affordable housing would not be met by the existing plan. She was in favor of Ms. Spangler-Bartle’s suggestion of acknowledging that the Committee has more work to do.

Mr. Poulin said it was unrealistic to suggest that a City or County could address very low-income housing, and reiterated that these needs are being addressed by Federal programs. Ms. Alexander said the Committee should at least try.

Motion made by Ms. Spangler-Bartle to make the final changes to this [report] and submit it to the City, and then develop a work plan which will include discussing the very low-income and rental strategies.

Ms. Batchelder said the document itself would be presented to the City Commission at a Conference Agenda meeting. Mr. Deckelbaum suggested that as many Committee members as possible should plan to attend this meeting, although one individual should make the actual presentation. Chair Riley agreed she would present the report.

The **motion** died for lack of second.

Mr. Jordan suggested making the final changes to the report and bringing it back the following month for formal adoption and recommendation. There was consensus among the members to do this, and to include the work plan as part of the Executive Summary rather than as a separate document.

Mr. Poulin said rather than discussing a target income, the work plan should state the Committee planned to talk about subsidized rentals and other rental strategies. Mr. Jordan said the work plan should make sure it does not sound as if the Committee is moving away from its original charge. Mr. Deckelbaum said he did not believe the City Commission’s intent was to focus on home ownership as a priority over rentals.

Mr. Deckelbaum asked what part of the existing report was considered “specifically home ownership oriented” as opposed to focusing on rentals. Mr. Walters explained that the current report extends to people making 120% of the median, but fails to address the needs of people making less than 30%. He said he felt the very low-income population was “not part of this document,” and the

Committee has to find a way to deal with everyone in need of affordable housing. He reiterated that he did not want to participate in a committee that provided help for part of the population but excluded those most in need of help.

Mr. Poulin said the existing report is sufficiently broad to deal with all income groups; while it does not focus on the income groups with the greatest need, he did not feel it does not assist them or cannot be applied to them. He said if the Committee plans to focus on the lowest income groups, however, "there are more steps" than are recommended in the existing report. Mr. Walters said he would like to construct a plan that addresses these steps.

Chair Riley said if affordable housing is discussed, it means an entire range of the population: the report discusses how to get housing "at the upper end" of this range, but does not discuss how to meet the needs of the lower end of the income range. She said there should be consensus regarding how to talk about the Committee's next steps, which seem to include a focus on affordable housing and rentals for the very poor so the full range of affordability is covered.

Ms. Spangler-Bartle asked if there are any other goals the Committee should seek to accomplish this year. Mr. Parke said they should have "numbers" to define the population making 30%-35% of the median income, such as what approximate income would fall into this range. Mr. Poulin said he would provide income limits at the April meeting, as well as the rent levels and tax credits associated with these income levels.

Mr. Walters said while affordable ownership may not be likely for people earning less than 30% of the median income, affordable rental should be provided. Mr. Poulin said municipalities do not have the resources to deal with this population, so programs are Federally administered; there is "a huge shortage" of housing for these individuals.

Ms. Spangler-Bartle said she was concerned that many of the City's programs are targeted at home ownership, but the last major study done in Broward County showed that the greatest need was for rental housing. She said this was another reason for the Committee to discuss rental strategies.

Mr. Crush said he was not certain the Committee could discuss rental strategies and existing programs without receiving direction from the City Commission to do so. He did not feel the lowest income group was excluded from the report, stating that an affordable housing trust fund could apply to any income, and its subsidies could be used for rentals.

Ms. Spangler-Bartle said while the first step may be a recommendation to create specific programs, the next step should be to advise where the money associated with these programs should be directed.

Mr. Brown suggested that Housing and Community Development could share information on its existing rental programs with the Committee, and they could offer suggestions on how these programs could be improved. He estimated that they had given nearly \$1 million to the Housing Authority over the last three years for rentals; there are also rental programs associated with the State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP), although he noted that there have been no SHIP dollars in recent years.

Ms. Alexander asked if a trust fund for affordable housing meant the money in this fund would mean less money for the City. She explained that there might be programs administered by the City that would be preferable to placing money in a trust fund. Ms. Spangler-Bartle said the suggestion was if a trust fund is developed as a new source of funding, the money should go toward affordable housing only.

Mr. Crush said one plan included in the report is that developers in Fort Lauderdale must either provide a certain number of affordable housing units or pay into the affordable housing trust fund. He said this would mean the developers would be a source of income, and there is no current plan that uses them as a source.

Mr. Walters asked what the Committee's target date is for providing the City Commission with a report. It was determined that the report would be submitted by early May if it can be included in the Conference Agenda at that time.

Communications to City Commission

None.

Other Business

It was noted that the next meeting would be on April 18, 2011.

Good of the Order

None.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 8:57 a.m.