

Minutes of the Ventura Social Service Task Force for May 5, 2021

5/5/21 3:18 pm via Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88503050348>

Attendees: Denie Adams, Judy Alexandre, Sergeant Mike Anselmo, Brian Brennan, Gayne Brooking, Jenn Harkey, Meredith Hart, John Jones, Kyler Carlson, Kevin Clerici, Rev Jim Duran, Sonja Flores, Doug Halter, Meredith Hart, Mike Johnson, Pam Kelly, Pam Marshall, Sandra Meyer, Kathy Nye, Kappy Paulson, Clyde Reynolds, Chris Russell, Debora Schreiber, Jan Schmutte, Summer Ward, Susan Whitewood

- I. Meeting was called to order at 3:18; welcome and introductions took place
- II. Agenda approved without changes (John Jones/Jan Schmutte)
- III. Minutes of 4/7/21 approved without changes (Pam Marshall, Jan Schmutte)
- IV. Financial update (Jan Schmutte) - No changes - \$2,316.46
- V. Updates and information:
  - a. Safe and Clean, Housing and Homeless Subcommittee (Meredith Hart)
    - i. Subcommittee met yesterday and adopted a new name: The Hope and Solutions Subcommittee, Housing Opportunity and Proactive Engagement and Solutions Committee, or HOPES. We think this title better captures everything we do and has many positive connotations. We are now meeting at 2:30. It has been difficult because we can only have one public meeting on at a time. We are continuing with our monthly environmental clean ups, with a big thank you to Sergeant Anselmo and his team, as well as Chris Russell and Christina Cabral, who are really helpful in engaging the community in our river bottoms, offering support as needed and wanted. Every time we go and clean up the decades of accumulation in there, there are about 150 pounds minimum of debris we remove. At some point we will have a clean slate for everyone, and then we will just have to manage the debris instead of having these massive clean up efforts. We had Measure O meeting yesterday, and they approved the recommendation for 3 budget increases to go to City Council. Those are increases for environmental clean ups, for Mercy House, and for an on-site manager for River Haven, which has had some issues stemming from being so close to the Santa Clara River bottom. I will be speaking at Montalvo District 6 on Tuesday. I have been doing a lot of communications work with our Communications Team doing a lot of videos that answer questions that come in to me or to Council. It is to educate the public about what we can do and what we can't do. They are on the City You Tube Page. We are releasing them every couple of weeks.
  - b. City Council (Mike Johnson/Doug Halter)
    - i. Mike Johnson - Main thing going on is the budget, which could be quite contentious. Council will get to have input as to what they want in two weeks

and budget must be passed by end of June. There will be some discussion of the Housing Element as well. The Safe and Clean Committee has had a name change and we have had discussions about what Meredith Hart has been doing, which is really seaparated out from picking up abandoned mattresses and blight. I am hoping we can rethink that division and separate it out from Safe and Clean and give it the precedence it deserves. I think we are making good headway on that. I understand that there is a very active group protesting the water rate hikes, but the decisions that cause this were made in 2018. We can't use another pot of money for it under state law. Anyone who has traveled to third world countries knows how precious water is. I pay a penny a gallon, and it is going to go up to a penny and a half a gallon, and I am okay with that personally. It is clean water delivered right to my house.

- ii. Doug Halter - Budget will take precedence. City Manager has presented what he thought he heard from council at the goal setting session. GPAC is going well; we have a lot of people attending. The first workshop was on April 1, with 150 people present. Streamlining ordinance was extended for a year. We are looking into some Main Street moves and some potential options as we move forward through the pandemic. As to water rates, water is a quality of life decision. It gives us the ability to be here. I am looking at decisions that have set us on this path, and it is pretty impossible to retract from that path. We are looking at having a sustainable, reliable source of water, so we don't have to go on water rationing of any type. We are looking at many different streams and being cognizant of the environmental needs of our rivers. That is going to limit 150-year-old water opportunities that we have had, not to mention climate change. They have already declared a severe drought in our region. With the cost of so much going up, it makes it expensive to live here. And that makes it hurt. The option of doing nothing is not really an option.
- c. Continuum of Care (Jenn Harkey) - Project Room Key is continuing to operate through the local motels in Ventura - Vagabond and Best Western - with funding through FEMA, and we have enough funding to continue through September. That gives us more time to work with the households and individuals on exits to housing. We have been working with Housing Authority on vouchers and on placement through our Coordinated Entry System. Over the past couple of weeks, we have housed more people through mainstream vouchers and the new Project Ranch and through Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing. For the Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention Program, which is state funding, we are accepting proposals for Round 2, open until June 4. The application is posted on [venturacoc.org](http://venturacoc.org). Most of the funding is aimed at housing and rapid rehousing for individuals who are currently homeless. We also recently issued the agreement for the Emergency Solutions Grant for Corona Virus, also through state funding. The Human Service Agency with Rapid Re-housing and flexible subsidies is one of our largest partners; we also have street outreach operations funded as well as some of the shelters including the ARCH receiving funding for housing navigation and rental assistance. United Way is receiving landlord incentive dollars.

- d. The ARCH (Staci) - We are in the middle of hiring a new program manager, as our old manager is moving to the Oxnard shelter. Some CIC clients have come into the shelter recently. We are helping them with court, etc. We had a few leave, but more came in and have stayed, and now that restrictions have been lifted, we are beginning to fill up again. We would love to get to the point when we can open up for tours again. Judy added that Meredith Hart is already looking at creating a group that can work on pathways to jobs for people who have been homeless. Further updates will come on that. Jim Duran has been successful at that at City Center, and it is just starting for the ARCH. Staci added that this is an important step, and that she is concerned that hiring managers Google the address on applicants' applications and find the ARCH and that can limit their opportunities. Sandra Meyer asked if the committee working on pathways to jobs would be just for the ARCH, and Judy replied that it will be for all.

VII. Legislative update (bills impacting housing and homelessness - Pam Marshall)

- a. SB 9 - Housing Opportunity or HOME Act- allow 2 homes on every property zoned for single family homes in CA and streamline process to split a lot or to create a duplex. Could lead to substantial increase in housing - 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting in Committee. Next hearing in 5 days.
- b. SB 10 - Missing Middle Housing Near Jobs and Transit - allows cities to streamline zoning lots that are near jobs and transit; increase density up to 10 units. In committee, 2<sup>nd</sup> reading; next hearing on May 10.
- c. SB 477 - Housing Data Act - required information added to annual report cities must give - placed in suspension, may die
- d. SB 478 - Housing Opportunity Act, removes artificial barriers that limit the number of homes that can be built on a property. Establishes minimum standards such as floor area to lot ratio. 2<sup>nd</sup> reading in committee, next hearing on May 10.
- e. Senate constitutional amendment #2, to repeal Article 34, which limits the supply of low-income housing. Pam suggested folks read this one online, as it is very involved. It has yet to go to committee. It would go to the ballot for approval in the end.
- f. AB 946 - End Tax Deductions for Vacation Homes - no longer could deduct 2<sup>nd</sup> home mortgage and apply savings to housing; author pulled it before hearing; probably will not advance
- g. AB 1401 - End Parking Mandates - no parking mandates for property within half a mile of transit. 2<sup>nd</sup> reading; advanced to Appropriations Committee
- h. AB 1075 Missing Middle Zoning Reform - would make it legal for cities to allow up to 10 homes on lots that currently ban multi-family housing - still in committee
- i. AB 602 - Development Fee Reform - required impact fees to be proportional to the size of the home. 2<sup>nd</sup> reading - Advanced to Appropriations Committee
- j. Much more information at [CaliforniaYIMBY.com](http://CaliforniaYIMBY.com)

- k. Judy added that we will continue to have Pam do this each month, and Judy will send it out. City Council members, housing groups, and individuals can follow up.
- l. Peter Gilli will come to June meeting to hear Ventura Social Services Task Force concerns around housing and have input for General Plan

VIII. Faith Sub-Committee (Pam Kelley)

- a. The Faith Subcommittee had its first meeting at the end of April. A workshop with information and updates on issues of housing and how to decrease homelessness will be Thursday, September 30, 5:30 - 8 pm at O'Brien Hall at Mission Basilica on Main Street. Main talking points include who qualifies for different types of housing, history of discriminatory housing information on housing element, needs of low income housing developers, and what faith communities and the general public can do to help make housing happen. Invitations will go out to all service agencies to set up tables. Housing developers will be there.
- b. Approval to spend funds - Up to \$500 for printing, mailing and refreshments and other needs. M/S Approved: Kappy Paulson/Kathy Nye
- c. In the past food was donated by Salvation Army, and Jim Duran did all our printing, but don't know if these can happen again. No fee for location, so thank you to Mission Basilica.

IX. Housing Element discussion (Sonja Flores, Kyler Carlson) Sonja discussed the upcoming housing element and the Advocacy Proposals from Homes for All and VSSTF. The Housing Element is one portion of a bigger document call the General Plan that the City is required to do by law. The General Plan must describe how the City will meet the housing needs of the population - especially the low income residents. We can ask the City to have very strong elements in place to make sure that enough properties and density are allowed. The City is working on the General Plan, but is going ahead with the Housing Element first. Must have done by February. Have hired a consultant. A draft housing element will be released in June. In July, the Planning Commission will have a study session. Then the state will review the draft. If we get the draft in June, we have little time to give input, so we are putting together now a list of recommendations we want to have included. It will be harder to get it changed once draft is released. City will take state's revisions in October and put into Housing Element and take to City Council for adoption in December. Final form must be adopted by February. Here is a summary of the recommendations we would like to put forward and approve if you are in agreement. We'd like to include those you approve in a letter we will send to City Council. We submitted a letter from Homes for All and Ventura Social Services Task Force back in November 2020.

- a. Recommendations 1-3
  - i. 1) Inclusionary zoning – This is to affirm the direction that council gave staff to have this done by December of 2021. That the new ordinance needs to get rid of the loopholes that are in the old one and be required to provide 15 percent affordable units to all new for sale and rental projects. We would also like the

City to incorporate an in-lieu option for all projects subject to inclusionary housing policies. For each required affordable unit, the fee to be paid by the developer to the City would be comparable to or close to the cost of developing a housing unit.

- ii. 2) Stronger considerations for Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) - We request that the City identify sufficient sites within its current housing element vacant and underutilized land inventories that are located in high or highest resources areas and include these sites within the affordable housing overlay program as well. High or highest resource areas have been analyzed by the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee and designated as areas that have proven to have access to opportunities, i.e.: educational, transit, proximity to jobs, etc2) Inclusionary zoning – This is to affirm the direction that council gave staff to have this done by December of 2021. That the new ordinance needs to get rid of the loopholes that are in the old one and be required to provide 15 percent affordable units to all new for sale and rental projects. We would also like the City to incorporate an in-lieu option for all projects subject to inclusionary housing policies. For each required affordable unit, the fee to be paid by the developer to the City would be comparable to or close to the cost of developing a housing unit.
- iii. 3) Stronger considerations for Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) - We request that the City identify sufficient sites within its current housing element vacant and underutilized land inventories that are located in high or highest resources areas and include these sites within the affordable housing overlay program as well. High or highest resource areas have been analyzed by the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee and designated as areas that have proven to have access to opportunities, i.e.: educational, transit, proximity to jobs, etc
- iv. Discussion and Answers to Questions on Items 1-3
  1. Mike Johnson clarified that the new General Plan is not based on the upcoming Housing Element, which will be finalized in February.
  2. Sonja responded that the Housing Element being approved now is the one that gives us the most opportunity to include policies that are really going to make a difference. Anything approved later would have no pressure by the state to include more affordable housing.
  3. Mike clarified that we are going to have an inclusionary housing in lieu fee, because it is required by law. The amount and timing are at issue.
  4. Affordable Housing overlay -30 parcels over 2 acres and smaller parcels for tiny homes identified. Asking that the City allow those parcels be developed by right as affordable housing. Owners could use land for other purposes than current zoning, i.e., affordable housing. The letter

that details all of this was sent to Ventura Social Services Task Force with agenda.

5. Our proposal increases by-right building of affordable housing and increased zoning.
6. Asking that the ordinance get rid of loopholes that applied only to for-sale projects; we are asking that they apply to rental and all new project include 15% affordable housing or in-lieu fee equal to actual cost of building
7. We are asking that the City identify high-resource parcels and allow up to 30 units per acre - the goal is to more evenly spread income levels throughout the City. We have inclusionary housing in the current housing element. It is perfectly fine that we are pushing for it now.
8. The new General Plan could elicit rezoning, and if that happens, then that could open up additional parcels for affordable housing.
9. Our advocacy has the potential to make a difference.
10. This will come for a vote before city council. Elected officials cannot vote at this meeting on the items under consideration on Council.

v. VOTE ON ITEMS 1, 2, AND 3: Approved by hand vote

a) Proposed Items 4-6:

- a. 4) Consider reducing, deferring, and/or waiving development fees for 100% extremely low-income/very low-income households.
- b. 5) Participate in the County-wide Farm Worker Housing study.
- c. 6) Study opportunities for city owned land to be donated for the development of affordable housing

b) Discussion/Answers to questions on items 4-6:

- a. County of Ventura agreed to conduct a farmworker housing program into their study. Other cities such as Oxnard are participating and contributing to that study and we'd like Ventura to do so as well.
- b. City will be getting money through COVID Relief Fund, and perhaps a certain amount of it could be designated toward Housing Trust Fund. Kathy Nye added that there is a commitment to the Housing Trust Fund from the City already. Judy added we need to make sure it is in the budget, and Sonja added that we are also asking that the City donate city-owned land for affordable housing.
- c. Council signed off on Monday how to spend the COVID money, so it may not be possible to bring that back to add Housing Trust Fund.

- d. All ten cities in the County are already contributing to the Housing Trust Fund, and a grant just brought in an additional \$10 million.
  - e. Ventura City already waives most fees for any project that is 100% affordable.
- c) VOTE ON ITEMS 4, 5, 6 M/S Approved (John Jones/Pam Marshall)
- d) Proposed Items 7 - 9
- a. 7) Include a Housing Element Goal which promotes the preservation and maintenance of affordable rental properties and affordable housing. This goal could be achieved by implementing stronger tenant protection programs, such as a rent stabilization program and a Just Cause Eviction protection ordinance.
  - b. 8) Consider a wider Low-Income Multi-family by-right Ordinance. Given the state of the affordable housing crisis, this would permit denser housing uses by-right in certain zones. This could help accomplish fair housing, because the vast majority of Ventura's High Opportunity Areas are R-1 zones only.
  - c. 9) In the Permanent Streamlining Ordinance consider measures that help Affordable Multifamily Projects navigate the entitlement process quickly and efficiently as recommended by the Matrix Report - Offer Expedited Plan Check Services to all Affordable Multifamily projects. (Recommendation 18)- Direct All Affordable Housing to the Administrative Hearing Officer
- e) Discussion/Answers to questions on items 7-9
- a. #7 (Kyler) These focus on rent stabilization and just cause requirements. These proposals are amplifying the recommendations put forward by CAUSE and other advocacy groups. These mostly ask that landlords have the burden to provide proof of need for rent increases.
  - b. #8 (Clyde) This proposal is based on one that was recently passed by Los Angeles and would determine zones where affordable housing could be built by right. Commercial zones don't currently permit housing by right. There are properties in R2 zones that could include condominiums and other multiple family housing. This would greatly enhance possibilities for those that are developing low, very low and extremely low income housing
  - c. #9 (Kyler) Council approved a streamlining ordinance that reduces the workload for development of affordable housing. This advocacy point would provide recommendations to staff as they look at how to streamline and expedite the approval process. These recommendations have already been provided to staff; this would simply support those proposals.
- f) VOTES ON ITEMS 7, 8, 9 M/S/approved (Pam Marshall/ John Jones)

- g) Judy will be arranging meetings with City Council members to advocate for all 9 of these items. Agencies or individuals that wish to advocate for these/send letters to City Council are encouraged to do so.
- h) Homes for All and Ventura Social Services Task Force will be advocating for all 9 of these. Judy will contact City Council to arrange for meetings to go over these. Judy encourages other agencies or faith communities to so advocate as well. Judy asked that Faith Communities might want to coordinate this effort through Jim Duran.
- i) Sonja clarified that we have been in ongoing conversations with City Staff already, and City Staff has indicated that the State will be coming down hard on these issues and the City will need new programs to comply with need for additional required affordable housing. There is still time to make changes.
- j) Mike stated that the important thing for all to understand is that the responsibility lies with City Council to make sure that a good Housing Element comes forward.
- k) Judy asked if Kevin would write an Op Ed piece for the Star.

#### X. Agency updates

- a. City Center and Tender Life both have spaces available
- b. A lovely new board and care facility is opening with 26 beds for adults with disabilities.. The new facility is called Thompson Place. It is smaller than the older facility, but it is a sparkling place. Thank you to Turning Point and the City of Ventura for working on this. When older facility, La Fiesta, closed, people had to be moved, some to other counties or to room and board or family. One or two ended up homeless; priority to relocate to the new facility was given to displaced former residents and four will be moving. Turning Point will have a grand opening soon.
- c. Ventura Homeless Prevention has funding for people who need help paying rent because of a one-times financial setback like job loss or a major car repair bill. People who do not qualify for state program, Housing is Key, can remain housed with help from Ventura Homeless Prevention. Please share with those who need rental assistance.
- d. Ventura County Homeless Student program has been recognized by state for work being done and has been funded for next three years. May 24, 2-5 conference on equity and inclusion for students and parents; new diversity director for county will be keynote speaker
- e. Vulnerable Populations Housing Advocacy Network group has been working with all organizations advocating around the housing element. Three of the programs we recommended to the City of Oxnard were adopted, and we continue to work with the City of Ventura. There is a broad coalition working on the Housing Element.
- f. Next HOPES (old Safe and Clean) meeting is June 1 at 2:30
- g. Faith subcommittee is 5/26 at 3 pm

- h. Continuum of Care Alliance 5/20 at 10 am
- i. General plan Advisory Committee; 5/18; 6:30pm
- XI. When to begin in person meetings: We need to decide when we want to begin meeting in person; perhaps we can send out a survey
- XII. M/S/approved to adjourn (John Jones/Kappy Paulson)

Meeting adjourned at 4:51.