

MINUTES

The meeting was in person, with the public invited to attend. The public was also able to view the meeting via Zoom Webinar.

Committee Members Present

Amanda Edwards, Brownie Newman, Parker Sloan

County Staff Present

Jennifer Barnette, Matthew Cable, Brandon Freeman, William High, Andrew Mayronne, Nate Pennington, Amanda Stratton, Sybil Tate, and Don Warn

Call to Order & Welcome

- Chairman Newman called the meeting to order at 1:06

Approval of Minutes

- September 7, 2021
- Commissioner Sloan motioned to approve the agenda and minutes from the previous meeting. The agenda and minutes from the previous meeting were approved unanimously.

New Business

- Housing Choice Voucher Program – David Nash, Executive Director, Housing Authority of the City of Asheville
 - Comm. Sloan asked for clarification on the available inventory of vouchers. Mr. Nash clarified it was the amount potentially available to the county, not the number in use. The current number in use is currently 1,115 leased.
 - Chair Newman asked why more vouchers are not in use, and if the main limiting factor was available units. Mr. Nash explained that was the primary reason more vouchers are not currently in use.
 - Comm. Sloan asked for clarity on the use of the unused vouchers, and whether the need existed for those vouchers. Mr. Nash reported there was sufficient need for those vouchers, but there was not available units.
 - Chair Newman asked if the decision on funding from HUD is based on population and available housing, or does the availability of funding remain based on set formulas regardless of housing supply. Mr. Nash explained that the amount of vouchers does change according to specific categories of users, but not all categories of users get additional funding. Chair Newman further asked if there was an ability to increase the number of vouchers provided to this community.
 - Comm. Edwards asked for hard numbers on the impact of short term rentals on housing availability. Mr. Pennington explained a study had been done in recent years, which could be shared. Comm. Edwards explained the commissioners hear anecdotes, but they lack formal data regarding the impacts of STRs.
 - Ms. Tate explained that staff are waiting from Wake County staff for additional details requested by the committee. Staff explained they should be able to share recent findings with the committee at the next meeting in early October.

- Chair Newman asked for clarity on the requirement of accepting vouchers for 9% and 4% LIHTC projects in Wake County. Mr. Mayronne would confirm the details, but believed that both types of LIHTC projects are prohibited from screening tenants based on voucher-status.
- Chair Newman asked about the issues involved for landlords that accept vouchers, and the difference between HUD sanctioned rent values and actual market prices that landlords can receive. Mr. Mayronne explained that market rate rents in this area often exceed the limits what vouchers can pay for.
- Chair Newman asked about whether it made sense to use vouchers for LIHTC projects wherein they already have affordable units.
- Goal Setting – Sybil Tate & Amanda Stratton
 - Chair Newman asked about whether 4% projects can be mixed with affordable and market rate housing. Mr. Mayronne said he would determine whether it was feasible. Mr. Pennington provided a local example of how this could be performed, and Mr. Mayronne explained there are compelling reasons for leveraging greater rents by mixing the types of units available including the ability to receive improved lending opportunities.
 - Chair Newman confirmed that the goals presented were over a five year period.
 - Mr. Cable explained that the current program allows for \$25K funding per unit, and an increase in available funding per unit would be merited in order to leverage 4% LITHC projects as costs continue to increase in the area. He explained a larger commitment would be required for these projects to move forward.
 - Comm. Sloan asked what the current homeowner program is. Mr. Cable explained it was typically Habitat for Humanity, MHO, and the Asheville-Buncombe Community Land Trust. Mr. Cable added the county has both offered loans as well as down payment assistance to homeowners. Comm. Sloan if it was typically single family units, or if denser types of units have been included. Mr. Cable mentioned a recent AAHH project at Curry Road which uses duplexes.
 - Chair Newman commented that the option 3 presented to him was appealing in order to address the scale of what was required. He added that this type of effort can help communities from losing ground, and added that the added efforts of area partners could greatly enhance available affordable housing opportunities. Finally, Chair Newman expressed interest in leveraging county owned land to push for more housing. Mr. Mayronne encouraged the committee to continue to pay attention to mobile home parks.
 - Comm. Edwards asked for more information on the efforts from PODER Emma.
 - Comm. Sloan asked how the numbers were calculated for goals. Mr. Cable explained the numbers reflect built and occupied units.
 - Comm. Edwards asked whether it made more sense to look beyond the 5 year period. The staff believed that yes it should be, but that for the moment a set window was helpful.
 - Comm. Edwards asked whether wages should also explored in this committee as well, as they represent the other element of the affordable housing situation.
 - Comm. Sloan commented the committee should look at having a voucher goal as well.
 - Chair Newman asked whether there are strategies involving existing and aging affordable housing projects. Mr. Mayronne explained there are ongoing conversations about preserving existing units through rehabilitation.
 - The committee expressed support for a senior housing goal.
 - Chair Newman asked for information on the number of homes and businesses impacted in BC by Urban Renewal, and how to leverage other goals involving reparations into the current

AH goals process. Chair Newman further asked if the monies involved in homeownership would be recouped, for example through a sale or as a subordinate lender.

Next Steps

- Comm. Edwards asked for feedback from Finance regarding an affordable housing bond.
- Chair Newman asked for further information regarding the utilization of public land for affordable housing in the area.

Announcements

Public Comment

- Public comment – no public comment was received prior to the meeting.
- Public comments received via Zoom text were shared with the committee. Messages were received from Scott Dedman, Jessie Figueroa, Greg Borom, Margie Bukowski, Cassidy Moore.

Adjourn

- The committee adjourned at 2:58.

Documents

- Presentation
- September 7, 2021 Minutes