



## **HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE 2014-2021 CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

*Wednesday, May 29, 2013*

*10 a.m. to Noon*

*Riverside Public Utilities Board Room  
3901 Orange Street, Riverside CA 92522*

Members Present: Peter Benavidez, Bruce Kulpa, Rose Mayes, Tony Mize, Grace Suchowski, Robert Treen, Paul Van Doren, Robert Wade

Council Members Present: Nancy Hart

Staff Present: Doug Darnell, Michelle Davis, Monica Hernandez, Frances Andrade

RBF Consultants: David Barquist, Carolyn Hernandez

Members Absent: Leonard Doup, Mike Teer, Tommy Thompson, William Allen

### 1. Call to Order

Doug Darnell, Senior Planner, called the meeting to order. He introduced David Barquist and Carolyn Hernandez with RBF consultants.

### 2. Welcome and Introductions of Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) members

Mr. Darnell thanked the members for attending today. The committee members introduced themselves.

### 3. Purpose and Responsibilities of the Citizens' Advisory Committee

Mr. Barquist gave an overview of the Citizen's Advisory Committee's purpose and responsibilities.

### 4. Overview of Brown Act

A brief summary of the Brown Act and how it affects the CAC as well as the rules for conducting business was given by Mr. Barquist.

### 5. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Mr. Barquist asked the committee to select a Chair and Vice-Chair for the CAC.

MOTION by Rose Mayes to nominate Tony Mize Chair of the CAC. SECOND by Grace Suchowski.

MOTION by Peter Benavidez to nominate Bruce Kulpa Chair of the CAC.

MOTION by Tony Mize to elect Bruce Kulpa Chair and Tony Mize as Vice-Chair. SECOND by Peter Benavidez. MOTION CARRIED – Unanimously.

## 6. Establishment of Meeting Ground Rules

Chair Kulpa referred to Section 4 of the CAC binder: Committee Ground Rules and Expectations. He asked if the Committee was in agreement with these ground rules and if there were any changes or additions to be made.

Mr. Benavidez stated that because of his visual impairment it is impossible for him to recognize everyone's voice when they speak on any item on the agenda. He requested that when such instances occur, the speaker identify themselves. He would like to be provided with information verbally as to what they are speaking to as opposed to referring to "item 13".

MOTION by Rose Mayes to adopt the ground rules as written with the addition of Mr. Benavidez' request. SECOND by Nancy Hart. MOTION CARRIED – unanimously.

## 7. Public Comments

Mr. Barquist inquired if there was anyone in the audience requesting to speak at this time, to please come forward and state their name and address. There were no public comments at this time.

## 8. Overview of Committee Binder

Mr. Barquist went over the various sections of the CAC binder. As further information and documentation becomes available, it will be forwarded for the members to add to their binder.

## 9. Introduction to the Housing Element Update

The Statewide Housing Goal: "...*Decent housing and suitable living environment for every California family.*" translates down to the local level through the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) process. The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is the entity that does the RHNA process and defines what the projected needs for housing, over a planning period, will be for the community. The City responds to this by providing the policy and regulatory guidance to ensure the market has the ability to accommodate this.

The Housing Element is one of the seven elements of the General Plan required by State law. It provides for a variety of housing types based on the variety of income levels. This is the City's policy document and guidance tool, and is a reflection of the community's needs. The Housing Element is the only element that requires review and certification by the State of California. He noted that many funding and grant opportunities require a certified Housing Element. October 15, 2013 is the statutory deadline for the Housing Element.

Mr. Barquist reviewed the sections of the Housing Element. He described the phases of the Housing Element update process.

## 10. Committee Visioning Exercise

Mr. Barquist invited everyone to participate in a "post-it" exercise. Post-it notes were provided to everyone and they were asked to write down their top three housing challenges for the City of Riverside. The post-its were posted on the wall and grouped together in categories.

Mr. Barquist invited everyone to post their top three "housing opportunities" for Riverside. He noted these would be ideas for improving the housing in Riverside.

Mr. Barquist referred to the wall and all the information posted. He noted that what was important to point out was the commonalities that everyone present had as a community. Everyone may think that there is a diverse level of ideas or considerations but in many cases, everyone thinks alike. These commonalities lead to conclusions which, in this case, will ultimately be good policies. Ms. Hernandez will go over these challenges and welcomed everyone to add to or discuss these ideas.

Ms. Hernandez, having organized the post-its into groups, summarized the issues identified. Transportation concerns including having mediums of transportation close to housing. Open space varied from keeping open space open and having open space for development as challenges. Other issues identified were Zoning issues, quality of low income housing, availability of public utilities and here is a group including housing for disabled, veterans, seniors and homeless individuals. She noted that affordability was another big topic. Owners versus investors: renters as well as investors since they are taking over for first-time homebuyers and making it difficult for the first-time homebuyer to purchase a home. Funding: federal funding, funding for transitional housing and providing mobile home opportunities for families and seniors.

Mr. Barquist asked if there were any other challenges, ideas or discussion anyone would like to add to this topic?

Paul Chavez noted that a mention was made of building housing close to transportation. It should be the opposite, the City already has existing homes but does not have the transportation where it can be easily accessed by those residents. He stated that there is a lot of transportation but it doesn't meet the criteria of going to where people live or work.

Mr. Barquist summarized Mr. Chavez' statement in that the challenge would be serving existing population in the community. This is a good point of discussion, not necessarily a direct housing issue but it has an affect on housing. While not explicitly a housing issue it really is a tentacle of that process as well.

Morris Mendoza brought up the issue of single women head of households. It used to be that two parents could make enough money to afford a house but that is now becoming harder. Another issue is with large households. He is the only person on his street with two people living in the house. All others have 6 or more people living in the home. This can range from family of six to people and/or a family renting to other families. He knows of a couple of homes where 10 -12 people share a home, and that is a challenge. Some do it to get extra money and others are two families who just have to get together and live like that. It is not just one family but 2-3 families living together.

Christina Duran added to Mr. Chavez and Mr. Mendoza's comments. She comes from the Eastside of Riverside and they actually have 2-3 generations of families and friends and extended family living in one home. They are fortunate but unfortunate because University Avenue cuts through their community so they have quite a few bus lines but there really aren't any bus lines that go into the community. There is perimeter type busing but there is no way that families can catch a bus when they are inside the neighborhood. People may think this isn't a big deal but for the elderly it can be a long walk to get to the bus and that is really bad. The City would like everyone to leave their cars at home and ride a bike, take the bus but the streets are cracked, there are holes, and raised sidewalks. These are challenges that the residents in these communities find. The City wants to be a grown up City but it doesn't even have an 18-20 hour bus line like other major cities. She suggested having longer repayment schedules available for families to purchase homes. Perhaps lenders and bankers can be approached with the suggestion to extend payment schedules based on a person's income. These are challenges that every day families have and are never really

addressed in a lot of meetings. If it is not extended to every single neighborhood then it is a failure. She has friends that live in Mission Grove area and if they have a few cracks in their streets, they have their streets repaired. Go down Ottawa, trucks come through this area and the whole street is disgusting/broken but they can't get Ottawa repaved. Why? Since she arrived in Riverside she always thought it was family friendly and was supposed to be all about being a wonderful place but if it doesn't go into every single neighborhood then it is a failure.

Peter Benavidez thanked staff for sending out the binder in advance electronically which makes it a lot easier to be prepared when he comes to the meeting. His challenge that he wrote down was accessibility. He pointed out that the report addresses accessibility differently than how he looks at it. In the report it talks about making sure the homes have adequate ramps and widened doors so that people with physical disabilities can live comfortably. He supports this and the comments about the City's current transportation issues. If some neighborhoods don't have efficient, effective and usable transportation to meet daily needs, even though it is not a housing issue, it is an issue. He was not sure if the transportation was in the purview of this particular body but it is certainly important to where the houses are located. He did note that most times it is the buyer's responsibility, or the renters, to do their research when they search for a place they can afford that they take all those items into consideration.

He also addressed multi-level housing. If there is less land available and the City needs thousands of affordable units, what is wrong with building up? This is something that should be considered for the future as the population, literally and figuratively, lose their ability to drive and will need to be located nearby goods and services, grocery stores, doctors offices, entertainment areas and places like senior centers, etc. He did not believe the current transportation provider would be able to meet the future demand alone. He stated that from a visually impaired stand point, ramps, curb cuts, grab bars, widening of doors and the things mobility people require and need, are not necessarily the needs of people with visual impairment. Most of the time, their issues occur once they enter the building. They encourage people, when they are looking for homes to look around the neighborhood. There is an education component that should be part of this document to educate seniors, people with disabilities or special needs to the best approach when seeking affordable housing.

Rose Mayes explained that their number one discrimination complaint is dealing with disability. There are not enough homes that are ready for people with disabilities. As you know, the baby boomers are coming through and affordability of those types of homes are not available. Especially in downtown Riverside she see a lot of beautiful condominiums and homes but nothing affordable for seniors. This is a concern for her. Also, senior housing used to be mobile homes but you don't see too many of those types of homes that are being deed restricted. The zoning and deed restrictions need to be discussed as well.

Peter Benavidez, Rose Mayes, and Nancy Hart announced that they needed to depart early and excused themselves from the meeting.

Erin Snyder, Northside Improvement Association, stated she wrote down an opportunity but thought perhaps it was actually more of a challenge. In the Northside they have available housing. There is this whole development on Rivera Street that has been there over five years and still half of it is empty. They have senior housing on Orange Street. She stated this was an affordability issue because the housing is there but people can't afford it. She just didn't understand why they weren't using it. There are other developments like M'Sole and Mission complex down on Market Street. These projects can't just be built if people aren't going to be able to use it.

Paul Van Doren stated that, particularly to Riverside, they should think about student housing. There are a lot of colleges and universities that put a big demand on the City's existing housing stock especially affordable housing and affordable rental property. If the City could work with the universities to address their student housing plans to address student housing as their universities and colleges expand.

Robert Treen noted the use of SROs by other cities. He said that for students this may work.

Mr. Barquist thanked the individuals for their comments. He stated that whatever the challenges, there are always opportunities. He read over the opportunity notes and some of the ideas were tax incentives (tax credits) for affordable housing. These would be incentives for developers to build affordable housing and noted that an incentive isn't necessarily a check. Incentives can be in many forms such as shortened processing timelines and review procedures, streamlining of the policy. Also, rehabilitation programs in the form of assistance for other things to provide for the community. There were a number of comments regarding density suggesting higher density development. Higher density well planned near transportation comes back to the issues discussed earlier and getting that higher density population close to that. We should zone for higher density to get a ratio of 60/40 (60 percent single-family residential and 40 percent multiple-family) or 65/30.

Tony Mize agreed and stated that typical good planning would suggest the City functions well when the single-family is 60-65 and multifamily is the opposite. Riverside has a lot of rentals because of the universities. There is a lot of student housing that is not in traditional housing like we have around the university, instead they are all throughout the single-family neighborhoods in rental units. There are single family detached homes that are rented to five students and so that is one piece of that imbalance the City has going on. The classic example of that is San Bernardino which has 65 – 70% of their entire housing stock single-family. When you don't zone for dense multi-family you wind up having an inordinate amount of your single family as rental.

Chair Kulpa added that the City of Riverside has traditionally been a suburb and therefore more dominantly single family construction. If the City has to produce 8,000 units, there is a finite amount of land left and that is where plans have to go up in density. To the extent that this looks at zoning and makes recommendations, there are corridors around universities and along Magnolia Avenue where there are services and bus lines. Consideration should be given to major streets where there is access to services and access to transportation. He suggested clustering housing along those corridors. This goes back to the previous comments where they live off the beaten path far from public transportation, those individuals have quite a walk ahead of them. It was also mentioned that, to expect RTA or someone to come along with new bus lines that go deeper into the neighborhoods is probably not realistic, at least not over the near term. For a near term solution, he thought they need to induce, incentivize and prepare a plan for more development along the arterial corridors the City already has.

Mr. Mize agreed and noted that other cities all over southern California such as Rancho Cucamonga, Chino Hills and Corona, which during the housing boom, zoned for large lot and large housing neighborhoods, did not zone for the dense multi-family at that time or very little of it. The result at the end of the day is a battle in the neighborhoods between the traditional single-family owner with a conventional mortgage and their next door neighbor which may have three families with five-six cars renting a single family home. If there had been an adequate supply of multi-family close to all the services being developed at the same time as the population was growing, they would not have near that problem.

Chair Kulpa noted that there seems to be a stigma often attached to multi-family housing because of what Mr. Mize just described. This is really an overcrowding issue rather than a multi-family versus single family but that is what happens when you fail to make opportunities conducive for multi-family development. He suggested identifying where the City wants the multi-family development to occur. The City needs to be proactive and look into that now before it becomes a bigger problem. If we don't make an opportunity that is better for our community that is close to services and doesn't result in overcrowding, then they will land in single family neighborhoods and cause problems although not intentionally.

Mr. Chavez indicated that what is being said is good but in reality look at what happens in LA. Multi-family areas are created but these areas can easily become what is considered negative and the area starts to depreciate. It can happen here as well if we are not careful. There has to be a good balance so that multi-family is not over saturated. It has to be diverse.

Mr. Barquist reviewed additional comments that were posted. Comments included retaining the existing housing stock, rehabilitation of blighted properties for affordable housing, assist the acquisition and rehab in multi-family neighborhoods. Also suggested was, infill housing, VA housing, additional opportunities for senior apartments, the construction of starter homes for the younger generation, opportunities such as green development housing and addressing the quality of housing to ensure attractive housing not just cookie cutter development.

Ms. Duran added that to the education component brought up by Mr. Benavidez. She noted that not many of the smaller apartment unit managers, even though they are part of Crime Free Housing, are as educated with regard to the community dynamics within the complex. There is a disassociation with some of the managers toward their tenants. Some of the larger apartment complexes in other areas are almost walled in and treated differently. The City should have a more uniform design when these apartments are being constructed so that all projects are beautified, not just in the prosperous areas. She noted that despite what the community usually wants, they do not get their way as the City does what they are going to do. She stated she would give this process a chance even though she has not seen a community group that she has been happy with the result of things that are done.

Bob Garcia asked where the multi-family housing for people with limited income would be built. And most importantly, include enough driveway space for them. They are currently in the single family areas. There are several families in one home that it tends to give an appearance of a continuous block party. There are so many families in one home and that they take up all the street space to accommodate the families. They don't give any of the other residents, who have lived there longer, to have their family over because everyone else is parking there. They are even using the Villegas Park lot as their parking because they don't have enough.

Morris Mendoza stated he wanted to thank this committee for volunteering. Things may not always go right but he wanted to say that he appreciated everyone who volunteered. He brought up instances where lower income people have saved up and placed their homes in trusts. The government tends to look at their savings as assets and often time they do not qualify for simple repairs such as an air conditioner. These families have saved up and just have enough to make it through the rest of their life. Because of this they are not entitled to more traditional benefits and programs that are available to the general lower income families.

Mr. Barquist thanked everyone for participating and stated this was a form of learning from each other's input. This is something that will continue to grow and all of the information will be brought back to be placed in their binders. In addition, he indicated that something similar will be planned

with the community and those ideas will also be added. He encouraged the CAC members, as well as those interested individuals in the audience, to stay involved by checking the City's website: <http://www.riversideca.gov/planning/housing-element.asp>, and attend future community workshops and public hearings. For more information, please call Doug Darnell, Senior Planner at (951) 826-5219 or [ddarnell@riversideca.gov](mailto:ddarnell@riversideca.gov).

Erin Snyder asked about the availability of the information provided today. Will there be an opportunity for the audience members to access the information in the Committee's binder?

Mr. Darnell explained that the minutes from today's meeting, as well as everyone's comments will be available on the website: <http://www.riversideca.gov/planning/housing-element.asp>. There isn't much on the website now but he will also include the Housing Element and Element Technical Report on this web site so that everything is in one place and easier to find.

## 11. Meeting Adjournment

Chair Kulpa thanked everyone for attending and for their input today. The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 am.