

MINUTES
10x10 Blue Ribbon Affordable Housing Meeting
Thursday, November 8, 4:00 p.m.
Fresno City Hall, 3rd Floor, Meeting Room 3054

Committee Members Present: Cynthia Sterling, Fresno City Council District 3 (Co-Chair)
Keith Bergthold, City of Fresno, (Chair)
Michael Sigala, City of Fresno
Sara Hedgpeth-Harris, League of Woman Voters
Rev. Sharon Stanley, FIRM
Dennis Woods, United Security Bank
Jess Negrete, Central California Legal Services

Others Present: Charlotte Hylton, Deputy City Attorney
Pam Kallsen, Fresno Madera Continuum of Care
Tony Miranda, Habitat for Humanity
Dave Martin, Redevelopment Agency
Karana Hattersley-Drayton, City of Fresno
Leslie Gacad, City of Fresno
Tamala Fields, Center for Independent Living
Bonnie Rusko, Center for Independent Living
Tara Huff, CSUF
T. Jazmin Serrano, CSUF

Members Absent
Veda Stamps, The Ramsay Group

- A. Call to Order**
Meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m. by Council Member Cynthia Sterling
- B. Introductions**
Attendees introduced themselves.
- C. Approval of Minutes**
Minutes from August 30th, 2007. Cynthia Sterling moved to approve the minutes, Sharon Stanley seconded, and the motion was approved.
- D. Presentation about Demolition Permits**
Karana Hattersley-Drayton provided a presentation regarding demolition permits. Many houses that are set for demolition may be re-used, and resources can be saved by not approving these demolition permits. Karana advocated for the implementation of Receivership Programs. A receivership program entails taking the property from the owner due to public health and safety risks. The property is then cleaned up and resold.

Karana presented on three properties as examples. Two of the three examples are occupied. Karana said that residents are generally reluctant to sell.

Sharon Stanley asked where properties with perpetual code violations are sent, and what the process is. Charlotte Hylton, City Attorney's office, said that the properties go to the City Attorney's office. She said that generally, if it's not cost prohibitive, it goes to demolition. She stated that we currently do not have a receivership program in place, and a new program would depend on finding people willing to become receivers.

Karana stated that demolition is a tough process because it takes housing away from residents when there are other options. She stated that rehabilitation is an alternate option. She's arranging the pieces to put a receivership program into action.

E. New Financing Strategies: Housing Trust Fund Update(s)

Cynthia Sterling reported that the City of Fresno, Housing Trust Fund Ordinance was passed by the City Council on Tuesday, November 6, 2007. Michael Sigala identified the next step as putting out a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) to the public. He stated that the group needs to come up with additional criteria, such as identifying priority projects. Criteria may include: project readiness, consistency with current projects, consistency with the general plan, etc. Michael Sigala stated that activity for this program will move forward within the next six weeks.

Next steps for developing the housing trust fund were presented to the committee, including the following issues: how to increase the outreach and revenue streams for HTF?; possibly setting aside \$30,000 for outreach; how to create momentum and awareness locally?; if members had comments or feedback as to how to proceed, or if they think a committee could work, suggestions are welcome. A consultant may be used. Cynthia Sterling asked what the process will be to stabilize the trust and make it grow. She asked if it should be required to go to City Council every year for funds. She stated that this may get lost in Council turnover. She would like to leave it in Housing and Community Development Division for long-term consistency. The City Council will consider \$250,000 per year, as per the language of the Housing Trust Fund Ordinance. The Housing Trust Fund will start in the 2009 fiscal year.

Cynthia Sterling asked Michael Sigala how we could take it out of the city and into a place where it can be safeguarded and gain interest. She stated that the committee should be prepared if funds get lean in the future, with staff turnover, this would protect the funds from being diverted to a different cause. She said that if we give proper authority to this group (10x10) we can grow the fund to several million. Dennis further explained that taking the funds out of the City will protect the funds that have been earmarked for HTF's from being spent by the city through reallocation to other projects. Cynthia Sterling said that setting up a committee is a possibility, and it could be staffed when we add new members. We need to think about our existing committees and the best way to approach handling the Housing Trust Fund, either through reusing an existing committee or creating a new one.

Sara Hedgpeth-Harris is interested in getting the Fresno Housing Alliance involved in a subcommittee for the Housing Trust Fund. Dennis Woods stated that it needs to earn interest.

Keith Bergthold motioned to charge the finance subcommittee with taking the \$30,000 and creating a plan for leveraging it into \$2 million in two years, and to recommend a use for where the existing \$500,000 funds should be held. It was moved by Keith Bergthold

and seconded by Sharon Stanley. It was approved by the quorum with seven ayes and zero nays.

E. Review of 10 x 10 Subcommittee Matrix Timeline:

Keith Bergthold stated that the Housing Trust Fund Ordinance has been passed but it has not been implemented, and that we are on our way to implementing it. We have not addressed wage issues such as prevailing wage. Adopting a community plan has been attempted and rejected. Keith Bergthold said we are going to try again.

Sara Hedgpeth-Harris suggested creating a countywide consortium of various housing stakeholders to work on implementing the housing trust fund, similar to the structure of Rollie's regional fund, the San Joaquin Valley Affordable Communities Initiative (SJV-ACI). Sara said that it would also be a way of coming together to lobby in Sacramento for funding.

Cynthia Sterling added that we have talked to our lobbyist about what we can do to access Sacramento funds. She stated that in order to obtain federal and state funding we have to have a shelf-ready project, and we don't have any shelf-ready projects. Sara Hedgpeth-Harris said that these policies in Sacramento are discriminatory because the San Joaquin Valley doesn't receive funding that is comparable to the bay area, and the points for project readiness work against the valley. She added that policy at the state level needs to change, and she asked the group how we can influence the legislative process to change the criteria for project readiness.

Cynthia Sterling responded by saying that current legislation hasn't been set up that firmly yet. Sara Hedgpeth-Harris said that legislation is set up to give more points for Transit Oriented Development, density and other items to large metropolitan areas. She added that as a valley, we need points for issues that are unique to our area; we're rural, and criteria discriminates against us. Sharon Stanley asked how we are proactively linking with resources like Rollie and his initiative (SJV-ACI), as a 10x10 committee. That kind of outreach can become a vehicle for establishing projects that meet the criteria.

Michael Sigala gave an update on funds for proposition 1C. He said that half of the funds went to existing programs in proposition 46, and half of the funds went to new programs, whose guidelines were set by outside forces. He cited an example where legislation required 30 units per acre. That disqualifies many current projects in the valley. Keith summarized that this is a policy issue. Keith suggested we go to the housing and land use work group of the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley. Jose Luis Barazza said that most big cities siphon off most of the funds. Cynthia Sterling said that this is why this committee needs to continue – so that we can strategize for future growth and policy decisions. She suggested that this committee identify a stair step plan for becoming more involved in the policy work for the valley. Sharon said we need a consistent system for conveying information, such as using a combination of city staff and this committee.

Pam Kallsen with the Fresno Madera Continuum of Care said that we need to organize and create a master plan, to prove credibility and establish some shelf-ready projects. Cynthia Sterling added that we could help agencies coordinate, especially agencies that serve a specific area, to share resources and avoid duplicating services.

With regard to organizing and creating a master plan, we can work to identify which housing groups are out there, and invite them to come out here to these meetings. Mary Chaisson said that we need a policy committee that coordinates housing and homelessness and policy. Cynthia Sterling said that we should look at water, agriculture, and other issues as well.

Sara Hedgpeth-Harris asked who is responsible for acquiring funds for this. Keith Bergthold asked if we can work with the CA Partnership. Keith Bergthold would be the point person for connecting with the Partnership. Cynthia Sterling asked if we can bring the partnership to these meetings. Keith Bergthold asked if there is a study that talks about this issue of points as being discriminatory towards the San Joaquin Valley. He then asked if we can send someone to talk to Ashley Swearingen. He stated that this is a goal of the committee, and that we need to identify allies and see how we can get this partnership/alliance building work done for policy change.

Jess Negrete said that we need access to the policy makers with the power to have an influence. We need to organize together by pulling in people from the community and from City departments, to increase our power and influence to get attention to this issue. Cynthia Sterling said she will work harder to get things done within City departments, including the Mayor.

Michael Sigala, Keith Bergthold and Cynthia Sterling volunteered to work with the Fresno-Madera continuum of care to identify strategies. Sara Hedgpeth-Harris suggested that we could contact Alyson Williams as a next step for connecting to the California Partnership. Keith Bergthold added that every member of this committee needs to have a project. Cynthia Sterling and Sara Hedgpeth-Harris both suggested that we pull Alyson Williams into this committee. Sharon recommended putting her on the finance subcommittee.

Cynthia suggested tabling the matrix update to move on to new members. Sara said that she will agree as long as we have a system for following up to the matrix and making sure that everything gets done. Keith said that he'll have a status meeting with Michael to establish next steps. Sharon said that we need to rely more on the committees, and less on city staff. Committee chairs can be utilized to have more responsibility. Sharon Stanley said that we should be realistic about workloads. Tony Miranda suggested we identify the areas where we need help. Sara Hedgpeth-Harris said we need to assign people to each point on the matrix. Cynthia Sterling said we need to start here and organize here. We need to start empowering each other to be successful. We need to bring everyone to the table (committees). Keith Bergthold said we need to connect to what's already going on and we can partner with various local groups. In the smart growth report from the city, which included the Southeast Growth Area (SEGA), the thesis was that a higher density platform is needed to begin establishing affordable housing. The SEGA project is a mixed-use project, with transit-oriented development. There's reason to be optimistic and not be beaten down by slow bureaucratic responses.

F. Discussion of New Members for the 10x10 Blue Ribbon Committee

Cynthia Sterling asked how we should approach this. Sara Hedgpeth-Harris suggested we begin with department heads. Jess Negrete said we should follow the original process of obtaining more people. Sara Hedgpeth-Harris said the Mayor appointed people, and that maybe that would engage more people. Michael Sigala suggested we remove names

from the committee of people who are no longer attending meetings. Keith Berthgold said that the Mayor and the Council should know about this. He suggested the Regional Jobs Initiative, the Chamber of Commerce, the EDC, the Ca Partnership, Habitat for Humanity, The SJV-ACI, Continuum of Care, Fresno COG with the SJV Regional Blueprint, and banks/CRA. Dennis Woods added that he's not sure we need a banker because we don't need private financing.

Keith Bergthold said that we have the Fresno Redevelopment Agency. We can have agencies evaluate. We need to give agencies a specific role, otherwise we'll lose them. Sharon Stanley said that committees can put the work of 10x10 on the radar of key agencies in the community.

Cynthia Sterling said that we'll send a letter of introduction to 10x10 members and make plans to go to Sacramento if necessary. Sharon Stanley said we should have committees start meeting once a month. Tony Miranda said we need to remind committee chairs of this expectation.

Sara Hedgpeth-Harris said we need to have a representative from the homeless community, someone who is actually homeless. Cynthia Sterling is working with Art Dyson, who has a phenomenal plan for working with homeless without waiting on administration.

G. Commissioner Items

Agenda item not addressed.

H. Public Comments/Announcements

No comments.

Meeting adjourned at 5:36 PM by Councilmember Cynthia Sterling.

Next meeting: December 13, 2007.