

March 10, 2010

Housing Options Sub-Committee Meeting

Present: Carolyn Briggs, Loretta McCarty, Neal Andrews, John Jones, Mike Merewether, Ken Finning, Muriel Steiger, Patricia Hamilton; Debora Schreiber, Clyde Reynolds

CITY STAFF: Jeffrey Lambert, Lisa Wilkinson, Brian Randall

I. Introductions

II. New Business

Meeting with City staff:

What pending housing projects are in the pipeline and do we know why they are not moving forward?

In the last 2 years about 1000 units have been entitled. Even though they have the entitlements, they are not proceeding, primarily due to the economy and tight lending climate.

The City expects about 300 units will be brought back for processing within the year. For example, the Downtown Olson project is showing a lot of activity, ranging from investors saying they are ready to buy the project to the Olson Company indicating they are ready to proceed.

The units at the Harbor project are about two years away from beginning development.

The Ralston Courtyards, a 127 unit apartment project, has begun construction. The inclusionary housing ordinance does not apply to rental projects; therefore, there are no designated affordable units in the project.

The City's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance is only for residential projects with for-sale units. The program is implemented citywide, with a few modifications in the Downtown Redevelopment Area. Generally fifteen percent (15%) of a residential project must include inclusionary units. The first is a moderate income unit, the second a low income unit and the third a very low income unit. The fourth rotates back to being a moderate income unit and so on.

Of the 1000 entitled units in the pipeline, about 97 are inclusionary units.

What role can the Housing Options Subcommittee play with affordable housing production in the City?

An effective role for the subcommittee is to be an advocate for affordable housing projects. When a project is brought before the decision makers - it is helpful to have supporters present as well as those who may oppose the project.

The subcommittee was created about 15 years ago with a focus on social services provided in the community. When the 10-Year Strategy to End Homelessness was developed, the Social Service Task Force began to focus on selected goals within the 10-year Strategy and developed various subcommittees to address specific goals. The Housing Options Subcommittee is focusing on shelter options and permanent housing solutions in the community.

What role can the Housing Options Subcommittee play to ensure the Housing Element is deemed to be in compliance by HCD?

The Community Development Department is preparing an Emergency Shelter Ordinance in response to SB 2 but also to be considered prior to the Housing Element final adoption. The Planning Commission will be conducting a study session in April and it is expected to go to City Council in May or June.

The Housing Options Subcommittee will be provided an advance copy of the Emergency Shelter Ordinance and will be invited to the PC study session.

The City resubmitted the Housing Element draft to HCD. HCD asked the City to rescind its letter to enable HCD to provide guidance rather than a formal response within the legislative time periods. Lisa W. is making additional changes to the document per HCD observations. HCD staff including Cathy Creswell are expected to conduct a site visit in Ventura to look at vacant and underutilized parcels. HCD has indicated the City is very close to having a Housing Element in compliance.

John J. asked if the subcommittee could meet with HCD staff when they come to Ventura. If at all possible - could the Farm worker Housing group also meet with HCD staff? The city responded that the visit would be limited but if a meeting was possible - they would try to schedule one.

The Subcommittee was also asked to develop an affordable housing resource list so that when housing developers come to the planning counter and ask for input and assistance with inclusionary or affordable units - that Planning staff has a resource list to provide them.

Jeff Lambert also suggested the Housing Options Subcommittee members make a more intentional and deliberate effort to participate in Community Councils throughout Ventura - especially the active ones: Pierpont, Westside, and Midtown.

Ken F. asked whether any of the projects in the City's pipeline could be modified to emulate the WAV project: a mixture of commercial and residential. The concept has merit but financing for a mixed use project is challenging. In addition, the City had been requiring residential with commercial space on the ground floor and some of the projects had vacant space for a long period of time before it was filled.

In closing the deliverables were reiterated:

CITY

1. A matrix of residential projects in the pipeline and the affordability designation for each project to the Housing Options Subcommittee
2. HCD visit to Ventura - explore whether the Housing Options Subcommittee and be included in a meeting
3. Advance copy of the Emergency Shelter Ordinance to the Housing Options Subcommittee

HOUSING OPTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

1. Resource list of affordable housing and special needs service providers to the City for distribution at the Planning Counter

NEXT REGULAR MEETING

April 14, 2010

4:30 - 6:00 PM

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11122 SNAPDRAGON STREET, SUITE 100
VENTURA, CA 93004