

**BOARD OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
MEETING
10:00 A.M., March 20, 2017
Glen Allen, Virginia**

Members Present

Mr. John Ainslie
Mr. James “Robby” Dawson
Ms. Susan Dewey
Mr. Sean Farrell
Mr. Rich Napier
Mr. Shekar Narasimhan
Mr. Earl Reynolds
Mr. Jeff Sadler
Mr. Steve Semones
Ms. Patricia Shields

Members Absent

Mr. John Patrick “J.P.” Carr
Ms. Helen Hardiman
Mr. Roger McLellon
Mr. Tommy Shields

Call to Order Mr. John Ainslie, Chairman of the Board of Housing and Community Development, called the meeting of the Board to order.

Roll Call The roll was called by Mr. Kyle Flanders of the Department of Housing and Community Development’s (DHCD) Policy Office. Mr. Flanders reported that a quorum was present.

Public Comment Mr. Ned Yost, a resident of the Westminster-Canterbury Retirement Community in Charlottesville, stated that he was speaking on behalf of elderly residents of Virginia living in single and multi-family homes in neighborhoods marketed to seniors. He stated that the elderly are at high risk of dying in home fires and proposed the adoption of automated sprinkler systems in senior communities. No other comments were made by the public; the public comment period was then closed.

Approval of Minutes Mr. Sean Farrell made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 23, 2017 meeting of the Board. The motion was properly seconded and passed unanimously.

Code Change Process Updates Ms. Cindy Davis, Deputy Director of Building and Fire Regulations at DHCD, provided a brief update of the code change process, including that the public comment period was currently open and the public hearing will be at the May meeting

of the Board.

Mr. Robby Dawson shared information on proposed legislation regarding Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding that may change the way states are able to obtain assistance. The legislation proposes that FEMA will issue funding after a state reaches a preset deductible; they will also use the Insurance Services Office (ISO) Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule (BCEGS) to apply credits towards the deductible.

FOIA Discussion

Mr. Bill Shelton, Director of DHCD, introduced Ms. Maria Everett, the Executive Director of the Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory (FOIA) Council. Ms. Everett gave a presentation to the Board on their roles as Board members and what constitutes a meeting under FOIA as it applies to deliberative boards. A meeting would be held to the open meeting requirements when there is a gathering of three or more Board members and there is a discussion of public business. An open meeting should be a meeting that has been given proper notice, is open to the public, and there are minutes of the meeting.

Discussion ensued over the issue of whether or not Board members should attend the workgroups as open meetings. It was discussed that the workgroups should follow the open meeting requirements as outlined in FOIA. Mr. Justin Bell, Attorney General representative to the Board, advised that while staff would cover the open meeting requirement, it should be a separate discussion as to whether or not to form a Board policy regarding attendance at workgroup meetings.

Mr. Ainslie directed staff to develop a draft Board policy regarding attendance at workgroup meetings to present to the Board at the May meeting. In the interim, Mr. Bell advised that members do not attend workgroup meetings unless notice is given to staff prior to the meetings.

Consolidated Plan/Action Plan Update

Mr. Shelton introduced Ms. Lisa Atkinson, Deputy Director of Community Development and Lyndsi Austin, Associate Director

of Housing Policy at DHCD, to give an update on the Consolidated Planning process. Ms. Atkinson advised that they are currently in the fifth year of a five year plan. The Consolidated Plan is a requirement for grantees of federal funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The plan is comprised of a needs assessment, a strategic plan, and annual goals with a focus on housing, homelessness, and community development. DHCD receives over \$30 million in funding from HUD to oversee numerous programs such as: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), HOME Investment Partnerships, Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS/HIV (HOPWA), and the National Housing Trust Fund.

Ms. Austin shared that the citizen input sessions took place in February across the state and that a public hearing will be held on March 30th. The Board will review the Action Plan and public hearing input and vote on the approval of the Action Plan at the May meeting.

Mr. Dawson questioned had there been any talk of federal reductions. Mr. Shelton responded that the budget process on the federal level is in the beginning stages and that we have to proceed as if funding will still be allocated. Ms. Austin also added that they do not have the official number for FY 18 but there has been no official communication from HUD.

Enterprise Zone Report

Mr. Shelton introduced Dr. Sarin Adhikari from the Center for Urban and Regional Analysis (CURA) at Virginia Commonwealth University who contributed to the review of the Enterprise Zone (EZ) Program. This report was part of a 2015 budget item to determine the effectiveness of the program.

Dr. Adhikari presented an overview and the history of the program. CURA was tasked with studying the impact of the program on business and job growth and effect on real property value. The report also investigated the strengths and weaknesses of the program, the role the program played in helping communities achieve their goals, and various ways to improve the program. The report showed that Enterprise Zones have

experienced economic growth comparable to their localities and that EZ incentives show a correlation to an increase in businesses and jobs. The report also included a survey of zone participants and stakeholders to determine the importance of the incentives and satisfaction with the program. Dr. Adhikari finished with suggestions to improve the program, some of which included making it equally attractive for small and medium-sized businesses, focusing on workforce development, and simplification of the application process.

Legislative/Budget Update Mr. Shelton shared the status of several bills of interest with Board such as: Danville's program for the recordation of deeds, manufactured home lot rentals, short-term rentals (AirBNB), FOIA exemption for building plans, and broadband. Mr. Shelton also shared details of the budget based on the conference report which included the restoration of \$1 million to the Enterprise Zone Program and a \$500,000 reduction to the Industrial Revitalization Fund (IRF). Budget language was also added that directs the agency to work with VHDA, the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services and others to develop and implement strategies that focus on housing for individuals with serious mental illness.

VHDA Report Ms. Dewey reported to the Board that they have received applications for the Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) program and plan to make awards at their June Board meeting. Ms. Dewey also expressed uncertainty at the federal level that could affect the program.

VFSB Report Mr. Sean Farrell reported on behalf of the Virginia Fire Services Board (VFSB) that their Board met February 23rd in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Mr. Farrell also added that the Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP) is instituting a search function on their website to better access the data that is held by the department. VDFP will also be publishing an annual report. Mr. Farrell reported that there were 69 fire related fatalities in 2016 and have been 14 as of the Board meeting for 2017. Their next meeting will be June 2nd in Petersburg.

Report of the Director Mr. Shelton reported that DHCD had hired a new Deputy

Director for the Housing Division and introduced Ms. Pam Kestner. Mr. Shelton also shared that there had been some grant announcements since the Board had last met and would be happy to answer any questions.

Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business to be discussed.

New Business

There was no new business to be discussed.

Board Matters

There were no board matters to be discussed.

Future Meetings

Mr. Ainslie went over the dates of the upcoming meetings, noting the next meeting of the Board would be May 15th along with the joint public hearing on the proposed regulations.

Adjournment

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.