

**Minutes of Special Meeting of  
The Housing Authority of the City of Galveston, Texas  
Island Community Center – Community Room  
4700 Broadway, Galveston, TX 77551  
November 10, 2010 at 5:00 P.M.**

The Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Galveston, Texas, (GHA) met as stated above. Chairperson Neff called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and declared a quorum was present. She further clarified that the meeting was duly posted. The following commissioners were noted present: Paula Neff, Chairperson; James Dennis, Vice-Chair; and Tom LaRue

Commissioners Absent:       None

Others Present:               Pete Urbani, Jr., Legal Counsel;  
Robert Bastien, Legal Counsel; and  
Harish Krishnarao, Executive Director/Secretary

Barbara Crews reported that the last time she had come before the Board, she had requested permission to be the local sponsor for a grant through the Houston-Galveston Area Council (HGAC) to work together with a number of partners in developing and creating a Livable Center in the corridor between downtown and University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB). The application was not only successful, but ranked so high that the process will begin in January 2011. Galveston Housing Authority (GHA) agreed to be the local sponsor, and is paying 20% local match and 3% to Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT), approximately \$43,000.

Ms. Crews continued that the 15-block study area identified to HGAC is located between the Galveston central business district and UTMB. The street boundaries are Harborside (north), 14<sup>th</sup> Street (east), Market Street (south), and 19<sup>th</sup> Street (west). There will be opportunity for partners to sit around a table and be part of the planning process to develop the corridor so that it will be a walkable, livable, sustainable center in the City of Galveston. It will connect the two major employment centers of Galveston. GHA is an obvious partner because of their property owned in this area. We have received support letters from the East End Historic District neighborhoods and UTMB.

Ms. Crews explained that a committee would be created to work very closely with HGAC and would not require a lot of administrative work for GHA. They will put the committee together to develop a scope and RFP. They will also hire the consultants who will work with the community and the representatives to develop a plan. It will not be very complex. We are very pleased about this exciting opportunity as we will finally be able to link those two strategic neighborhoods in Galveston.

Commissioner LaRue questioned what kind of timelines were involved as far as the issuance of the grant and completion of the work. Ms. Crews responded that, at this point, only a letter had been received telling that we will start in January 2011, and that no other information had been forthcoming. She further stated that transportation linking these two areas had been discussed, as

well as a blend of student housing, market rate housing and public housing and a way to connect all of these entities. It would be possible either to walk between these areas or using the trolley system. The project is tentatively named West University Development.

### **Items of Discussion -**

- a. Small market payment standards - Mary Bentz, Quality Control Supervisor, reported that GHA has proposed small market rents, which will be fair market rents for specific census tracts. Specific census tracts will be identified within zip codes and those census tracts divided if they are in multiple zip codes. They will be given specific payment standards that will identify those census tracts that are most lucrative as targets. GHA has looked at several different pieces of information and the census tracts have been ranked. There are 22 census tracts in Galveston. The tracts were ranked primarily by poverty level (concentration) and other quality of life concerns such as security, public transportation and employment opportunities. Education was not included because people can choose the school they want their children to attend. The good news is that we can reward the better census tracts by increasing our payment standard to 109% and discourage the people from moving into the poorer ranking census tracts by reducing payment standards to 91% in those areas. This helps GHA meet ITS goal of poverty deconcentration as well as the city's goal.
- b. Local preference for Galveston residents - Ms. Bentz referred to the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and what it says about local preference. She explained that local preference means that we can choose locally which preferences we would like to utilize based on our housing needs. It is not a preference of locale. However, there is an option to include a residency preference and this was discussed earlier. GHA does have several preferences currently outlined in the Administrative Plan such as: disability preference, elderly preference, working preference, job training/school preference, families displaced by Hurricane Katrina or Rita, former GHA public housing families housed immediately prior to being displaced as a result of a natural disaster, and a veteran's preference. Order of selection has also been discussed and how the current waiting list is ranked. One additional fact is that disability and elderly preferences also receive a working preference according to CFR.
- c. JHP contract – Deyna Sims, Director of Real Estate & Development, stated that at the last Board meeting, the Board had authorized GHA to begin the fee proposal from JHP Architects. JHP Architects were working on the HOPE VI proposal along with EJP. Therefore, JHP was very familiar with the site, location, and topography. We requested a fee proposal from JHP and GHA staff is currently analyzing that proposal. It is a little high, but we will continue to negotiate and hopefully be able to bring a contract before the Board at the next board meeting.

John Manuel, Modernization Coordinator, stated that the proposal was a little higher than what GHA had previously been paying architects; however, there is a possibility for negotiation to bring this number into a mutually agreeable fee. The contract is currently being negotiated. She further stated that on the upcoming tour that the staff will be taking in New Orleans, they will see one of JHP's designs called Columbia Parks.

- d. Bridges Program – Chairperson Neff stated that the commissioners had held a great workshop last week on Bridges Out of Poverty. We are still receiving positive feedback and people seem to be supportive of this program for the City of Galveston.

Commissioner LaRue stated that it was a very interesting program and that after attending, he has heard many comments from other organizations and community leaders that our dollars are better spent trying to cure problems when we are dealing with the youth. We need to develop programs to help our youth. We need to find and push concepts that concentrate in this area.

Vice-Chair Dennis stated that the one thing he is happy about with GHA is that we are building a lot of new partnerships with many different organizations. He believes that all of the staff is working hard toward this common goal.

Ms. Laura Murrel from the audience commented that she was very impressed in what she has read about the program. She stated that it seems like this program has made a difference in other communities. She said that the program appears to be one that is based upon real communication between people and Building Bridges looks promising.

Commissioner LaRue commented that he had seen the new Galveston Independent School District (GISD) superintendent speak today. The superintendent stated that whenever you can take a child out of multi-generational poverty and graduate that child from college, the future generations of that family will never experience poverty again. Mr. Krishnarao agreed with the statement.

Mr. Krishnarao stated that he had met with the superintendent the previous week, along with Justin Herter, Public Information Officer. He reported that they had spent about four hours with him and toured all of the public housing scattered sites. One of the things currently being explored is for GHA to allocate approximately ten units for GISD employees, under a local preference, when the 569 units are reconstructed. Mr. Krishnarao added that if people wanted to stay, there would be a brief presentation on GISD.

#### **Commissioner's Comments -**

Commissioner LaRue stated that the conference in Reno had been very informative and worthwhile.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:29 p.m.  
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