

CHARLOTTE COUNTY
MINUTES
AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Mid-County Regional Library
November 25, 2009

Committee members present included Jim Kelly, James Sweeney, Barbara Lisby-Sowell, James Marshall, Jeff Ahrens and Melissa Doyle.

The following people were also present:
Robert Hebert, Charlotte County Housing Division,
Wilda Rock, Charlotte County Housing Division,
Roxanne Reed, Charlotte County Growth Management,
Brenda Bala, The Housing Corporation of Charlotte County, and
Mike Mansfield, Charlotte County Habitat for Humanity.

Mr. Kelly called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. Roll call was taken. It was noted that Wendy Reinhardt resigned due to other commitments and Jean Farino submitted her resignation due to her retirement end of December. Currently there are 4 vacant positions on the committee. There is a notice posted on the Charlotte County website requesting committee volunteers. A quorum was present.

The question of approval of minutes from the August meeting was called. **Ms. Lisby-Sowell recommended approval of minutes as presented. Ms. Doyle seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.**

Mr. Hebert indicated that all information relative to future meetings will continue to be sent via email, complying with the County's goal of going paperless. Members having difficulty accessing information are to contact Mr. Hebert so that hard copies can be mailed.

Mr. Hebert introduced Wilda Rock, assistant to the Housing Division, who was hired under contract for this grant-funded position.

Mr. Hebert briefly discussed the contents of the Source Document Manual (orientation book for new members). All members of the committee were given a copy.

The Housing Management Report for September & October 2009 was emailed on November 20th to all members of the committee, Board of County Commissioners and County Attorneys.

Mr. Hebert noted there are currently two open projects which are utilizing Hurricane Housing Recovery funds. The Hurricane Housing Recovery funds have a completion deadline of June 30, 2010. These two projects are Charlotte Crossing for which the Carlisle Development Group is in the process of refinancing and may be requesting less HHR funding than was originally allocated to them – approximately \$1.3 million dollars less. The Stillwater Home (Restoration Roads) is now owned by the County and will be completed with the \$300,000 currently allocated. The County is in the process of updating architectural drawings to current building code and also in the middle of the bid process for a contractor to complete construction of the project. Discussions are being held with potential property management groups.

Kelly Hall was closed, but will be reopening next week. Coastal Behavioral plans on moving their Compass Program from Sarasota to Punta Gorda. The Compass Program will be a rehab and shelter for homeless youth with substance abuse issues. The Chara House and the Bishop House, both owned by the Homeless Coalition, are temporarily closed due to lack of operational funding. When they reopen, they will need to continue to provide services in the low and very low income levels of AMI or less in order to comply with grant obligations.

Mr. Mansfield presented his report on Habitat. Habitat has closed on 8 homes since the beginning of their fiscal year in July 2009. It is anticipated that 10-12 more homes will be complete by Christmas. Of the eleven homes purchased in Englewood, six of them are almost

complete. The Voc Tech Center is helping in the construction of two new Habitat homes. Ninety percent of Habitat clients have credit issues. Habitat is currently receiving 30 to 35 applications per month. Those that Habitat is unable to provide assistance to are being referred to The Housing Corporation. Twenty-five families have been selected and approved and are working towards homeownership. Habitat anticipates having to stop taking applications within the next two to three months.

Ms. Bala, of The Housing Corporation of Charlotte County, presented her report on homeownership activities. Ms. Bala indicated that she is struggling to market the FHOP (Florida Homebuyer Assistance Program) for the County. Ms. Bala believes that it may be because the program is not clearly understood because it is so complicated. Applications have been going out, but very few have made it to closing. The Homebuyer Educational Course has been revamped and is now an eight hour course, meeting 2 hours per week. Rehab applications continue to come in with an increase expected as the weather gets colder. The Rehab's run about \$20-\$30 thousand dollars each. There are currently 498 foreclosure cases. HUD recommends 75 cases per counselor; The Housing Corporation currently handles 150 cases per counselor. There are 95 cases just between Englewood and Punta Gorda. There will be an article printed in the newspaper shortly discussing housing services for those in need. There are currently 25 families on a waiting list for the same type of revitalization program previously offered by Hurricane Housing Recovery funds. Ms. Bala hopes to be able to place some of these families in homes purchased under the Neighborhood Stabilization Program.

No report for the Punta Gorda Housing Authority. Jean Farino is retiring at the end of December 2009. Lorraine Helber was named as the interim director.

Mr. Hebert advised the committee of the status of the NSP- Neighborhood Stabilization Program. The \$6.7 million dollar grant contract was signed and accepted by the Department of Community Affairs on November 24, 2009. The environmental review was resubmitted via overnight mail on November 24th. The Department of Community Affairs will have 15 working days to review the form for approval. Real Estate Services has been working on a list of eligible foreclosed properties. The problem the County will be facing is that the foreclosed properties are being bought up by speculators, leaving us with not much of an inventory to choose from. There is a \$1.5 million set aside for low income rentals. A nonprofit foundation in Englewood has identified two properties that are foreclosure. They may be the first two properties that will be purchased under this program. The acquisition process will take place as follows. Real Estate Services will identify and acquire properties. Building Construction Services will do initial inspection of properties and provide cost estimate for completion. An appraisal will be done with the purchase price not exceeding ninety-nine percent of appraised value. Once property is acquired, the bid work for rehab/construction of the unit will be done by the Purchasing Department. Discussions are on going with The Department of Community Affairs regarding the handling of program income.

Mr. Hebert addressed the possible reallocation of HHR funding originally allocated for Charlotte Crossing and the Carlisle Development Group. In its original proposal, the Carlisle Group was to use tax credit funds, however, that didn't come together. The Carlisle Group is currently seeking alternative funding options, but anticipates not needing \$1.3 million of the \$3.3 million dollars that was originally allocated. Mr. Hebert requested that the committee open up a discussion on how they would like to see this \$1.3 million dollars reallocated if it becomes available. A discussion followed with options such as Rehab Assistance, senior housing, and the Revitalization Area as possibilities. The committee agreed that it would be best to keep the allocation "loose", and not get pigeon-holed into just one option.

Mr. Hebert discussed the Renter Eviction Strategy language modification. Many are seeking help but are not eligible because of the restrictions in original strategy. **Motion was made by Jeff Ahrens and seconded by James Sweeney to approve modification. Motion was approved unanimously.**

The next meeting of the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee will be on February 25, 2010 at 10:00am at the Mid-County Regional Library.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:13am.