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MINUTES OF A JOINT MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL
OF THE TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL AND THE HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD,
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, MONDAY, JANUARY 30, 1989, 7:30 P.M.

Mayor Howes called the meeting to order.

Council Members present were:

Julie Andresen	Nancy Preston
David Godschalk	Arthur Werner
Joe Herzenberg	Roosevelt Wilkerson, Jr.
David Pasquini	

Council Member Wallace was absent. Also present were Town Manager David R. Taylor, Assistant Town Managers Sonna Loewenthal and Ronald Secrist, Town Attorney Ralph Karpinos, and Housing and Community Development Director Tina Vaughn.

Housing Advisory Board Members in attendance were:

Edwin Caldwell, Jr., Chairperson	
Betsy Bryan	Adele Thomas
Lynn Magee	Charles Weaver
Barbara Booth Powell	Priscilla Wooley

Mayor Howes asked Mr. Caldwell, Chairman, Housing Advisory Board, for introductory remarks.

Mr. Caldwell said that the composition of the Housing Advisory Board should be evaluated. He stressed the need to have members with expertise in affordable housing, federal housing regulation and construction.

Mr. Caldwell added that the board plays a vital role in the lives of public housing tenants. He noted that the Housing Advisory Board has developed a good rapport with tenants, lessening stress and tension levels. Mr. Caldwell said that tenants are becoming increasingly involved in crime prevention and beautification programs within their communities.

Mr. Caldwell noted the Housing Advisory Board's recent evaluation of the tenant's grievance process. Mr. Caldwell said that the board's principal aim was to make the procedures stronger and more understandable.

Mr. Caldwell concluded his remarks by stating that the Housing Advisory Board was seeking clarification of the board's mission and role as outlined by the Council.

Council Member Andresen asked whether the Housing Advisory Board was satisfied with maintenance at the Town's public housing units. Mr. Caldwell responded yes, it's getting better, adding that one should not be able to recognize public housing units when driving down the street.

Mayor Howes asked whether HUD maintenance funds were inadequate. Mr. Caldwell responded that they were in his view.

Council Member Andresen asked how well the Town was doing in its maintenance role. Mr. Caldwell said that positive events had occurred since Ms. Vaughn became involved with administering programs.

Council Member Wilkerson said that approximately \$500,000 in major improvements were required to units when the Town took over administration two years ago. Council Member Wilkerson added that there was no preventative maintenance program in place to address the declining condition of the housing units since so much has to be done.

Mayor Howes asked whether the situation was better now than two years ago. Mr. Caldwell responded that tenants are beginning to see things happen, with some units being brought up to standards. Mr. Caldwell stressed the need to have housing maintenance addressed within the Town budget. Mr. Caldwell also suggested that the Housing Advisory Board have input into the housing bond and Community Development funding processes.

Council Member Andresen asked whether members of the Housing Advisory Board felt a need to change the current board composition of nine members (three of whom must reside in public housing). She asked if the Board would consider adding more members to gain broader experience from the housing and construction industry.

Ms. Bryan responded that there are currently two public housing tenants on the board. She noted the need to recruit tenants in the future.

Council Member Andresen noted the importance of considering special expertise in recruiting board members.

Mr. Caldwell added the importance of eliciting positive suggestions from tenants.

Council Member Andresen noted the importance of establishing rapport between the Housing Advisory Board and tenants.

Mayor Howes asked whether the Housing Advisory Board was intending to make a recommendation to the Council on the need for a housing bond referendum. Mr. Caldwell responded that the Housing

Advisory Board was uncertain of how it tied into existing Town resources. He noted that some proposals come to the Housing Advisory Board at the last minute, making it difficult to provide proper consideration. Mr. Caldwell stressed the willingness of the Housing Advisory Board to get involved in new processes.

Mr. Caldwell noted that the Housing Advisory Board is relatively new and is undergoing an educational process, including the identification of housing needs in the near term (three to five years).

Mayor Howes asked whether members of the Housing Advisory Board felt comfortable with advising the Council on affordable housing issues. Ms. Thomas responded that few people possess expertise on affordable housing. She added that the Council had not developed a housing policy to date.

Ms. Thomas suggested breaking up the Town's maintenance programs among public housing neighborhoods rather than doing a series of repairs in one neighborhood. All public housing tenants would realize benefits sooner.

Mr. Caldwell noted the need to establish a maintenance plan in conformity with HUD mandates. Council Member Andresen asked whether HUD had funds available for maintenance of public housing units. Ms. Vaughn responded that HUD funds are not currently being focused on these types of programs. She said that monies are currently needed for extraordinary maintenance. Ms. Vaughn estimated total capital needs to be approximately \$1 million. She noted that roofs in two neighborhoods currently require replacement.

Council Member Wilkerson asked when the Town had last received significant funds from HUD for extraordinary maintenance purposes. Ms. Vaughn stated that several years ago the Town received monies to address an emergency situation. She said that two requests for approximately \$300,000 each had been submitted to HUD, but neither was approved. Council Member Andresen asked why the requests had not been approved. Ms. Vaughn responded that no funds were available since HUD targeted its limited funds based upon age of housing stock. Ms. Vaughn said that since the Town's public housing units are not very old (oldest units built in the late 1960's), the Town has not yet receive favorable consideration.

Council Member Preston what the chances of receiving HUD maintenance assistance were for this year. Ms. Vaughn responded that chance were better since a HUD audit identified the need to replace roofs and kitchen cabinets in certain public housing units. Mr. Caldwell said that shortly after the Town took over the administration of the housing units, members of the Housing

Advisory Board made site visits to the units. During the visits, tenants made HAB members aware of existing and continuing problems with the facilities.

Council Member Godschalk said that the Housing Advisory Board had done a remarkable job in the transition period, having obviously dealt well with a difficult situation. He stated the need to focus energies on future maintenance scheduling.

Council Member Godschalk asked whether the Housing Advisory Board will advise the Council on a comprehensive housing policy. Ms. Bryan responded that the Housing Advisory Board, due to its recent formation, had only just begun to function effectively as a committee. She added that many tenants perceive the Housing Advisory Board as a continuation of the former Housing Authority. Ms. Bryan added her concern about the Housing Advisory Board's dual role of serving as grievance panel while maintaining good rapport with public housing tenants.

Ms. Powell said that each member of the Housing Advisory Board has their own specialty. She added the importance of formulating a plan to induce tenants to move out of public housing into their own homes. Council Member Wilkerson concurred with Ms. Powell's remarks. He added that one impediment to moving tenants into their own homes is an intergenerational mindset of living in public housing. Ms. Thomas added that certain HUD guidelines inhibit tenants from moving out of public housing.

Mr. Caldwell noted that a 1982 Presidential Commission on Housing concluded that quality of housing was not a problem. He noted that the Federal Government has been turning housing programs over to state and local governments for administration. Mr. Caldwell said that approximately \$26.5 billion of federal funds were earmarked for housing programs in 1980 as contrasted with approximately \$10.1 billion in 1989. Mr. Caldwell said that when existing housing obligations are addressed, there is very little left for allocation to new programs. Mr. Caldwell concluded his remarks by stating that today's federal housing programs emphasize the moneymaking element.

Ms. Vaughn concurred with Mr. Caldwell's remarks concerning the changes in federal housing programs. She noted that the Town issues credits to some of the public housing tenants. Ms. Vaughn added that there is no income ceiling requiring tenants to move out of public housing.

Council Member Preston asked whether some of the tenants desire to move out of public housing. Ms. Vaughn responded no, since there is really no incentive or requirement to do so. She added that when the income of a tenant goes down, the rent is similarly adjusted downward.

Mayor Howes stressed the need to identify the Town's role in housing policy.

Mr. Caldwell said that the City of Charlotte is currently selling General Obligation (G.O.) bonds for housing and purchase of related land. Mr. Caldwell added that some municipalities, including Chapel Hill, are making efforts to address housing needs in their communities. He added that it is unfortunate that long-term residents of the Town have to compete with students for affordable housing.

Mr. Caldwell noted that the sense of community is lost when one works in a community but lives elsewhere.

Ms. Powell said that the Housing Advisory Board's field trip to see the Town's housing units was very educational. She added that many tenants feel that the Town is doing a good job of administering its housing units. Ms. Powell noted the board's commitment to doing the best possible job of performing its responsibilities.

Ms. Thomas noted the important role of tenants in assisting with enforcement of the Housing Code.

Ms. Powell said that the maintenance problems in units were not broken down windows or doors but items which were worn out or poorly designed.

Council Member Werner said that he had learned a lot about public housing programs from the evening's dialogue. He noted that some members of the Housing Advisory Board had expressed an interest in formulating a broader Town Housing Policy. He asked which body, the Council or HAB, should take the lead in developing a housing policy. Mr. Caldwell stated that the HAB needed greater access to Town resources such as planning staff.

Council Member Preston asked for Mr. Caldwell's (as well as that of other board members) feedback on the role of the Housing Advisory Board in composing a Town Housing Policy.

Mr. Caldwell said that the initial orientation of the board members was a difficult process. He said that board members need time to formulate their own ideas and opinions. Mr. Caldwell noted the need for the Housing Advisory Board to coordinate its efforts with Town staff.

Council Member Andresen asked whether the Housing Advisory Board members had the time and energy to devote to the development of a housing policy. Ms. Magee said that there was plenty to do within the realm of public housing. She added that there is no formal five year plan for the Town's public housing units. Ms.

Magee noted that members of the Housing Advisory Board are acutely aware of the overwhelming maintenance needs of the Town's public housing units.

Ms. Woolley said that approximately 15% of the population of the Town lives below the poverty line. She stated her aim to provide decent housing for this group. Ms. Woolley added that the Housing Advisory Board should serve as an advocate for those living below the poverty line.

Ms. Thomas said that Ms. Vaughn has established a maintenance schedule for the Town's public housing units. She added that little financial support for housing could be expected from the Federal Government.

Mayor Howes noted that there had been concern among the Council concerning certain portions of the Housing Grievance Procedure. Ms. Vaughn responded that the Housing Advisory Board will review the Council comments (relating to a definition of escrow and making clearer a sentence containing a double negative) at their February meeting.

Mr. Caldwell expressed his commitment to maintaining a fair grievance procedure for all involved parties. He noted that it takes a strong person to run a grievance hearing. He added the importance of securing counsel for the Housing Advisory Board when grievants provide their own counsel.

Mr. Caldwell stated that he felt this evening's meeting had been useful, providing a broader focus to both the Council and Housing Advisory Board.

Mayor Howes said that it was interesting to have a dialogue with the Housing Advisory Board collectively and individually. He added that housing needs should be the central concern of the Housing Advisory Board. Mayor Howes concluded his remarks by noting that four prominent speakers will address housing issues at a League of Women Voters Forum on Tuesday, January 31st.

Council Member Andresen asked the Town Manager to evaluate a proposal for expanding the membership of the Housing Advisory Board from nine to eleven members.

Mr. Caldwell stressed the importance of tenants attending meetings of the Housing Advisory Board.

Mayor Howes said that every effort should be taken to assure that public housing is decent housing.

The joint meeting was adjourned at 8:58 P.M..