



MEMORANDUM

Date: December 1, 2008
To: SWRPA Housing Committee
From: Benjamin Henson
Re: Housing Committee Meeting Summary – Tuesday, November 18, 2008

This is a summary of the November 18, 2008 Housing Committee meeting. Committee Co-Chair Anna Duleep called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM. Present were co-Chairs Anna Duleep and Paul Settlemeyer, Tony Lopez, Dudley Williams and Margaret Wirtenberg. Floyd Lapp and Benjamin Henson of SWRPA were also present.

Mr. Benjamin Henson presented the summary of the October 7 meeting. The summary was approved by the committee.

SWRPA prepared its response to the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD)'s Draft Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) Action Plan. The Action Plan is being prepared by the State for submission to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Its approval is necessary for the State to receive its share (\$25,043,385) of the available \$3.92 billion. Comments included in SWRPA's response focused on the definition of "affordable rents"; lack of penalty for maintaining compliance with affordability, eligibility and verification requirements; and unrealistic demolition and redevelopment performance measures. Mr. Paul Settlemeyer pointed out that the concerns regarding the definition of "affordable rents" should be mirrored by SWRPA's Legislative Committee and perhaps discussed at the annual legislative breakfast. Mr. Settlemeyer asked if DECP planned on monitoring affordable units created by the NSP and how the Action Plan addressed long-term administration. Mr. Henson pointed out that the Action Plan requires sub-recipients (municipalities) to outline administration plans.

Mr. Henson opened discussion of the 2009 Housing Summit. He asked that the Committee try to "set in stone" the event's date, location and format. The event will occur on a Tuesday or Thursday in early April. Although moving the event to a location such as the Norwalk Community College, it was agreed that the UConn-Stamford location works well. Mr. Settlemeyer asked what the focus of the event will be and if it was small towns. Mr. Floyd Lapp answered that it might be a good idea to have the three chief elected officials who are actively pursuing affordable housing developments each present. He identified the three as Gordon Joseloff, Westport; Evonne Klein, Darien; and Jeb Walker, New Canaan. Mr. Henson asked if it would be a good idea to include them as presenters when they are, effectively, the audience we are hosting the event for. Dr. Margaret Wirtenberg pointed out that Jim Himes, the newly elected US Congressman from Connecticut District 4 is a noted housing expert and may be interested in speaking on behalf of the region. The Committee consented that reaching out to Mr. Himes is a great idea. Mr. Lapp said that we should set the date

for the event around his schedule if he plans on presenting. Dr. Wirtenberg added that if we are interested in a two-panel event—one focused on small towns and the other on cities—perhaps Mayor Bill Finch, Bridgeport could speak on the cities panel. Mr. Settlemeyer pointed out that last year's summit tried to push too much and that we should be careful not to repeat this. He also said that we need someone to present that has put these types of projects together and actually developed units. Ross Burkhardt of New Neighborhoods, Inc. was mentioned. Ms. Anna Duleep said that we should keep the focus on getting affordable/workforce housing done in small towns.

Mr. Henson provided a copy of an evaluation form that the CT Housing Coalition handed out at its annual housing conference. Mr. Dudley Williams said that the evaluation looked good, but we should include rating-scale questions (1-3) in addition to qualitative (open-ended) questions to better identify strengths and weaknesses. The evaluation must be included in planning for the 2009 event.

Mr. Lapp mentioned a public hearing being held in Westport on Monday, November 24 to discuss the Baron's South conceptual plan. He explained that the Baron's South concept includes senior and workforce housing on municipally-owned land. He and a host of others were invited to address the public and answer questions.

Mr. Settlemeyer brought up the topic of "transfer of development rights" as something SWRPA might want to look into. Mr Lapp explained that the process of transferring development rights between tracts of land is a complex process that is usually only pursued in areas where development is especially difficult, such as large built-out cities.

The date and time of the next committee meeting was discussed. Tentatively, the next meeting will occur on Tuesday, January 13, 2008 at 4:00 PM at the SWRPA offices.

Ms. Duleep adjourned the meeting at 5:10 PM.