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MEMORANDUM

Date: May 4, 2009
To: SWRPA Housing Committee
From: Benjamin Henson
Re: Housing Committee Meeting Summary – Tuesday, March 31, 2009

This is a summary of the March 31, 2009 Housing Committee meeting. Mr. Benjamin Henson called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. Present were: co-Chairs Ms. Anna Duleep and Paul Settelmeyer, Mr. Bud Boucher and Mr. Nathan Snyder. Floyd Lapp and Benjamin Henson of SWRPA were also present.

Mr. Benjamin Henson presented the Final Agenda for the 2009 SWRPA Housing Summit (attached). He explained that two panelists committed to participating are not able to attend and have filled their vacancies with substitutes. Tim Hollister, Attorney, Shipman and Goodwin speaking on C.G.S. 8-30g affordable housing appeals legislation will be replaced by Joe Williams, also an attorney with Shipman and Goodwin who is well-versed on the controversial housing legislation. Seila Mosquera, NeighborWorks New Horizons will be replaced by her Deputy Director, Shenae Draughn who will present affordable/workforce housing case studies from New Haven County.

Dr. Floyd Lapp commented that credit should be given to Representative Jim Himes' Chief of Staff and District Office for their communications leading to his commitment to keynote the Summit. The Committee discussed changes to the Summit Agenda to facilitate Rep. Himes' participation.

Mr. Snyder pointed out that the Committee should have a backup plan in place if Rep. Himes is unable to attend. The Committee agreed that it would be very easy for any one of the panelists to speak longer and that the Summit coincides with Congress' spring recess, so Rep. Himes' availability should not change.

Mr. Henson explained that nearly 500 individuals have been invited to the Summit and that the event has been advertised by CLEAR, CCAPA and the Partnership for Strong Communities, but thus far less than 30 persons have registered to attend. He asked for the Committee's direction. Dr. Lapp pointed out that same-day registration for previous events has historically constituted a large proportion of attendance. The new swrpa.org website and inability to electronically submit registration payment may be inhibiting factors as well. Mr. Settelmeyer said that he will support the event at the Board meeting and will invite members on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) mailing list. Ms. Duleep suggested a letter to the editor of local newspapers and also that she can invite local Police and Fire union members.

The Committee discussed the event satisfaction survey, prepared by Mr. Henson and made appropriate changes to keep the form short and concise.

Mr. Settlemeyer explained that the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) has taken its Board meetings on the road and that he attended the March 26, 2009 meeting which took place in Stamford. He was impressed with the number and quality of speakers, including Joan Carty, HDF and Chris Bruhl, Business Council of Fairfield County. Mr. Bruhl presented the Council's 2008: Regional Issues and Trends report which contains some very interesting figures, especially regarding schools. The Stamford Housing Authority has changed its name to Charter Oak Communities.

Dr. Lapp and Mr. Settlemeyer expressed their desire to see the Committee move in a new direction, perhaps beyond advocating for affordable/workforce housing. The next Committee meeting, to take place after the Summit, should focus on this important issue. Mr. Henson would like to identify a number of key housing figures that the Committee can regularly track which would form a base for the preparation of an annual report. The report could also include important actions and/or events shaping housing in Connecticut. Mr. Settlemeyer wants the Committee to arrange to visit sites such as Jonathan Rose's MetroGreen development in Stamford to educate itself on contemporary housing development. Mr. Snyder asked if there is a different audience expected for a future housing summit? Mr. Settlemeyer and Dr. Lapp responded that this is the question at hand. The mission of the Committee needs to be clearly identified and should not be limited to advocating for affordable/workforce housing. Topics such as TOD, mortgage assistance, fraud prevention, green development, etc. should be considered. Mr. Henson added that the survey includes a question to assess interest in specific housing-related topics. He hopes enough people will respond to identify a set of topics in demand.

The date and time of the next committee meeting was discussed, but not determined. The next meeting will occur shortly after the 2009 SWRPA Housing Summit.

Ms. Duleep adjourned the meeting at 4:12 PM.