



DRAFT

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON HOUSING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 4, 2021
SAM KING ROOM
4:30 P.M.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Wendy Davis (Chair), Bill Temple, Walt Busby, Hannah Phillips, Taylor Ritchie, Sherrell Smith, Brian Spears, Devon Smyth, Harry Brock, Allison Watters, Brooks Mathis, Carol Hatch, Ryan Earnest, Maia Santamaria (Zoom)

OTHERS PRESENT:

Craig McDaniel, Jamie Doss, Bill Collins (Zoom), Sammy Rich, Artagus Newell, Brittany Griffin, Bekki Fox, Chris Jenkins, Toni Rhinehart (Zoom), Mike Hackett (Zoom), John Boyd (Zoom), Doug Walker, Pam Powers-Smith, Jim Givens, Charlie Williams, Matt Harper, Chris Forino, Ivy Lowery, Missy Kendrick, Charles Love, Thom Holt, Terri Morgan, John Druckenmiller (Zoom), Shawn Tolan (Zoom), Sandy McGrew (Zoom)

Chairperson Davis welcomed everyone to the meeting and the minutes of the April 14th meeting were approved by unanimous consent. It was discussed that the number of single housing units available, approximately 100, were currently on the market with 31 of those units falling between the \$100,000-\$250,000 range. This led to discussion focusing on how to best define “workforce housing”. Davis reminded everyone that it was determined that 65% of the city population and 57% of the county population was at a household income of \$50,000 and below. Brock stated that the term “workforce housing” could be confusing and suggested a term and definition of the term be created and that retirees should be included as well. It was agreed that the terms “affordable housing” could be misconstrued as well; the terms middle market housing and mixed income were suggested, but no consensus or decision was made. The group moved to discussion of the desired range of housing prices to be considered “workforce housing”. Sherrell Smith stated that she felt there is a huge need for housing in the \$150,000 and below range. Walt Busby asked what she envisioned the product built for that price would be like. She stated that a standard home with the basics would be sufficient, much like the homes built through Community Development programs and that several abandoned homes throughout the city could be renovated. Bill Temple stated that it was important to provide a blend of remodeled properties and new housing inventory available to attract new industry. Brooks Mathis stated that affordable rentals are also not available for young professionals and he feels that more one-bedroom apartments are needed with a monthly rental closer to the \$800/month rate. Hannah Phillips stated that the NWGHA has applied for a grant that will allow them to offer incentives and sign on bonuses to landlords to participate in their program which would potentially add to available housing. Commissioner Watters asked what the mission of public housing was – Phillips responded that their goal was to promote self-sufficiency to exit out of the program. She agreed that there is a lack of affordable transition housing for people to move to.

Davis suggested infill house builds would receive higher incentives than houses built with price tags closer to the \$250,000 maximum threshold amount that they were discussing. Brock agreed, stating infill lot builds should receive a much higher incentive. Devon Smyth asked what steps could be taken to utilize abandoned properties in the city for new housing. Brock stated that the Land Bank Authority is tackling that issue and is looking to work on clearing more titles so that properties can be sold for the purpose of building new houses on the lots. Taylor Ritchie asked about non-traditional housing options like repurposing empty buildings for homes or micro apartments, etc. Maia Santamaria stated that people with disabilities and limited income cannot afford rentals or housing in our community even at the amounts being discussed in the meeting. Smyth added that residents of the shelter have no available options of affordable housing after they leave their program. She mentioned that other communities are providing smaller, cluster homes for these needed transition homes. Carol Hatch added that she has found that the community is lacking in one-bedroom rental opportunities. Davis summed up by saying that this discussion reiterated the fact that the community must have more options of all types. The final consensus was that the price threshold to receive potential building incentives would be set at a maximum of \$250,000 for new houses and \$1,200/month for rental houses.

Matt Harper stated that builders need places to build, and that not all builders want to build on infill lots. Several builders and developers added that the lack of available sewer and water lines would make it impossible to meet all the needs of the housing crisis. Brock asked the builders to state their biggest impediment to new construction – 5 stated lack of sewer lines available and/or cost of extending sewer lines. Ivy Lowery stated the escalating cost of building materials was her biggest impediment. Brian Spears mentioned that the area on 411, east of Chulio Road, would be a great area for development if there were available sewer lines. Rich answered by saying that was currently in discussion. Allison Watters mentioned that she would like to see some of the Covid relief funds be used towards infrastructure.

Rich updated the group on the changes that are currently being made to the ULDC in the interim while the rewrite of the document - removing minimum lot size requirements, allowing accessory dwelling units, multi-units/cluster options. Davis added that there is also discussion of changing restrictions on townhouses. These immediate changes will be beneficial to address housing needs rather than waiting on the rewrite of the ULDC to be completed. The committee was in agreement regarding the changes.

The next meeting will be held on May 17th at 4:30 p.m. and the group will discuss possible incentive options. Chairperson Davis adjourned the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelley Parker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kelley Parker
Executive Assistant, City Manager's Office