

ORANGE COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY BOARD

Minutes

August 31, 2015, 6:00 PM

Southern Human Services Center
Conference Room D
2501 Homestead Road
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Members Present: Jean Bolduc, Chair; Mark Marcoplos, Evelyn Johann, Daniel Bullock and Tammy Jacobs

Members Absent: Diane Beecham, Vice Chair (Excused)

Others Present: Gina James, Jeremy Hawkins, News of Orange County, Nate Broman-Fulks, Assistant to Town Manager-Carrboro

Staff Present: Audrey Spencer-Horsley, Director, Department of Housing, Human Rights and Community Development and Angela Rockett, Administrative Assistant

Welcome/Introduction

The meeting was called to order at 6:09 PM by Jean Bolduc, Chair. Jean Bolduc welcomed Gina James to the meeting who is a Board applicant as a Resident member. She welcomed other guests in attendance. Audrey Spencer-Horsley introduced Angela Rockett, the new Administrative Assistant in the Department's Chapel location (County's Southern Human Service Center).

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the May 20, 2015 and June 24, 2015 meetings were approved unanimously on a motion by Mark Marcoplos and seconded by Daniel Bullock.

Public Hearing- Annual and Five Year Plans

Jean Bolduc opened the Public Hearing and Audrey Spencer-Horsley provided an overview of the Annual and Five Year Plans required by HUD for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program. She highlighted the goals that had been included and or revised in the Plans as discussed at the previous meetings. The goals included becoming a High Performer under SEMAP, initiating a pilot and establishing a self-sufficiency program and increasing the number of HCV homeowners. Additional goals were providing support to obtain a strong Resident Advisory Board, an aggressive landlord campaign for landlords with incentives, educating tenants on finding and maintaining units and increasing affordable housing opportunities.

Public Hearing- Annual and Five Year Plans (continued)

Audrey Spencer-Horsley mentioned that we are currently organizing a Resident Advisory Board. The organizational meeting was August 12, 2015. She stated that the feedback was good. She summarized that the meeting included discussion about campaigning to get more landlords and provide training for tenants on how to search for housing and how to communicate with landlords. There was also the suggestion to put more information on the website for landlords.

Mark Marcoplos asked if people apply for Housing Rehabilitation. Audrey explained that the County through funding from the State Finance Agency has a small rehabilitation program that provided for three to four houses. She said the Department advertised and interested persons could submit applications which far exceed who can be assisted. She estimated there was over 30 applications. She also stated that the State has very specific rehabilitation requirements and it is a challenge to find properties that fit. Qualifying can be hard because most houses are only allowed \$45,000 and often the work needed to bring the property up to code far exceeds that amount. Mark discussed how construction can be expensive. Audrey stated that maybe the Board of Commissioners can supplement some of the cost to assist more people under this Program.

Audrey said the County also has an Urgent Repair Program funded by the County for limited repairs for owner households that are elderly and or disabled. She said requests far exceed the funding and resources for that Program as well. Evelyn Johann asked if the purpose of the program is to keep people in their home. She said yes that is one of the primary objectives. Audrey explained that repairs include roof repairs and ramps for example.

Jean Bolduc asked if there were any further questions or comments regarding the Annual and Five Year Plans; and there were none. Audrey Spencer-Horsley stated that the Plans would be submitted to HUD for approval upon signature by the Chair. Jean Bolduc closed the Public Hearing. A motion to approve the Annual and Five Year Plans was made by Mark Marcoplos and seconded by Evelyn Johann and was unanimously approved.

HAP/Budget Review

Audrey Spencer-Horsley presented the financial report. She reviewed with the Board the VMS HUD report and answered questions. She said that at least 34 port-ins have been absorbed. She stated that HUD has had questions about lease up being down. She said that they have asked for additional information and she has responded to all HUD's concerns and described the plans being implemented to improve the numbers for lease up. Participants use to have four months to look for housing, they now have sixty days, but they can ask for an extension... Tammy Jacobs wanted to know why the change from four months to sixty days and Audrey explained that trying to streamline as much as possible the lease up process and time. There was discussion about the number of vouchers on the street and the total HUD budget.

Department Updates

Audrey Spencer-Horsley stated that Gina James who is a prospective resident member for the OCHA Board and with the Boards consensus her application will be submitted for appointment.

The county manager offered to help with transportation for any HCV residents to attend the Resident Advisory Board meetings.

Audrey discussed possibly adding portals to our Elite software program that will make it more user friendly.

There was discussion about landlords and the inspection process and providing some type of incentives and the possibility of forming a Landlord's Group. Jean Bolduc suggested doing a survey through Survey Monkey to get feedback about likes and dislikes. Audrey stated that she had some sample surveys. It was also discussed how to get rid of the myths about affordable housing and the HCV Program. It was suggested to have some type of Q&A online to dispel myths.

Gina James wanted to know how most units pass inspections. Audrey-Spencer-Horsley explained that the inspectors have HUD HQS standards that they use when they inspect the units. Audrey Spencer-Horsley stated that they meet HQ standards, but the Authority may want to consider higher standards. Jean Bolduc suggested we could possibly create a newsletter.

Audrey briefed the Board on purging of the waiting list. She said the response rate was low due likely to how long it has been since the list was updated. We have approximately two hundred responses so far and four hundred of the cards mailed came back due to improper addresses. This means that the waiting list will need to be opened.

We now have a billboard encouraging more landlords at the intersection of Hwy 70 and 86 in Hillsborough. The billboard is asking for more landlords.

The County Attorney responded to the OCHA Board questions concerning the Bylaws. He noted that the Authority operates differently from the other volunteer boards. He will be going to the Board of Commissioners to suggest changes that reflect this difference along with a few other Boards that fall under the same category as the OCHA Board.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Angela Rockett, Administrative Assistant
Audrey Spencer-Horsley, Director, Housing, Human Rights & Community Development
OCHA Board Secretary