

CHARLOTTE COUNTY
AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
May 27, 2010

The meeting convened at the Mid-County Regional Library at 2050 Forrest Nelson Boulevard in Port Charlotte.

ROLL CALL:

Committee members present: Barbara Melanson
Cecy Cowger-Glenn
Edward Zysko
James Marshall
Jeff Ahrens

Committee members absent: Barbara Lisby-Sowell
Jim Kelley
James Sweeney
Melissa Doyle
Christine Cupp

Also present:

Bob Hebert, Charlotte County Housing Division,
Wilda Rock, Charlotte County Housing Division,
Doreen Stoquert, Charlotte County Budget & Fiscal Services
Ken Quillen, Charlotte County Growth Management Department,
Diana Bello, Housing Corporation of Charlotte County,
Mike Mansfield, Charlotte County Habitat for Humanity.
Loraine Helber, Punta Gorda Housing Authority

In the absence of the Chair, Bob Hebert called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. Roll call was taken. Roseanne Good representing the Home Building Industry resigned due to other commitments. New members were introduced: Cecy Cowger-Glenn - Non-for-profit provider and Ed Zysko - Real Estate representative.

Members are coming up expiration of their term ending in June & July. They are being polled to determine if they wish to be reappointed.

Mike Mansfield reported that Habitat for Humanity has completed 35 homes to date. Five more are to be completed by June 30th. Each of the homeowners gets to purchase house for \$85,000 and receive a tax credit of 8,000 under the New Home Buyer Tax Credit Program as long as house is purchased by June 30th. He thanked Charlotte County for funding, providing land and impact fee reduction funds to make this all possible. Habitat for Humanity, Inc. has helped 103 families in 3 years. They are largest Habitat home builder in the country for population 50,000 to 250,000 for the last two years. They are considering participating in a USDA program for rural development which includes all of Punta Gorda and Harbor Heights, a one percent interest funding with a 33 year mortgage. Typical clients pay \$430.00 principle, insurance & tax a month. Habitat gets paid back at closing from the USDA funding. This program would plan to complete 25 to 30 homes in the next year. Habitat still has less than 5% delinquency rate. Most clients are 60% and below area median income level.

Brenda Bala was not present so no Housing Corp report was presented.

Loraine Helber introduced as Director for PGHA. The Tax Credit Application for Phase II of their construction was not picked in the lottery for 2009. The Housing Authority has challenged the funding decision and that could be ruled to their favor. The PGHA should know this decision in a month or two. Construction phase two on airport road may begin if funding is put together.

The question of approval of minutes from the November and August meetings was delayed due to a lack of a quorum.

Housing Division Report: SHIP is not funded in the next fiscal year nor was last year funded due to the State emptying the Sadowski Trust Fund to balance the State Budget. Charlotte County has one year remaining of SHIP funds which is a three year cycle. The new budget year starts in July 2010. Ms. Glenn asked questions from her review of the reports.

The County received state funding for impact fee reduction, \$2 million. The County satisfied requirements of a minimum 18 months with a 25% reduction in impact fees after the 2004 hurricane season. Housing Corp has used most of it portion and is expected to be fully expended by 6/30. Habitat for Humanity received \$1.4 million to purchase abandoned houses not completed by developers and has completed them as per contract. This portion of SHIP will be closed on 6/30.

The Hurricane Housing Recovery Grant County projects are completed except Charlotte Crossing – Carlisle Group. This project will be brought to the Board of County Commissioners in July for \$2.1 million. This will leave \$1.2 million which may be redirected when the Florida Housing Finance Corp approved this redirection.

Neighborhood Stabilization Program, per DCA needs to have it all funds obligated in six months. The purpose of this grant is to purchase foreclosed houses, help with blighted neighborhoods and through rehabs, get local contractors work and provide low income housing. The County has acquired property at 318 Fitzhugh plus two lots. Environmental issues: this is a 50 years old + structure, located in flood zone, near railroad track (used twice a day), bulk fuel oil limited use located within 1,000 ft and possible noise issue due to major roadways in proximately.

Commissioner Duffy reported that the County has recently approved moving forward on a neighborhood revitalization area – medical arts district in Charlotte Harbor.

Staff reported on a meeting between Emily Lewis and Mike Mansfield regarding neighborhood revitalization area. Habitat for Humanity, Inc. (national) has a new program that would provide financial assistance for the rehab of several homes in the neighborhood revitalization area.

Staff, on behalf of Committee member, James Sweeney reported that he would like the AHAC to propose and embark on a housing needs assessment study. This would provide an evaluation of needed housing unit types in the county. It was suggested that we involve a University in this study to lower costs by the use of interns and students. This study needs to question that with the funds we have are being reduced and in some cases eliminated we need to focus housing programs to the areas of most need. It was stated that recent directions of the programs has increased the income levels to up to 120% of Area Median Income which gets to the working class populations. At the next AHAC meeting Mr. Sweeney will be asked to further discuss the topic.

The Housing Division Customer survey was passed out to those present for information. It was distributed to our partner agencies for their clients to complete and return.

Mike Mansfield reported that impact fees have increased last year. Those previously costing \$4,000.00 are now approximately \$8,000.00. Staff reported there is language being developed in the County Attorney's Office to allow for the reduction of Impact Fees for Affordable Housing projects. This is being prepared to present to the BOCC as part of the discussions being held by the Board on county wide impact fees. Commissioner Duffy mentioned that impact fee was reduced 2½ to 3 years ago for about one year then a tiered system was adopted that resulted in lower fees in urban areas and higher in rural areas. The City of Punta Gorda waives the impact fee for affordable housing. At the next meeting with a quorum the AHAC could make a recommendation for waiving or reducing impact fees for affordable housing projects.

Staff reported that impact fees were waived after the hurricane on a case to case allowed by the emergency declarations after the hurricanes. Recently we had cases asking for reductions in impact fees and utility fee hook-up. The County Administrator has asked the language to be brought to the board that allowed for the reduction of impact fees on the case by case basis for

affordable housing projects. This is what the County Attorney is responding to with some qualification language and appropriate limitations. That would allow the Administrator or the board to review each case and could reduce the impact fees. An example of the problem is the Stillwater home – an existing building owned by the county. The CCU fees for hook-up have been paid by grant funds in the amount of over \$36,000. Only rehab was completed on the building.

Mr. Mansfield also reported code violations of \$8,000 on the owner not on property for acquired properties bought with grant funds. Building Construction Services would not remove these fines from Habitat for Humanity, Inc. even though they were new owners causing their attorneys to get involved, adding expense. Another house had re-inspection fees of \$800.00 from a previous builder with the same result. These types of charges are severely affecting the ability to provide affordable housing within the parameters of the various programs.

Commissioner Duffy commended Robert Hebert for good work, especially for Stillwater Project.

The next meeting of the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee will be on August 26, 2010 at 10:00am at the Mid-County Regional Library.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:49 am.