



Chatham County, NC

Meeting Minutes Board of Commissioners

Thursday, October 8, 2015

9:00 AM

DSS Conference Room

Affordable Housing Retreat

BOARD PRIORITIES

Present: 5 - Chairman Jim Crawford, Vice Chair Mike Cross, Commissioner Diana Hales, Commissioner Karen Howard and Commissioner Walter Petty

[15-1430](#)

Affordable Housing Retreat

Attachments: [Draft agenda for Oct 1 and Oct 8 BOC affordable housing retreat Sept 18 version](#)

Peg Carlson called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM.

Ms. Carlson walked the Board through the Retreat Agenda.

Ms. Carlson asked the Board to their response to the question "What is the problem we are trying to solve?"

- Expanding safe housing, lack of; opportunities for low-wage earners. Safe= housing that meets minimum standards according to codes we abide by
- Do not have a way of controlling for safety of housing once it's built
- Not having repository of information on affordable housing needs – how to update and monitor "snapshot"
- Growth is moving Chatham home prices upward, resulting in fewer entry-level homes – type of growth tilting toward upward end
- Not enough in 30% of income rental range in Pittsboro and Siler City
- Not enough for purchase in Siler City and Pittsboro
- Cannot accommodate those who need attention of Family Violence Rape Crisis Center
- Lack of visibility of those providing services, not currently serving as resource connecting those needing services with those organizations
- Looking at symptoms; underlying problem is lack of good-paying jobs in county
- Address gap while we are continuing to try to recruit industry and good paying jobs

Ms. Carlson worked with the commissioners on the statement "Regardless of the specifics of any solution we propose, we want to address the affordable housing problem in a way that..."

- frames county role as a positive enabler
- collaborates with towns
- leverages existing opportunities, includes collaboration with existing organizations
- is sustainable for individual & community
- sets priorities and doesn't try to do everything
- sets our sights on something we can actually accomplish so we don't get bogged down or disorganized
- we hear from people in Chatham county who are in these different categories so we draw from/include perspectives of those being "pinched".

- utilizes the expertise of experts in this field to determine what the problem is and what impact we can have
- does not duplicate what is already being done or could be done better by others
- uses ongoing updated data about need
- doesn't put us in the housing management business

Ms. Carlson asked the Board what does list of interests suggest about where you might be able to have greatest impact? (* indicates this was a top priority for the Board)

- ordinances*
- permitting process
- go to companies who do this for a living to encourage them to build rental housing here*
- incentives: fees, water/sewer*
- talk with developers and towns to learn how they can do this in a way that allows them to make a profit
- compact communities ordinance – summary is the county gave them double density approval and the county got the affordable housing component, school sites, updated buffer and stream requirements, and higher impact fees.*
- other tools along with compact communities ordinance that could be options all built on the idea of incentives & tradeoffs.*
- Comprehensive Plan will help sort out appropriate land use for affordable housing, conservation, etc.
- selling small plots of county land that aren't suitable for other uses that could be starter homes or rental housing
- Henry Siler School property DFI did a study that showed viability for low income and senior housing, opportunity to do pre development work so it could be - marketed to developers.*
- look at county owned underutilized assets

Additional Thoughts/Reactions:

- density requirements may mean partnering with the towns, not always going to be able to do on our own especially if not on water/sewer
- doesn't mean we are neglecting/shifting away from Habitat
- could be affordable housing pressure in the east as well as the west, would like to see presentation on existing infrastructure

Ms. Carlson asked the Board what the Next Steps are:

1. start with the executive committee beginning conversations with the mayors to share ideas, learn what they may have underway, whether they are already working with developers, perhaps EDC can help get us together to meet
2. county, towns, rental housing developers meet
3. stakeholders meeting as part of comp. plan to talk to developers about incentives, barriers to affordable housing
4. incorporate the interests in search for suitable consultant to develop Comprehensive Plan

The Board agreed no. 1 needed to happen first and various things may come out of this meeting. They also agreed no. 3 and no. 4 can occur in parallel and don't depend on no. 1.

- Challenge is continuity of affordable housing over time, e.g. how to not have it be immediately resold
- revisions will be needed to Compact Communities Ordinance due to regulatory changes, could be opportunity to make other changes as well, add to list of options
- Comprehensive Plan can be a good place to sort out the various aspects of the public good, affordable housing is one among others.

- recognize that these steps do not address rehab needs for edlerly, young and disabled right now – doesn't mean we don't think it is important, see step 5.

5. List of who is doing transitional/supportive housing, including repair – board subcommittee to work with grad student, staff and representatives of smaller agencies and religious organizations. Commissioner Hales and Commissioner Howard will reach out to Dennis Streets with the Council on Aging, also look to UNC social work students to do some of the legwork. Community Resource Connections for aging and disabled in Chatham and Orange Counties – groups that meet periodically to coordinate resources, better identify who we are trying to serve.

Ms. Carlson asked for reflections about the retreat.

- Chairman Crawford stated he came away with a good understanding of what the issues are and the Board has planned the first steps to move forward.

- Commissioner Howard stated having the issues framed early on was very helpful but the group did get into the weeds. She also thought the follow-up on the questions from last week was great.

- Vice Chair Cross stated the staff did a wonderful job and appreciated guest experts.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Vice Chair Cross, seconded by Commissioner Petty, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Chairman Crawford, Vice Chair Cross, Commissioner Hales, Commissioner Howard and Commissioner Petty