

CANNON BEACH HOUSING TASK FORCE

MEETING NOTES

FEBRUARY 10, 2016

1 – 3 PM – CANNON BEACH CITY HALL

The meeting was called to order, introductions were made, and the agenda reviewed. No changes being made to the agenda the meeting proceeded.

Discussion of points outlined in Notes that merit further exploration – Ms. Silvis lead the group through a review of certain points that were left unresolved at the December meeting. These included:

1. Thoughts on cross jurisdictional initiatives and work? How can/should City task force interface with County group discussing similar issues
2. Using City owned land banked for affordable workforce housing
3. Reviewing City Regulations to assess opportunities to facilitate long term creation of affordable workforce housing
4. Considering an appeal to expand UGB for affordable housing?

The latter (point number 4) was quickly eliminated as being politically unpopular, lengthy to accomplish (if at all) and expensive in process. Highlights from discussions surrounding points 1 through 3 are below:

Cross Jurisdictional Initiatives – Most of this discussion focused on the idea that transit may indeed be one of the solutions to the affordable workforce housing issue in cannon Beach, as previously suggested by Mark Barnes. It was noted that Clackamas County has a successful and widely used bus system to get not only visitors but employees up to Timberline and other resorts on Mt. Hood...leaving from Sandy, Oregon. Mr. Barnes noted that the Sunset Empire Transit District is currently revising its Strategic Plan and expansion of routes and stops in the area is one of the topics under discussion. A second and related topic is how the Transit service can better served the traditionally “underserved” in the communities – which includes people with disabilities and low/moderate income families. It is a timely opportunity to weigh in on the number and times of routes coming into and out of Cannon Beach, especially during the high season for employees (tourist season). Employers in the group granted that, given the demographics of those who apply for seasonal jobs (mostly single, younger who follow seasonal tourist employment opportunities and students), supporting housing efforts in larger Seaside to the north and advocating for increased bus routes into town likely is the best approach to seasonal housing challenges in Cannon Beach. Mr. Barnes is currently on the strategic planning committee for the transit district and officially represents the city on the body. He will take the Task Force’s comments back to the transit authority for consideration in its planning.

It was also generally agreed that the City should have representation on or at least reach out to collaborate with those who are discussing/addressing housing issues in the surrounding communities of Wheeler, Warrenton, Astoria, Seaside, Tillamook, Manzanita and Nehalem – as Clatsop and Tillamook Counties are connected economically and often socially. No action was taken at this time, but City staff will begin forging connections with housing groups located across the two counties.

Regulatory Review: A review of the City Codes surrounding development was included in the scope of work from the consultant. Mr. Barnes agreed to send Ms. Silvis the relevant chapters for review by sub-consultant, Carleton Hart Architecture. The goal of the review is to identify barriers to the creation of long term, affordable workforce rental housing and to make recommendations for changes to the code to facilitate increased opportunities for the development of workforce and affordable housing into the future.

City Land: The most lengthy portion of the discussion surrounded the potential use of City owned land for a more short term solution – development of long term workforce rental housing. After much discussion the following conclusions were made:

- a. The 55+ acres owned by the City on the north side of the highway, purchased for other policy reasons, will take significant funds and much time to prepare for development. It is possibly part of a longer term solution but not available for a more immediate approach.
- b. The City also owns 9.43 acres that currently sites a RV Park (which generates significant revenue for the City) and several acres of greenspace. After much discussion, it was agreed that a portion of this land should be analyzed to see if it is appropriate for development opportunity. Though many voiced concerns about preserving both the City revenue and the open space, all agreed a feasibility analysis should be completed for the task for to adequately consider available options.
- c. Third, it was noted that the City (and a private property owner) both own large parking lots to the north of the main business corridor. Two ideas floated through the group, both of which merit further exploration. First, it makes sense to complete a feasibility analysis for building housing over the publicly owned property. The air rights could be leased to a private developer, with regulatory restrictions on what type of housing (including workforce income parameters) could be built. Second, for City staff, does it make sense to consider charging for parking in the public lot? Whether housing is built over it or not, it is a vast amount of revenue likely foregone and, if the cost benefit analysis made sense, revenues could be potentially targeted for housing programs.

It was agreed that Mr. Barnes would provide Ms. Silvis with maps clearly delineating both the 9.45 acres and the public parking lot. She then complete the design and financial feasibility analyses with Carleton Hart.

Lastly, Ms. Silvis lead the group through a short discussion of interesting models from other tourist communities with similar housing issues, handouts of which were provided prior to the meeting. These examples included the towns of Vail and Aspen as well as Sun Valley. The group quickly eliminated the idea of the City subsidizing home ownership as being too expensive with fewer beneficiaries but were interested in the rental housing models. Screening criteria focused on preferences for emergency and first responders, critical public employees, and verified employees of local business. Each program is distinct in that the screening criteria is customized to meet the housing needs of each community and includes provisions that reach across income levels – such that moderate income workers are not eliminated by using federal or state subsidies with more stringent income qualifications.

Discussions included questions on ensuring the City’s commitment to and administration of Fair Housing was preserved but, overall, the models were greeted with interest. Interestingly, the models depended on local housing authorities to administer the programs (even though they were not specifically limited to low income households) and the City’s subsidized at some levels incentives to/assistance to housing providers and residents.

Further, the following “draft position statement” was presented by the Consultant for consideration, based on the comments provided during the discussions:

The goal is “To forge housing strategy that encourages and facilitates the creation of long-term workforce rental housing for in Cannon Beach – identifying long term and short term strategies and solutions that are inclusive of all in the workforce.” This means that, though some finance tools may include income qualification for lower income workers, the intent is to provide affordable housing solutions to an array of incomes and avoid disqualifying many of the residents who help create and support a vibrant, healthy community.

The meeting concluded with the Task Force members agreeing to consider further this position statement and to review the web sites of the housing models presented. Next official steps will be for staff to provide the consultant with the code chapters for third party review and the map of City owned property for initial feasibility analysis.