



BROWARD HOUSING COUNCIL MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: A regular meeting of the Broward Housing Council was held on April 15, 2011, commencing at 10:03 a.m., at the African American Research Library and Cultural Center (AARLCC), located at 2650 Sistrunk Boulevard, Seminar Room 2, Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

ROLL CALL: Roll call was conducted by Ms. Elizabeth Kersting

Council Members Present:

Richard Barkett	Monica Navarro
George Castrataro *Designee Nathan Brunner	Mercedes Nunez
Cynthia Chambers	John Primeau
Ann Deibert	Anita Fain Taylor
Paul Figg	Lisa Vecchi
Patricia Good, Broward County School Board	Lois Wexler, Chair, Broward County Commissioner
Lori Moseley, Mayor, City of Miramar	

Council Members Absent:

Anthony Abbate	Dr. Rosalind Osgood, Vice Chair
Tina Mulligan	

Staff:

Angela Chin	Suzanne Fejes	Ralph Stone
Patrice Eichen	Elizabeth Kersting	Michael Wright

Guests:

James Carras, Carras Community Investment, Inc.
Alexis Moseley
Rob Nadeau, Broward County Office of Public Communications
Margaret Stapleton, Broward County Office of Public Communications

I. APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 25, 2011 MEETING MINUTES

A. Introduction of New Housing Council Member

Mr. Stone introduced and welcomed new Council member Ms. Anne Deibert who is the new Chief Operating Officer (CEO) with the Broward County Housing Authority. She replaced former Council member and CEO Mr. Kevin Cregan who retired after 22 years with the agency. *Mayor Moseley entered the meeting at 10:05am.*

***MOTION:** It was moved by Ms. Nunez and seconded by Ms. Navarro to approve the Minutes of the Broward Housing Council meeting of February 25, 2011 as submitted. The Motion was passed by a unanimous voice vote.*

II. CHAIR'S REPORT:

Chair Commissioner Wexler updated Council members on a conversation she had with Broward County's Chief Judge Tobin on the foreclosure mediation program and other financial issues impacting the County's court system and how the incoming Chief Judge Weinstein prepares to move forward with the foreclosure

crisis. She further stated that Chief Judge Tobin indicated that all Chief Judges are currently in Tallahassee aggressively struggling to keep funding for foreclosure mitigation and mediation for the state which the Chair indicated is at this time less than \$2 million dollars. She mentioned a loss of those funds would have a major impact on the number of Case Managers processing foreclosure cases in the court system. Chair Commissioner Wexler stated she would follow up within the next few months with the new incoming Chief Judge Weinstein on the foreclosure issue.

Chair Commissioner Wexler updated the Council members about the March 2011 proposal to Mayors of Entitlement Cities regarding providing some level of funding to support foreclosure counseling and prevention. She indicated that she received a response from one city who stated that their City can request up to 15 percent of their 2011/12 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) allocations for public service activities which will include foreclosure prevention programs. Mayor Moseley stated she responded via email to the Chair's request by stating the City of Miramar will be hosting an upcoming foreclosure workshop in partnership with NACA (Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America) on Saturday, April 16th.

Chair Commissioner Wexler announced that Saturday, April 16, 2011, the Miramar Civic Center will be sponsoring a NACA workshop from 9AM – 1PM for Homebuyers interested in purchasing a home. She further stated that from 2PM – 4PM, homeowners can receive information on home repairs and financing the cost of the renovation as well as homeowners seeking to restructure their mortgage can receive information on a more affordable payment.

III. DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Mr. Stone briefly discussed with the Council members a conversation he had earlier in the week with underwriters and developers of two new multifamily affordable housing projects totaling 620 units known as Foxcroft Apartments and Sorrento Apartments. He stated that the County allocated \$750,000 in GAP financing for each project, the Housing Finance Authority allocated \$6 million dollars in local bonds for each project, and the Florida Housing Finance Corporation allocated \$25 million for each project. The underwriters and developers informed Mr. Stone that the Governor and Cabinet were not approving the two projects. Mr. Stone stated that the Governor and Cabinet sit as an agency that does an approval of this process. Mr. Stone further stated that the Governor's Key staff member indicated they were not going to support these projects because "Broward County has plenty of foreclosed properties for affordable housing." Mr. Stone stated that he spoke with the Governor's staff member and forwarded to him information on Broward County's current housing and economic conditions. Mr. Stone advised the Council that the Governor and Cabinet after reviewing the data and analysis approved the two projects.

Mr. Stone reported that staff received an email from the Local Miami Field Office regarding the impacts of last week's Federal 2011 Budget Resolution. He stated that the CDBG and HOME funding will be cut nationally across the board by approximately 15% - 17%. Mr. Stone stated these multimillion dollar budget cuts will have a major financial impact countywide. *Cynthia Chambers entered the meeting at 10:15am*

Mr. Stone provided an update on the Hardest-Hit Fund (HHF) program which the federal government has allocated funding to help pay the mortgages of qualified homeowners who have become delinquent in their mortgage payments. These funds will help to bring their mortgage payment current, he indicates. He stated that Broward County was allocated \$40 million; however, Mr. Stone stated that the HHF originally was to be launched in February, but was delayed when Governor Scott decided to review the federal funds received and to make a determination whether to keep the allocation. Mr. Stone mentioned that after much lobbying by the Affordable Housing Industry, the Florida Housing Coalition, and the Florida Housing Finance Corporation; the Governor approved the funding but cut the proposed benefits for homeowners in half. He stated, these changes to the HHF will mean less money for those who qualify.

Mr. Stone provided a brief update on the proposed legislative bill in Tallahassee that would redirect the Sadowski Act which provides Florida with a dedicated revenue source for affordable housing into a single source of revenue funding for economic development, transportation, and affordable housing projects. This trust fund will then be controlled by the Governor's office. The Sadowski Act established the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) Program and the state and local housing trust funds. Mr. Stone further stated that these changes to the Sadowski Act will eliminate the allocation of SHIP funds to counties and large cities across Florida.

Mr. Stone informed the Council members that with the support of Commissioner Wexler and the Housing Council, HOPE Inc. which is a nonprofit organization sponsoring events and workshops across the country to help homeowners facing foreclosure, announced that they will be coming to Broward County in July. He stated HOPE Inc. anticipates approximately 1,500-2,000 people attending this one day event. He mentioned staff is working with HOPE Inc. to identify a facility such as the Convention Center or Bank Atlantic Center to hold this event. Any homeowners struggling with mortgage problems and facing foreclosure will personally receive a notice of the event in the mail. Homeowners will be able to learn about foreclosure prevention options and get immediate help connecting them with loan servicer representatives and local counseling agencies.

There was a lengthy discussion amongst the Council members on the topics discussed earlier. Mr. Richard Barkett provided some feedback regarding his impressions from the legislature regarding affordable housing and funding sources in Broward County. He stated that there is a strong opinion amongst the legislatures that Broward County has so many foreclosures and lower property values that the County do not have an affordable housing problem. He indicated this way of thinking needs to change. He further stated that even though statistics and background information was forwarded, there is still a consensus from other parts of the state that believe Broward County do not need affordable housing assistance because of the surplus of foreclosed properties and decreased property values.

Mr. Nunez expressed her concerns regarding affordable housing and the market rates for rentals. She stated that it is becoming more difficult for renters to rent because landlords are now requesting background checks on potential tenants.

Ms. Patricia Good requested that Mr. Stone forward information on the upcoming HOPE Inc. Workshop to the School Board and other large employers so that employees can be aware of this event.

Mr. Stone characterized Ms. Nunez comments by stating that the workforce housing population which is persons or families whose total household income is at or below 140% of area median income (AMI) can afford a house or condo now if they have a down payment. He stated the very low, low, and moderate income households have gone from 42,000 severely cost-burdened households to 58,000 severely cost-burdened households which he stated is the bulk of our service economy. He mentioned these individuals are impacted mainly because the rental rates have not decreased but the need for rental properties have.

Ms. Navarro discussed briefly about a roundtable event she attended with some nonprofits and Broward County's Community Development Corporation (CDCs) to discuss acquiring and converting some of the County's foreclosure properties into supportive housing for veterans and/or youths aging out of foster care. She mentioned finance these affordable housing opportunities are hurdles small nonprofits have to overcome. She further stated that the Housing Council should be involved with this process as part of their work program.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Presentation on the Broward Housing Council Affordable Housing Web Site

Mr. Stone briefed the Council members on the two Affordable Housing Website User Group meetings that helped define the development, design and content of the Housing Council's Affordable Housing Web Site. He indicated that the launching of the web site would be in the fall leaving the summer months to do most of the data and content gathering. He mentioned that prior to launching the website, a BETA testing (testing a product prior to release) will be performed on a selected group of users to receive their feedback and suggestions on the ease of navigating and the content on the website. He stated that at the conclusion of the presentation presented by Ms. Margaret Stapleton, Assistant Director and Mr. Rob Nadeau, Web Site Manager of the Broward County's Office of Public Communications (OPC), staff recommends that the Housing Council endorse the website and authorize staff to continue to work with the OPC on the design and implementation of the web site.

Mr. Stone deferred the conversation to Mr. Jim Carras who was nominated by the Chair to represent the Housing Council at the Affordable Housing Web Site User Group meetings. Mr. Carras indicated that the two website user group meetings represented a range of nonprofit groups, including the Board of Realtors represented by Mr. Richard Barkett, the Broward Housing Partnership, and the Urban League to name a few. He mentioned that his firm did extensive research which he provided to the user group on affordable housing web best practices across the country. Mr. Carras stated a couple of issues that were raised and discussed at the last user group meeting such as "I am looking for affordable housing, where do I go? I have a foreclosure problem. I have a Section 8 voucher and I don't know what to do or where to go." These questions, he stated, were driven by the OPC navigating the website at the last user group meetings. He stated that the user group applauded the OPC on the website, but stated the website needs to identify the target audience and has more work to be done. He also mentioned the use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter which he believes is a real critical piece that should be addressed and incorporated on the website as technology involves. Finally, he mentioned the need for ongoing implementation and management for the website to be effective.

A PowerPoint Presentation on the Broward Housing Council Affordable Housing Website was presented by Ms. Stapleton and Mr. Nadeau of the OPC. Ms. Stapleton indicated their approach to designing the website included information gathered and collected from the user group as well as a survey that was conducted of the local affordable housing community professionals, governmental agencies, for-profit and nonprofit agencies, and members of the business and academic communities. An overview was given of the contents of the website under the categories of Affordable Housing, Municipality Information, Funding Opportunities, Databases, Education and Training as well as Networking. Mr. Nadeau mentioned the domain names currently registered for the website, (.com, .net, .org, and .mobi) He explained that .mobi is a domain name used to access the internet via mobile devices. Mr. Nadeau further stated that a language translation will be added to the website (Google translate) to translate between a number of different languages. *Ms. Anita Taylor entered the meeting at 11:15am.* Comments and suggestions were provided by the Council members on the ease of navigating and website content. Mr. Stone recommended authorization for resources and to move forward on the development and implementation of the affordable housing website.

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Barkett and seconded by Mayor Moseley to authorize staff to continue working with the Broward County Office of Public Communication in designing and implementing the housing council's affordable housing web site. The motion was passed by a unanimously voice vote.

Mr. Carras left the meeting at 11:20am.

B. Endorsement of Support: Broward County's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness

Mr. Wright provided an update regarding Broward County's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness (Plan). He stated that the Plan was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in December 2005. He further stated that the Plan is a comprehensive community developed Plan to prevent homelessness and develop permanent solutions to the many issues that lead to homelessness of individuals and families. He mentioned nine cities and a number of other organizations that have endorsed the Plan. Mr. Wright indicated that there is still lack of understanding of the homelessness program and the need to better collaborate with cities and organizations. He mentioned that the Homeless Initiative Partnership (HIP) Division presented the Plan to the City of Fort Lauderdale to endorse, but the City requested additional information in order to better collaborate with the County and other providers in support of the Plan. Mr. Wright explained that the estimated amount expected to be available to Broward County for its Continuum of Care program is approximately \$25 million. He stated that funding comes from Broward County, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the State Department of Children and Families (DCF), and the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP). He mentioned that the County's goal to end homelessness include assisting individuals and families to maintain current housing, preventing individuals and families from becoming homeless by ensuring timely access to resources, and assisting individuals and families with become self-sufficient.

Mr. Wright provided information on the 2011 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count which began on January 24th and ended on January 25th. He stated that the unsheltered homeless population increased by 18% compared to the last PIT count conducted. Mr. Wright mentioned that HIP submitted to the Board their HUD grant application for this fiscal year to fund 1,054 permanent and transitional beds. He stated that since the Plan was adopted, the Plan supports legal aid who assistance homeless persons obtain their mainstream benefits and services. Since 2005, he stated, legal aid has assisted homeless persons receive approximately \$27 million in titled benefits. Last year, \$654,000 was given to homeless persons, of that 44 individuals were able to maintain permanent housing.

MOTION: It was moved by Ms. Nunez and seconded by Mr. Figg to endorse Broward County's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness and request a council member participate at the quarterly meetings. The motion was passed by a unanimously voice vote.

V. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business brought before the board.

VI. INFORMATIONAL ITEM

Chair Commissioner Wexler stated that the article "South Florida Housing Burden Leads Nation" Published in the Sun Sentinel on February 26, 2011 was distributed to the Council members for informational purposes only.

Commissioner Wexler informed Council members that Vice Chair Dr. Osgood has missed four consecutive meetings and referenced the Board Policy on Attendance that was enacted by the Board of County Commissioners at their December 2010 meeting and filed with the State and became effective two weeks later. She suggested a motion for the removal of Dr. Osgood from her board position as Vice Chair. Mr. Figg and Mayor Moseley nominated Ms. Monica Navarro as Vice Chair. The nomination to re-elect a new Vice Chair to serve on the Housing Council will be held at the next scheduled meeting.

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Figg and seconded by Ms. Nunez to remove Dr. Osgood from the Vice Chair Board Position due four consecutive missed meetings in 2010 and two consecutive missed meetings in 2011. The motion was passed by a unanimously voice vote.

VII. NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting, June 24th, was rescheduled due to scheduling conflicts with some Council members. Council members agreed to the next scheduled meeting in July.

Date: Friday, July 29, 2011
Time: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00pm
Location: African America Research Library and Cultural Center, (AARLCC), Seminar Room 2
2650 Sistrunk Boulevard, Fort Lauderdale, Florida

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: It was moved by Ms. Nunez and seconded by Ms. Fain Taylor to adjourn the meeting at 11:55 a.m. The Motion was passed by a unanimous voice vote.

Disclosure: The above captioned Minutes are transcribed in a summary format. To hear the full meeting, a compact disk of the meeting (#DR-11-SC-021) can be provided after 24 hour notice to the Document Control and Minutes Section at 954-357-4900.