

Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Regional Housing Advisory Committee

Lower Columbia CAP – Altrusa Room

June 22, 2011

1:30 – 3:00 p.m.

Meeting Summary

Present:

Ilona Kerby
Pam Howe
Jeanne Hollatz
Zach Kittleson
Jack Reilly
Pat Reilly
Melissa Taylor

Representing:

Lower Columbia CAP
LifeWorks
Cowlitz Habitat for Humanity
PATH/Lower Columbia Mental Health
City of Castle Rock
Castle Rock
CWCOG

Absent:

Jack Keolker
Bill Hallanger
Julie Hourcle´
Sheila Thomas
Jerry Sivil
George Robertson
Mike Kerins
Chris Pegg

Kelso, Chair
Rodman Realty, Vice Chair
City of Longview
City of Kalama
Drug Abuse Prevention Center
FISH
City of Kelso
Longview Housing Authority

I. Call to Order & Introductions

In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair, Melissa called the meeting to order at 1:38 p.m. Attendees introduced themselves.

II. Changes to Agenda

None.

III. Approve Meeting Summary –May 25, 2011

This item was deferred until the next monthly meeting.

IV. New Business

A. Emergency Needs & Housing Support Program

Melissa Taylor distributed a summary of the new Emergency Needs & Housing Support legislation provided by Dean Takko and slides from a recent community planning meeting regarding this new program. Program guidelines and requirements will be developed in July, with counties getting some indication of the projected caseload and funding amount during that

time. Applications from counties will be due in September and the program will need to be up and running by November 1st.

There was some discussion regarding the housing options that would be available when the total benefit available for housing will be around \$198 per person per month. The law does have a hold harmless clause for local programs in regards to housing condition in recognition of the difficulty in housing someone for that low cost. Some people on GAU are now sharing an RV with other people. Similar arrangements might be common for people on the old GAU/new Disability Lifeline/newer Housing & Essential Needs program. Medical care will be part of the coverage for certain populations. Toiletries and other hygiene supplies is also part of the new law and funds will be provided. Jack Reilly mentioned that the hygiene kits he and Pat have been putting together for over a year now are still be distributed through CAP. He suggested that be listed in the Homeless Resource Guide.

V. Unfinished Business

A. Vulnerable Populations Emergency Plan – Review of Strategies

Melissa reviewed the highlights of the strategies from the Vulnerable Populations Emergency Plan and asked for additional input and comments. Jack Reilly suggested that we identify peer helpers who could help folks who are homeless during a disaster as part of the training effort mentioned in the plan. There were no other comments and the group indicated consensus with the strategies as presented.

B. Maple Terrace Project Review Comments

Melissa explained that a state SEPA environmental review checklist was recently received by the Council of Governments. She relayed the information from the checklist regarding housing impacts of the new Allied Health Services Building. The checklist was triggered by the request for a demolition permit for Maple Terrace Apartments and a rezone request for the project site. This project will result in the demolition of Maple Terrace Apartments for the parking area associated with the new building. She asked the group for any comments they would consider incorporating into the SEPA response.

In response to an inquiry, Melissa stated that the city of Longview had a gap of 250 housing units available to those at the lowest income range when the Consolidated Plan was completed in 2009. Since that time, the city has lost almost another 250 units, with the closure of River City Mobile Home Park and Maple Terrace. While home prices have declined due to the current housing market, rental prices have not experienced a similar decline, likely due to the mortgages that were refinanced during the housing bubble. She added that Longview Housing Authority has referenced a waiting list of 5 years for Longview. There are no preferences available for people who are involuntarily displaced from their housing.

There was discussion regarding the need for up-front community discussions about housing impacts whenever local projects result in loss of the affordable housing stock. Ilona Kerby suggested that legislation similar to that for the closure of mobile home parks might be worth pursuing, as that law requires a one-year notice of closure for tenants, who are likely to be low income and have fewer resources for relocation. Purchase of an affordable apartment complex should have some sort of review process prior to purchase and conversion to higher-income housing. The group requested information regarding current HUD income guidelines and Fair Market Rents for our area.

It was suggested that the affordable housing gap be included in the comments, and that the city track the gains and losses in its affordable housing inventory each year and over the long-term.

C. Regional Housing Plan

Melissa distributed a worksheet that listed all of the policies and strategies from the 2007 Regional Housing Plan, along with their level of priority (which was developed by the Housing Advisory Committee and adopted by the County). She added in codes to indicate which policies or strategies had been the topic of this group's discussion over the past year or two, those which related to the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness, and those which were related to financial support for affordable housing. Some of these included all three indicators, along with a "high" priority ranking. The group decided to focus on these and selected three areas of focus for the Committee in future meetings:

- Assist in identifying, obtaining and leveraging funding sources for the acquisition, rehabilitation and development of affordable housing;
- Expand availability of improvements for accessibility, weatherization, and sanitation/safety improvements;
- Preserve/conservate the existing affordable housing stock

Jeanne Hollatz talked about the importance of partnerships in reaching these goals. She referenced the local Love, Inc. chapter and Brush with Kindness Program as efforts by Cowlitz Habitat for Humanity to assist people with essential home repairs. Jack Reilly indicated that the Lions Club in Castle Rock might be available to assist with construction of accessibility ramps.

VI. Roundtable Discussion & Updates

Jeanne Hollatz – Habitat is working with two new families to build housing in the 100 block of 17th Avenue. .

Ilona Kerby – CAP is looking to start their second housing development for self-help housing in Castle Rock, near the church.

VII. Set Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be **Wednesday, July 27th** at 1:30 PM in the Altrusa Room at CAP.

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.