

AUGUST 29, 2006 - WORKSHOP

The Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida, held a Workshop to discuss workforce housing.

The following Board members were present: Chairman Scott Brannon, Commissioner Kenneth Pridgen, and Commissioner Cindy Meadows. Ms. Shirl Williams, Assistant County Administrator, was also present.

Commissioner Meadows led with prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag. Chairman Brannon called the meeting to order.

Commissioner Pridgen gave a brief introduction and discussed the need for workforce housing.

Mr. Dewey Wilson, CEO, Regional Utilities, stated that Regional Utilities purchased 2,200 acres in central Walton County with plans to construct workforce housing on 400 acres adjacent to a proposed sewer treatment facility. He stated that the county will not be responsible for costs or liabilities associated with the project. Mr. Wilson stated that this project is a collaborative effort between Regional Utilities, the County Commission, the Planning Department, the City of Freeport, and Mr. Lloyd Blue. A private not-for-profit to be called Walton County Workforce Housing Corporation will be established to create the housing authority. An overview of the project was submitted.

Mr. Lloyd Blue spoke as a volunteer working with the parties involved with this project. He thanked Senator Durrell Peaden for working with the DCA to get the Large Scale Comp Plan Amendment necessary for the project passed. Mr. Blue stated that the project is scheduled in two phases and briefly discussed each phase. A 40-acre school/recreation site is also included in the plan.

Mr. Mark Mustian, Nabors, Giblin, & Nickerson, discussed the non-profit corporation and Tax Increment Financing. He discussed drafts of the ordinance necessary to establish the housing district and of the three-party agreement to transfer surplus land to the non-profit which were included in the information submitted by Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Jody Bear, Cruise and Associates, discussed the process for underwriting bonds. He explained that the non-profit will obtain the financing and be responsible for the subsequent repayment through incremental ad valorem taxes. Mr. Bear added that the county will bear no responsibility for the borrowing or repaying of the debt.

Mr. Jeff Sharkey, Florida Housing Authority, discussed the Workforce Housing Innovation Program (CWHIP) recently established by the Florida Legislature. Through the CWHIP, the state set aside 50 million dollars in low-interest loans statewide, with a possible five million being available for Walton County's use in developing workforce housing- be it for rental or ownership. The program requires that the community establish a public/private partnership to provide 15% of the total development costs, the homes must maintain 30-50 years of affordability, 50% of the units must go to essential personnel, and 80% of the units must be for income levels of up to 140% of the county's mean income. Mr. Sharkey stated that grant monies should be awarded in January 2007. He briefly discussed methods for maintaining affordability. A CWHIP brochure was submitted.

Mr. Wilson discussed and read into the record the proposed Property Transfer and Use Agreement and a list of actions which must take place prior to the execution of the interlocal agreement.

Mr. Blue explained that the Board would need to appoint board members for the Workforce Housing Board should they approve the project and suggested the following

appointees: Ms. Bonnie McQuiston, Walton County Tax Payers Association, Ms. Anita Page, Mr. Gary Mattison, Director of Human Resources, Walton County, Mr. Dewey Wilson, Councilman Earl King, City of Freeport, Councilman Buddy Huffman, City of DeFuniak, Ms. Dawn Moliterno, Chamber of Commerce, and a member of the development community. Mr. Blue stated that he has been working with the project thus far and would be willing to continue.

Commissioner Pridgen felt that the project is an integral step in alleviating the burden of affordable housing. He approved of Mr. Blue's suggestions for the board.

The Board expressed their gratitude to those who have worked on the project and stated that the issue will be discussed further at the September 12, 2006, Regular BCC Meeting.

Senator Peaden spoke briefly regarding the need for workforce housing and discussed future growth of population.

Ms. Carleen Anderson, Superintendent, Walton County School Board, spoke regarding the betterment of the community for the students and residents. She briefly discussed the benefits to the WCSD.

Mr. Blue presented Ms. Anderson a check for \$81,984.00 to cover the pro-rata cost of the forty-acre school site. He stated that the check may be exchanged for the deed once the Board authorizes the corporation to move forward. Ms. Anderson expressed her gratitude.

Mr. Huffman, Freeport Mayor Mickey Marse, and Ms. Moliterno spoke regarding the collaborative effort to provide workforce housing and expressed their appreciation.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 10:50 p.m.

ATTEST: _____
Martha Ingle, Clerk of Courts

APPROVED: _____
Scott Brannon, Chairman