

Housing Work Group 2
January 9, 2012 1:00 – 3:30 p.m. at Carol Woods
Meeting Minutes

Attendance:

Rebecca Woodruff	Tara Fikes	Ed Flowers
Mary Fraser	Dorothy Anderson	Michael Harvey
Katherine Leith	Doug Mendenhall	LaTanya Davis
Janice Tyler	Michael Parker	Charlotte Terwilliger
Robert Dowling	Pete Langan	Jackie Thompson
Susan Levy	Mae McLendon	
Steve Lackey	Paul Klever	

1. Rebecca Woodruff gave a an abbreviated version of the introductory powerpoint presentation summarizing:
 - a. Overview of Master Aging Plan
 - b. Committee and work group structure
 - c. 8 state goals guiding Master Aging Plan
 - d. Overview of five work group meetings
 - e. Re-cap of Meeting 1
2. Loryn Clark, Neighborhood and Community Services Manager at the Chapel Hill Police Department briefed the group on the Chapel Hill Affordable Housing Strategy.
 - This plan intended to give lots of consideration to performance measures.
 - Goal 1f of the plan is to “Support the ability for senior citizens to age-in-place or transition to affordable housing within the community.”
 - The group responsible for this plan is open to input about how to achieve goal 1f.
 - An update will be provided to the council on January 23rd.
 - This group is interested in building single room occupancy apartments, duplexes, triplexes, multi-family housing, single-family dwellings.
 - If developers are interested in building new properties, they would come through planning and town council.
3. Michael Harvey, from the Orange County Planning Department briefed the group on the Orange County Consolidated Plan.
 - Orange County Consolidated Plan includes goals, practices, policies for promoting a wide variety and high-density of growth in municipalities, along the highway 70 corridor, and at designated nodes at historic crossroads (e.g. White Cross and 54, Little River, Carr Stone) through 2030.
 - Building in Orange County is limited by the availability and provision of services (sewer, water) as well as the soil quality and high clay content of the soil that impedes septic functioning. Additionally, Northern Orange is protected by the Board of County Commissioners to preserve a rural way of life and guaranteed land for small farms.
 - This plan was a cooperative effort with Chapel Hill, Carrboro, Hillsborough, Mebane, but those towns do their own planning and implementation of plans.
 - Efficiency apartments (aka “grannie flats”) are legal inside of houses, attached to houses or detached from houses as long as they have sufficient septic and well water

- and are not over 800 square feet. Efficiencies cannot be rented, but enforcing this regulation may not be a departmental priority of the Orange County Planning Department. Modular kits can be purchased and constructed as efficiencies, but trailer homes cannot be used. Several companies sell affordable modular building spaces, and Michael can direct the housing work group to such resources.
- Square footage allowance for efficiencies may be able to be changed, but the square footage cannot be so high that it becomes a single-family residence. If the work group tries to increase the square footage requirement, it would have to go to a public hearing and would take 4-6 months.
 - In the past year, 40 such efficiencies have been developed in Orange County and have gone through the permitting process to ensure they comply with building codes.
 - Highway 85 runs through the rural buffer zone district, which has the most strict development codes in the county. Intended to serve as a suburban zone to separate urban Chapel Hill and rural Orange County to prevent sprawl. Changes to allowable density on that land and lot sizes is not realistic. No water and sewer will be available in the rural buffer.
 - Heritage Hills, the location of Charles House's family care home, is within the Carrboro corporate and extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) district but also within Orange County's jurisdiction. Water/sewer is available in parts of this area.
4. Tara Fikes, Director of the Orange County Department of Housing and Community Development briefed the group on the Orange County HOME Consortium Action Plan.
- 5 year plan.
 - Goal 3, Priority 3.2 advocates for a continuum of care for special needs populations, including older adults. Strategies identified in the plan are to promote and make funds available to agencies that serve identified special populations, continue to strengthen partnership with local service providers, support the application of federal housing funds, and provide property acquisition funding to eligible non-profits and for-profits to develop permanent housing for those with special needs. The output indicator for this priority is to build 10 additional permanent housing units for those with special needs.
 - One use of this plan is that if an attempt is made to use federal funds, the project need must be included in the consolidated plan to ensure the consistency of programs and services.
 - Congressional appropriations are anticipated to have halved the HOME funds for the coming year.
 - There is no existing plan for the 10 additional housing units mentioned in priority 3.2 for older adults, but some is being built for people with disabilities.
 - The county does not develop housing. This plan is used to attract private developers, like nonprofits, who can be awarded federal funds.
5. Group Discussion of the Matrix
- Michael Parker advocated for accounting for housing options outside of Orange County, especially housing developments just outside the county borders. Many Orange County residents move across the county borders to other housing options, like Emerald Pond in Durham. There may be a reservoir of housing options just across the border because of a better business climate.

- Robert Dowling commented that many of the people who have the ability to move may have resources at their disposal, and the low-income residents of Orange County may be a priority group for this plan, since they may not be able to relocate across county borders.
- Michael Parker suggested including higher-income brackets in the housing matrix because even if an older adult has resources available to them, they may move into assisted living and quickly spend down their personal savings moving them into lower income brackets. He also questioned whether there are adequate options for higher income people (e.g. 10 year wait list for Carol Woods).
- Tara Fikes suggested that MAP may be an opportunity to talk about what we mean by affordability – the term may include everyone, but we may focus our attention on a specific group.

6. Sub-group discussions

Owned/rental housing stock notes (e.g. single occupancy units, grannie flats, Habitat's building project)

- Members: Rebecca Woodruff, Susan Levy, Robert Dowling, Dorothy Anderson, Mae McLendon.
- It will be difficult to use the matrix as a reliable and accurate baseline for this group since efficiencies aren't consistently reported, information about low-income older adults living in apartment complexes is hard to find.
- It is unclear whether places like Carolina Spring or Eno Haven fall within this housing category since (1) they are funded through tax subsidies programs, (2) it is an age-restricted location, and (3) structured, scheduled activities are offered, but meals/healthcare are not. (Note: Rebecca later spoke with Mary Fraser and confirmed that places like Carolina Spring and Eno Haven will fall under sub-group 2's area.)
- There was a consensus among the group that more places like Carolina Spring were needed in the county that offer safety, no burden associated with housework/maintenance, community, etc.
- More single-room occupancy apartments are needed that will not be competed for by students in Chapel Hill.

Subsidized congregate housing sub-committee notes

Members: Ed Flowers, Steve Lackey, Tara Fikes, Pete Langan, Paul Klever, Latonya Davis, Charlotte Terwilliger, Jackie Thompson

We discussed the types of housing subsidies available to the county and put them into 3 major categories:

Public housing/HUD 202/Section 8 vouchers – mostly federal funds

Special Assistance payments to Assisted Living and Family Care Homes – Fed/state funds

Tax Credits – Federal funding controlled by the state

The need and barriers to expand all of these resources was discussed. Strategies to expand/reduce barriers could fall into several categories: change local policy or land use restrictions, get BOCC to advocate for more state/federal funds and/or for expanding

low-income eligibility criteria, create new options (e.g., pass congregate housing regulation requiring 15% affordable housing set-aside, find new sources of funding support for co-housing options, etc.).

Homework Assignment:

Select one of the 3 categories above and come up with some solutions or advocacy initiatives that could expand its availability to older adults with low and moderate income. Investigate the barriers and facilitating factors associated with the initiative's potential for success. A work sheet is attached for your use.

During Meeting 3, we will discuss these initiatives as a group, further refining the opportunities for fruitful action.

Non-Subsidized Congregate Housing Sub-Group Notes:

Participants: Michael Harvey, Janice Tyler, Michael Parker, Doug Mendenhall

The perception is that Carol Woods is too expensive and has too long a waiting list since it's about 10 yrs. This causes them to go outside OC - such as to Twin Lakes in Burlington, etc. The Cedars is in Durham County and is a real estate investment. Also, in general, most CCRCs (Continuing Care Retirement Communities) want people's health to be such that they are expected to live independently for a given period of time.

The entrance fee for Carol Woods for a studio apt is about \$79,000 plus \$2,400 a month. However, the initial fee can vary based on one's age and the fact that they will use the services for a longer period of time (ex 75 yr old vs a 85 yr old). Their services are bundled (include meals, cleaning, health, etc). The refundability declines at 2% a month over 50 months. Carol Woods has 17 different plans.

How can the need be identified? Are there any general figures on the number of beds a given population would need/like similar to how the number of needed hospital beds are calculated? Janice suggested that someone in the NC Division of Aging might know.

What is available in OC? What are the available resources, and what's the perception of them? Education is needed - it takes 6-12 mon to get approval for a project in OC

What is the true need?

What are the deficiencies? What's the best way to fix them? What are the barriers?

In general, it's very expensive to live in OC due in part to the cost of real estate and to taxes (which are the highest in the state)

There are many people who would like to live in OC, but their resources are too high for subsidized housing, and too low for a CCRC.