

# Countywide Housing Affordability Taskforce (CHAT) January 18, 2008 Meeting Notes

*(copies of all handouts / draft reports are available at cob.org)*

Members Names: Seth Fleetwood, Co-Chair; Terry Bornemann, Co-Chair; Mayor Bromley; Charlotte Eastman-Pros; Derek Long; John Shorthill; Hart Hodges; Larry West; Nancy Larsen; Gary Reid; Ted Mischaikov; Jon Soine; Paul Schissler; Ralph Black; Gail de Hoog; John Harmon; Barbara Brenner; and Stan Snapp.

Members Absent: Mayor Bromley, John Shorthill, Gary Reid, John Harmon, and Barbara Brenner.

Staff Present: David Cahill, Heather Aven, Gary Williams, and Samya Lutz.

Guests: Tom Beckwith and Steve Price represented the consulting team

Seth Fleetwood called meeting to order at 9:04 am

## 1. Approval of January 11, 2008 notes

Jon Soine moved to accept the notes as written. Ralph Black seconded. **ALL AYES.**

## 2. Discussion

The discussion continued on the CHAT Action Plan Survey results.

### Discussion of Questions

- 105 - **MOTION TO ACCEPT. SECONDED.**

Tom clarified that this policy would be used where sewer extension main lines are going to the highest capacity, this will help determine where the highest number of units can be built.

Ralph commented that in the City of Bellingham water and sewer main lines are extended by project specific request at expense of developer. He offered a friendly amendment to include extensions of water and sewer lines into existing UGA areas in conjunction with lifting the moratorium. IT WAS ACCEPTED.

Ted explained that the water and sewer facilities are planned city wide based on population expectations. He expressed his support for the recommendation, but felt that it would be difficult to implement.

**VOTE: 12-1 (SCHISLER, OPPOSED)**

- 112 – **OPEN FOR DISCUSSION .**

Hart wanted more information on how this would be funded.

Tom explained that a Homeowner's Association will usually pay for it; however, in affordable housing projects, the homeowners have the option of participating and providing as well as paying. He mentioned that it works best using a competitive RFP process. He also commented that it is important to have a long-range management program to monitor the common improvements.

Jon expressed his concern with the portion of the question that reads "housing products remain affordable as they are sold and re-sold".

Tom stated since this question was meant to focus on the management of facilities, it would be fine to remove the portion Jon was concerned with. He recommended also removing equity participations.

**JON MOVED TO STRIKE "HOUSING PRODUCTS REMAIN AFFORDABLE AS THEY ARE SOLD AND RESOLD ON THE MARKETPLACE."**

Ralph seconded and added a friendly amendment that would remove "and equity participation". IT WAS ACCEPTED.

**VOTE: ALL AYES**

- **99 – MOTION TO ACCEPT. SECONDED.**

Ted feels that this option needs to be included in the recommendation somehow. He stated this concept is very important now, and will only become more important. He would like to see aggressive offsets for this type of improvement.

Derek stated that he was more interested in energy efficiency than renewable energy. He commented that this would help create an affordable lifestyle and not just affordable housing. Derek suggested a friendly amendment by making it an "and / or" statement.

Nancy stated that although this will save the community money in the future, it does not help them qualify for their loan now.

Dave suggested the group look at creating a local funding source for affordable housing and make increasing the efficiency in homes that do not have any, a priority to receive a grant.

Nancy suggested removing "green" from the sentence since she agreed with Larry that green encompasses more than just energy. IT WAS ACCEPTED.

Derek withdrew the motion and will submit a revised version next week.

## DISCUSSION LED BY TOM

- Questions 1-3:

There was discussion about the target AMI. Some group members felt the numbers are unattainable and instead of trying to reach 14,000 households, the Taskforce should focus their strategy on where they can be most effective. It was explained that the dynamics of housing costs, land supply, demographic shift, marketplace, financing, material cost, regulation, and consumer choice all contribute to why the numbers are unattainable. There was consensus that even though the need may not be attainable, it does need to be outlined in the proposal.

There was discussion about the best way to assist the Councils in prioritizing where affordable housing fits with all of the other issues that are being proposed before them. Some group members felt that it was not part of this group's charge to tell the Councils where affordable housing should rest on the priority list. Other members felt that if there was not some context given to affordable housing and how it relates to other issues, it will not be effective.

Tom agreed with Dave's comment about trying to fit a static proposal to a dynamic issue and suggested that instead of including questions 1-3 as recommendations, they be construed as informational text to make the Councils aware of how large the affordable housing issue is, as well as, what the Taskforce feels would be some solutions.

- **MOTION TO INCLUDE THE QUESTIONS AS INFORMATIONAL TEXT IN THE PROPOSAL INSTEAD OF SPECIFYING THE EXACT GROUP WE ARE TRYING TO ASSIST AND THE EXACT NUMBER OF UNITS TO BUILD. THE GOAL IS TO SEND AS MANY RESOURCES AS POSSIBLE TO THE ENTITIES THAT CAN BUILD / REHAB AFFORDABLE HOUSING. SECONDED.**

**VOTE: ALL AYES**

- Questions 7-16:

There was discussion about what determines when a home should be rehabilitated or retained or when it should be rebuilt to include higher density affordable housing.

There was group consensus to include this set of questions as informational text in the proposal similar to 1-3.

**VOTE: ALL AYES**

- Questions 17-22:

**THERE WAS A MOTION TO ACCEPT 17. SECONDED.**

Ted stated that on a case by case basis, grants may be appropriate.

**VOTE: ALL AYES**

- Questions 18-22:  
**THERE WAS A MOTION TO ACCEPT 18-22. SECONDED.**  
Paul clarified that most of these would be expanding programs already in place.  
**VOTE: ALL AYES**
- Questions 28-30:  
Tom clarified that these questions were specific to the mobile home structures.  
**VOTE: ALL AYES**
- Question 31:  
Ralph would like clarification on the question.  
  
Tom replied that the first objective would be to retain, and acquire is one option.  
  
Ralph moved to removing “acquire and”. **SECONDED.**  
  
Ted added that those in jeopardy of being redeveloped should be included as well. He suggested striking “in jeopardy of being redeveloped”. **IT WAS ACCEPTED**  
  
Samya suggested adding “or replace” so that the housing stock does not diminish.  
**VOTE: ALL AYES**
- Question 32:  
Motion to remove “acquire and” and replace with encourage.  
**SECONDED.**  
**VOTE: ALL AYES**

### **3. Next Meeting’s Agenda (1/11/08)**

- Continue discussion of Action Plan Survey.
- Possibly review the Public Survey
- 2 weeks after that a draft set of recommendations could be reviewed.

### **4. Public Comment**

Adjourned: 10:55 am