

**Palm Beach County Housing Steering Committee**  
**October 13, 2021 – 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.**  
**Neighborhood/Community Revitalization Meeting Summary**

**Attendance:** Skip Miller (Chair), Mary Lou Bedford, Juanita Bernal, David Brandt, Donald Burgess, Charlotte Burnett, Layren Calvo, Rose Cesar, Shereena Coleman, Matt Constantine, Jervonte Edmonds, George Gentile, Dodi Glas, Kim Glas-Castro, Scott Hansel, Stephanie Heidt, Michael Howe, Michele Jacobs, Elliott Johnson, Laura Kallus, Janet Kranich, Ezra Krieg, Margaret LaCalle, Cindee LaCourse-Blum, Matthew Leger, Sergio Mariaca, Teresa McClurg, Dorritt M. Miller, Joan Oliva, Shelly Petrolia, Amy Pettway, Tatiana Pumphrey, Kevin Ratterree, Caroline Shamsi-Basha, Carlton Smith, Katy Smith, Wendy Tippet, Lori Vinikoor, William Waters, Michael Weiner, Anna Yeskey, Gabrielle Zaidman. **Speakers:** Shirley Erazo, Renée A. Jadusingh, Annetta Jenkins, Terri Murray, Linda Odum. **Staff:** Suzanne Cabrera, Leslie Mandell, Eralda Agolli

**Welcome & Purpose – Development of a Countywide Housing Plan – Morris G. “Skip” Miller**

- ❖ The Palm Beach County Housing Steering committee was formed in response to a 2017 housing summit that determined that Palm Beach County (PBC) has a tremendous shortage of affordable and workforce housing.
- ❖ The Housing Leadership Council (HLC) commissioned Florida International University in 2020 to conduct a housing needs assessment, which found that PBC was short of tens of thousands of units of affordable and workforce housing.
- ❖ HLC began to assess the county’s needs by gathering information from experts in four areas: Finance, Neighborhood Revitalization, Planning & Regulatory Barriers, and Racial Equity to determine what to include in a housing plan. The housing plan committee will begin shortly to begin drafting the housing plan.

**Topic Experts on Neighborhood Revitalization**

**Moderator:** Annetta Jenkins, Director of Neighborhood Services for the Riviera Beach CRA; Executive Director of the Riviera Beach CDC

- ❖ Introduced each speaker and invited attendees to ask questions after the presentations
- ❖ Noted that housing for all, in light of rising prices, decreasing land availability, meager resources, and rising political and community will, is a challenge.
- ❖ Bios and PowerPoint presentations will be on the HLC website after the session  
<https://www.hlcpbc.org/initiatives/housing-plan-meetings-and-resources/>

**Speakers**

**Topic: The role of housing authorities in community revitalization (TWO PRESENTATIONS)**

**Linda Odum**, Interim Executive Director, West Palm Beach Housing Authority

- ❖ West Palm Beach Housing Authority (WPBHA): created pursuant to Florida statutes
  - To provide safe, decent, and affordable housing in the City of West Palm Beach to persons and families with limited financial resources
  - To provide residents with access to programs which will assist them in making the transition to greater financial security.
  - Currently manages 1,091 affordable housing units across PBC
  - Provides rental assistance through Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program to 3,500+ families in the private market.
  - A full-service housing authority
    - Developer arm (Baobab Development, Inc.)
    - Licensed building contractor
    - HUD-approved Housing Counseling Agency, providing housing counseling services to homeowners and renters
    - CHDO (Community Housing Development Organization), through a Pine Ridge Holistic Living Center, a 501(c)3 affiliate of the WPBHA
  - Goal: To transform low-income areas, improve the community’s quality of life, and contribute to breaking the poverty cycle in communities served by the WPBHA
    - Created diversity of housing stock: home ownership, rental, condominium, cottage homes, townhomes, single family, and multifamily stock.

- Actively participated in community outreach; intentionally building equity within minority and historically disinvested communities
- Example #1: MerryPlace (Pleasant City neighborhood)
  - One of the most disinvested and crime ridden areas of the city
  - Partnered with City of West Palm Beach (WPB) to assemble 14.6 acres of land using eminent domain
  - Undertook a neighborhood planning and visioning session with stakeholders and residents
  - Partnered with city of WPB; received \$9M in infrastructure improvements, 9% tax credit allocations, SHIP funds, and a permanent loan
  - Built 128 units fitted with amenities (clubhouse, media center, picnic, and BBQ area)
  - Won the Gold Coast Builders Assn Prism Award in the “Energy for Life” category and the Florida Housing Coalition Award for “Green Affordable Housing Development.”
- Example #2: MerryPlace Estates
  - Received permits in 2018; built four single family homes (all sold), with goal to build twelve more
  - Partnered with Pulte homes and the WPBHA to build 34 townhomes and 2 single family homes under the County Workforce Housing Program (4 townhomes are sold and occupied).
  - Expected completion date 2022/2023
  - Utilized a homebuyer’s subsidy from City of WPB to help residents make their homes more affordable
  - Provided housing counseling services to assist buyers to obtain subsidies through city and county
  - Used a conventional structure construction loan from Valley Bank and a line of credit with PBCHFA
- Example #3: MerryPlace Gardens
  - 63 units of rental units under development
  - Applying for 4% bond tax credits and SAIL financing through Florida Housing Finance Corp.
- Example #4: Dunbar Village (one of the first public housing projects in SE Florida, built in 1940)
  - In Coleman Park neighborhood; rebuilt after a heinous crime was committed in a unit
  - Implemented a phase renewal strategy
  - Involved the community in presenting plans and worked with Landmark, the developer
    - Sabal Palm Place - 9 units completed in 2014 considered public housing
    - Paul Laurence Dunbar Senior Housing complex – 99 units completed in 2017
    - Silver Palm Place - 120 units of multifamily housing completed in 2018
    - Royal Palm Place - 125 units of senior housing completed in 2019
    - Total investment \$65M
- Public Housing authorities
  - Have access to funding and initiatives that are only available when a government entity is present
  - Have a long-standing relationship and demonstrated commitment to our communities
  - Work with the most vulnerable people in our community.

**Question:** Can eminent domain be used to assemble properties for affordable housing redevelopment under Florida statute? **Answer:** Yes, although it is not always well-received and is not an easy process.

**Shirley Erazo, President/CEO, Delray Beach Housing Authority**

- ❖ Delray Beach Housing Authority (DBHA) has been in operation since 1973.
  - Operates a rental assistance program funded by HUD (1100+ vouchers)
  - Operates a VASH (veteran assistance housing assistance program), emergency housing vouchers, public housing, and a family self-sufficiency program.
  - Delray Housing Group (nonprofit affiliate of the Housing Authority) is the development and property management arm of the DBHA.
  - Serves a population of 2,600+ people, of which 538 are elderly
- ❖ Revitalization of 200-unit Carver Estates Public Housing Development
  - Property was condemned in 2005; HUD special application center approved demolition in 2008
  - Strong partnership with the city of Delray Beach and the CRA, which provided much support.
  - Identified an inadequate supply of quality affordable housing in the Southwest neighborhood; recommended new housing construction to eliminate vacant lots within the area
  - Renamed the housing units Village Square Affording Housing Development
  - Roundstone Development, LLC created the master plan

- Phase 1: Village Square Family - 144 multifamily units (acquired 9% LIHTC); Units fully occupied within 90 days
- Phase 2: Courts at Village Square - 84 elderly units (acquired 4% LIHTC, tax-exempt bonds from the PBHA, Delray Beach CRA loan, and DBHA subsidy layered with project-based section 8 vouchers). Units fully occupied within 90 days
  - Successfully addressed the housing need, revitalized the property and the community
  - Phase 3: Village Square – Island Cove (3-acre lot). Originally conceived to develop property as a homeownership but had difficulty in acquiring financing. Ultimately developed a rental affordable multifamily site. DBHA formed partnership with Smith & Henzy in 2019 to develop Island Cove as an affordable housing project (acquired 4% tax-exempt bond and \$1M grant). Construction to begin in May 2022.
- Housing Authorities' contribution to neighborhood revitalization
  - Partnership with housing authorities for LITC enhances potential awards
  - Creates additional affordable housing units to disproportionately impacted communities
  - Capacity to leverage financing by layering project-based Section 8 units
  - Brings strong partnerships with the local city, CRA, Florida Housing Finance Corporation and HUD for funding resources
  - Provides affordable housing opportunities to residents unable to rent units in a private market
  - Prevents further gentrification of neighborhood residents through redevelopment without displacing families

**Question:** Are there any current openings for housing vouchers for clients that are immune compromised? Are the housing voucher lists still closed? **Answer:** Accepting applications within the next few months.

**Topic: The role of CRAs in community revitalization**

**Renée A. Jadusingh**, Executive Director, Delray Beach Community Redevelopment Agency

- ❖ CRAs were created to prevent and eliminate slum and blighted conditions within a community. (Currently, there are 300 CRAs in Florida.)
- ❖ FL Statute 163: “Community Redevelopment” or “Redevelopment” means undertakings, activities or projects of a county, municipality or community development agency in a community redevelopment area for the elimination and prevention of the development or spread of slums and blight or for the provision of affordable housing, whether for rent or for sale, to residents of low or moderate income, including the elderly, and may include slum clearance and redevelopment in a community redevelopment area, or any combination or part thereof, in accordance with a community redevelopment plan and may include the preparation of such a plan.
- ❖ Avenues to address affordable housing
  - Land acquisitions
    - Home ownership: Renaissance program created a Community Land Trust for 170 affordable housing units
    - Community Land Trust
      - Acquired lots open for bidders to purchase
      - Partners with nonprofit developers to sell lots (ex: Land Trust, Habitat for Humanity)
      - Works with Housing Authority, which provides gap funding to help with the senior housing development
      - Provides \$1M government contribution for 4% tax credits that the Housing Authority secures to build future units
      - City Support: works on all the initiatives, zoning density, and funding
      - State Support: participates in city lobbying efforts; supports other housing initiatives to improve the housing stock in Delray Beach
      - Curb Appeal program: Improves existing housing stock by providing homeowners up to \$15,000 for exterior property improvements
      - Creates partnerships with private developers, with requirements to provide affordable housing

- Delray projects and initiatives
  - Acquires dilapidated properties that are improved, maintained, and rented to lower income or affordable housing families.
    - Nonprofit partners (Housing Authority and Community Land Trust) manage the properties and generating income for them.
    - Purchased and renovated apartment buildings: Lafrance Apartments, an historic property, now rented to for lower income households.
    - Palm Manor Senior housing: purchased to stabilize the housing stock; DBCRA owns, maintains, and controls the rents.
    - Carolyn Quince Court: provides housing as well as income for nonprofit partners
  - Land acquisition
    - Purchased Carver Square (cleaned up a former local dumping site)
    - Pulte Homes: building 20 single family homes at no cost to the CRA, due to needed credits to satisfy county regulations
      - Price in 2019 would have been \$4-\$5M for each development, which would have tied up CRA funds until payment received once homes were sold
      - Alternative financing resulted in Pulte responding to bid to develop property using tax credits in exchange for building requirements; funds would not be out of pocket for CRA.
      - Results were a quality product with a mixture of sale prices, size, and two car garages. The sale price is set by the county, and the numbers will increase every year.
      - The CRA asked that the price bid would become the sale price that would not escalate, to get that price locked in from the beginning; CRA will maintain close partnership
    - Acquired Corey Jones Isle (former nursery site)
      - Hired architect, put out bids for a nonprofit developer, with CRA providing the construction loan.
      - A \$2.7M project; worked with the Delray Beach Community Land Trust to build homes. Finished project includes ten brand new single- and two-story homes, 1500-1800 SF.
      - Will remain affordable under the Community Land Trust
  - Innovative Transportation Initiatives to improve mobility to and from downtown workplaces
    - Work with Freebee Transportation service
    - Enables connectivity within neighborhoods
- Commercial projects:
  - Affordable Office Space for small businesses in NW/SW neighborhoods
    - Enables residents the opportunity to work within their community
    - Purchased a two-story apartment building to convert to office space that CRA will own with management assistance but with controlled rent
    - Shared open concept 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor office space; individuals can use the space as their business address
    - Also building a two-story building on a vacant lot for small businesses
- SW Neighborhood Streetscape Improvements
  - Invested \$6+M into the Carver Square and Corey Jones infrastructure for new infrastructure, sewers, landscaping, lightscape, roadways, sidewalks
  - Osceola Park: invested \$5+M in streetscape improvements
  - Curb Appeal Project – Residential Rehabilitation Program
    - Provides ≤\$15,000 for home exterior improvements (new road, roof work, fencing, driveways, exterior lighting for security purposes, landscaping)

**Topic: Neighborhood Revitalization from the Ground Up: Coleman Park**

**Terri Murray**, Executive Director, Neighborhood Renaissance

- ❖ Neighborhood Renaissance: founded in 1992 to build strong economies and diverse communities in PBC
  - Develops homes within the financial reach of low- and moderate- income residents and by improving neighborhoods
  - Work is resident-driven to ensure a better quality of life for existing low- and moderate-income resident and to help them achieve their full potential

#### ❖ Coleman Park's revitalization efforts

- Redevelopment of four scattered sites along Tamarind Ave, with 50 affordable rentals and 3,500SF of neighborhood commercial space; includes a residential model block on Lincoln Rd, adjacent to one site
- Located 2 miles north of downtown West Palm Beach, adjacent to Northwood Village and Pleasant City.
- Concentrations of poverty, substandard housing, vacant lots, and blight intersecting with concentrations of minority populations
- Rich history in culture: North Tamarind Ave was once a thriving hub of black owned businesses, including clubs, grocery stores, beauty salons and a library; home to Lincoln Park, where baseball legends (Satchel Paige, Josh Gibson) played during spring training
- Former Dots Motel site (part of the Chitlin circuit) was visited by entertainers (James Brown, Sam Cook, The Five Blind Boys, Bobby Blue Bland, The Soul Stirrers, Moms Mabley, B.B. King)
- Supportive housing adjacent to a site, infrastructure, and streetscape improvements include Gulfstream Goodwill's special needs housing and other nonprofit homeownership programs (Habitat homes)
- Redevelopment of vacant lots along Tamarind Ave and the improvement of residential streets contributed to neighborhood rebirth
- Neighborhood is near public transportation (i.e., bus stops within ½ mile of the area) and services including Publix, Good Samaritan Medical Center, CVS, Roosevelt Middle School
- Recently renovated and expanded the Community and Recreation Center within walking distance
- Renovations were funded through the sales tax.
- Coleman Renaissance Scattered-Site Rental Development
  - 3-story garden style concrete construction with 50 units in 4 buildings with a mix of 17 1BR, 25 2BR, and 8 3BR apartments with 40% set aside for 60%AMI residents; 9 units for special needs HH
  - Additional 3,549 SF non-residential, commercial/retail space for minority businesses
  - Amenities: Energy Star appliances, in-unit washer/dryer, SEER 16 or better central AC, vinyl wood flooring, impact windows
  - Energy efficient units will conform to the National Green Building standards
  - Site amenities: playground, gazebo, community meeting rooms, BBQ, recreation areas
  - Estimated that 10% of the renters will become homeowners
  - City of WPB donated lots with the strategy of acquiring the 8 adjacent lots.
  - Challenges: heirs property, land speculators, environmental issues
  - Income ranges 22%- 70% AMI with net rents \$264-\$1,429
  - Rental Development Project Financing: tax-exempt bonds, SAIL, ELI Funding (FHFC), NHTF Funding, Palm Beach County HOME, WPB Cash match, and LIHTC (4% tax credits), donated land, with total development costs of \$14,736,726

#### ❖ Residents' Vision for the Lincoln Road Model Block

- Construction of new homes has recently begun
  - Part of a two-year process of resident collaboration
    - First component: 5 new single-family homes sold to 80% AMI buyers
      - ✓ Phase I sales price: \$155,000 (sold in July 2020)
      - ✓ Phase II sales price: \$210,000 (sold in July 2021)
      - ✓ City of WPB donated 4 lots on Lincoln Rd. and provided \$145,000 project-gap funding that leveraged an additional \$80,000 of funding from local foundations (~\$70,000/home for gap funding)
      - ✓ Phase III: Expand beyond Lincoln Rd with challenges: increased land and construction costs; increased funding gap, estimated cost \$90,000/unit for single family housing gap (for infill construction with existing infrastructure)
  - Engaging residents resulted in the completion of 5 existing homes through private investment
  - Will continue rehabilitation of housing for elderly low-income households using rehab dollars
- Resident interest in neighborhood revitalization resulted in their having more confidence in investing in the neighborhood as well as a resident driven beautification plan
  - Street resurfacing (by city of WPB)
  - Planting street trees – underway (by Community Foundation)
  - Uniform mailboxes - underway
  - Landscaping – underway
  - Traffic calming – petitioned the city

- Installing Decorative Street Lights (funding needed)
- Burying overhead wires – need funding
- Resident Empowerment Results
  - Community Engagement
    - Hired a fulltime community organizer (created a daily presence in neighborhood), surveyed residents to determine neighborhood concerns
    - Knocking on doors → gained resident trust
    - Created opportunity for ongoing dialogue to discuss solutions
    - Leadership training resulted in increased civic engagement
    - Identified resident leaders who are learning how to express concerns to commissioners, police, etc.,
    - Stronger Neighborhood Association
    - Participation in Mayor’s Neighborhood Task Force
    - Involved in fund raising projects
    - Financial literacy training/workshops provided for residents, including employment and homebuyer education (how to open a bank account, learning about credit scores, benefits of redevelopment)

### **Closing Remarks**

#### **Annetta Jenkins**

- ❖ All of these sessions have shared projects, initiatives, resources, and partnerships, for our stakeholders will give us a road map on how we can get to that vision.
- ❖ Presentations have shared innovative, bold projects and the importance of strong partnerships with local government and the private sector
- ❖ Mixed income and mixed use types of strategies can be successful.
- ❖ Reminding us of the importance of preventing gentrification to respect people currently living in neighborhoods.
- ❖ Will need legal partners to resolve heirs’ property issues in older neighborhoods
- ❖ Community redevelopment = economic development = housing development
- ❖ CRAs and housing authorities can be valuable in terms of land disposition and acquisition.
- ❖ Must look for strong policy support on the local, county and state level
- ❖ Community Land Trust are a vital tool in addressing some of the challenges.
- ❖ Green infrastructure sustainability, transportation, landscaping is especially important
- ❖ Resident empowerment is vital to building strong communities
- ❖ Ensure that equity overlays everything.

#### **Skip Miller**

- ❖ Send any questions to Suzanne via email
- ❖ This will be our last information gathering session.
- ❖ Next Steps: Each of the housing core groups will develop recommendations for inclusion in the housing plan

**Other business** – None

#### **Next Housing Steering Committee Meeting**

Wednesday, November 10<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 – 10:30 a.m. (2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month)

#### **Next Core Group Meeting**

Wednesday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, at 9:00 a.m. (4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday, monthly)

Adjournment

Skip Morris thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting.