

MEETING MINUTES

CITY OF LA HABRA GENERAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (GPAC)

May 6, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT: Carrie Surich, Community Services Commission Representative
Randy McMillan, At-Large Community Representative
Rose Espinoza, City Council Representative
Jose Medrano, City Council Representative
Michelle Bernier, Planning Commission Representative
Marie Laveaga, Chamber of Commerce Representative
Teresa Kempker, At-Large Community Representative
Jim Leonard, At-Large Community Representative
Sylvia Badillo, At-Large Community Representative

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ray Fernandez, At-Large Community Representative
Daisy Ibarra, Youth Services Commission Representative

OTHERS PRESENT: Roy Ramsland, Planning Manager
Veronica Lopez, Community Development Secretary
Mark Hoffman, PlaceWorks
Woodie Tescher, PlaceWorks

1. Call to Order- Chair Carrie Surich

Chair Surich called the GPAC meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The GPAC meeting was held telephonically through Zoom.

2. Roll Call

Roll call was taken with Members Present or Absent as noted above.

3. Committee Minutes

Chair Surich asked if there were any public comments on the minutes. There were no public comments. Seeing no comments, the chair asked for a motion

Moved by Member Jose Medrano and seconded by Member Randy McMillan to approve the GPAC Meeting Minutes of March 23, 2021. The motion passed.

4. Public Comments

The Chair asked if anyone from the public wished to address the Committee or if we had received any public comments to be read into the record. Elizabeth Hansburg, People for Housing Orange County, stated that she hoped the Committee would address the new guidance that had been put out by HCD for Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) and said she looks forward to seeing what policies will be put in place.

The Chair then asked if there was anyone else wishing to address the Committee. There were none. The Chair closed the Public Comments and moved to Consideration items.

5. Consideration Items-

a. Housing Goals, Policies, and Implementation Programs

Mr. Woodie Tescher of PlaceWorks, began the presentation by recapping the information covered in previous meetings and outlining what would be discussed in tonight's meeting. He then turned the presentation over to Mr. Mark Hoffman of PlaceWorks to continue with the PowerPoint presentation. Prior to Mr. Hoffman beginning, Planning Manager, Roy Ramsland, suggested to the Chair that for tonight's meeting they allow Committee comments and public comments after each slide instead of going through the whole presentation and then listening to Committee comments followed by public comments. The Chair agreed.

Mr. Ramsland then mentioned that a letter was received earlier in the day from Mr. Peter Cruz, which was emailed to the Committee Members. In the letter Mr. Cruz asks the Council, through the Committee, to consider putting in place a housing preservation ordinance goal. The letter also mentions funding mechanisms and programs to help put the ordinance in place. Mr. Ramsland mentioned that policy C-6 touches on the issues brought up by Mr. Cruz and the Committee was welcomed to discuss it further when they get to that section of the presentation.

Mr. Hoffman noted to the Committee that the goals and policies being presented were a work in progress and that they could be modified based on input from the Committee and the public. He presented the first PowerPoint slide which covered "Goal A: Housing Opportunities". The Chair asked if any Committee Members had questions.

Member Bernier asked for clarification between single-family and multiple-family and the difference between low, very-low and moderate-income housing. Mark gave an explanation. The Chair asked if anyone from the public had questions.

Rochelle Mills, Innovative Housing Opportunities, said that this was an excellent review of the existing and proposed policies saying they were easy to read and understand. She suggested that for policy A-1, the language be changed to "accelerate the development of all types of housing". For variety of housing, part of A-1 and A-4, Ms. Mills said that mixing income levels is the most successful model to build vibrant communities. Member Bernier agreed with Ms. Mills about the mixed income levels.

Mohammad Raza, La Habra resident and affordable housing advocate, echoed previous comments and asked for more affordable housing and less luxury apartment complexes in La Habra.

Mr. Hoffman went over the second slide, which was a continuation of the policies under "Goal A". The Chair asked if any Committee Members had questions.

Member Bernier asked Mr. Hoffman if he could explain Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) and Mixed Use. Mr. Hoffman went over the differences between ADUs, Junior ADUs and Mixed-Use projects. The Chair asked if anyone from the public had questions.

Rochelle Mills asked about the adequacy of the potential housing sites list that has been created for the Housing Element. She expressed concern on the developability of the sites and noted that other cities have included sites that needed zone changes or general plan amendments or had physical constraints that created problems for developers; she also asked if the selected sites can be tagged for a streamlined entitlement process for zoning by right. Planning Manager Ramsland responded that all of the selected sites have the General Plan and Zoning designations necessary for multifamily development in place and did not have any physical constraints.

Mr. Hoffman went over the next slide, "Goal B: Housing Maintenance/Conservation". The Chair asked if any Committee Members had questions.

Member Bernier had questions about policy B-1 "Protect and Improve Residential Character". She asked for an example of what we wouldn't want and what we would want to see in a neighborhood. Mr. Hoffman

explained some of the typical issues that Code Enforcement would look at and what programs might need to be put in place to assist their efforts. He also touched on how the City's Capital Improvements Program (CIP) is implemented for things like street and other infrastructure maintenance and improvements.

Teresa Kempker asked if the perspective residents (tenants) or the property owners are the ones expected to keep up with the maintenance of the housing. Mr. Hoffman said that it would be a shared responsibility between the property owner and the renter.

Mr. Hoffman noted that each of the goal and policy sections in the Housing Element would have introductory text that would provide an overview that would provide context and explain the topics that the goal covers.

The Chair then asked if there were any Members of the public who had questions for the Committee.

Rochelle Mills commented on policy B-2 "Neighborhood Involvement". She stressed the importance of having accountability and a vision document to help the City, the community, and the developer to agree on what is best. Member Bernier mentioned her involvement in the Love La Habra Committee and said Rochelle brings up good points.

Mr. Hoffman went over the next slide "Goal C: Assist in Provision of Housing". After Mr. Hoffman talked about policy C-6, Planning Manager Ramsland said that that policy speaks to Mr. Cruz's letter that was emailed to the Committee. The Chair asked if any Committee Members had questions.

Member Bernier asked about adding language to clarify who is eligible for inclusionary housing, is it La Habra residents or outside residents. She added that she felt that guidelines were needed for policies C-1 and C-2.

Member Espinoza asked Rochelle Mills what she thought about the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance that the City had just passed. Ms. Mills said she has become a lover of inclusionary housing policy. She also asked for clarification on policy C-2, on what support collaborative partnerships meant. Mr. Hoffman said her comments bring up good points to include language to encourage partnerships with organizations that bring knowledge in for affordable housing.

Member Laveaga asked for a definition of inclusionary housing. Mr. Hoffman gave the percentages of affordable units needed depending on the projects. Mr. Ramsland added that there is language in the ordinance that would also allow the developer to pay an in-leu fee as opposed to building the units.

Member Kempker referred to the Collaborative Partnerships policy and asked about adding a monetary incentive to help with repairs. Mr. Hoffman said when there are funds available, funds for repairs are generally set aside for low and very low-income levels. Rochelle Mills mentioned that she has received calls from seniors looking to downsize but not able to stay in their community. Planning Manager Ramsland added that a creative solution that some people have been using is adding Accessory Dwelling Units on their property to provide a revenue stream for property maintenance.

Member Kempker said that some seniors that downsize go to active senior citizen's complexes where rents are higher. Rochelle Mills said that is why seniors are staying in their homes because there is no housing stock for them to move into. Chair Surich agreed that having some kind of a program to help seniors with repairs is a good idea since many are on fixed incomes.

Mr. Hoffman went over the next slides "Goal D: Policies". He noted that these were prepared prior to release of the guidelines from the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing, and that the policies would need to be further review and updated. The Chair asked if any Committee Members had questions.

Member Bernier said she would like to see something added to assist veterans to find housing.

Rochelle Mills talked about policy D-5. She asked about changing “employment” to “workforce opportunities” and she asked about being more general with the words “special needs”. Mr. Hoffman said that the current definitions came from State law. Ms. Mills said being general is better. Member Bernier agreed.

Mr. Hoffman went over the last slides “Programs”. He reiterated that this was prepared prior to HCD releasing their guidance. He also mentioned that these would be brought back as a draft for the Committee to review. The Chair asked if any Committee Members had questions.

Member Bernier asked if “First Time Homebuyer’s Program” could be placed on hold and not deleted.

The Chair closed Public Comments.

b. Future Meeting Schedule

Planning Manager Roy Ramsland said that the next meeting would take place in early June. The topic of review would be the review of the revised version of the policies based on tonight’s discussion and they would be reviewing the proposed modification to the Safety Element as well. Mr. Tescher gave a brief overview of what would be included as part of the Safety Element. Mr. Ramsland went over the schedule of future meetings and asked Members if they wished to continue via Zoom or go to in person meetings. Most Members agreed to continue via Zoom.

Member Espinoza thanked Rochelle for her participation in the meeting. Chair Surich also thanked Rochelle and staff.

6. Adjournment-

Chair Surich adjourned the meeting at 8:26 p.m.