

**COMMUNITY ALLIANCE OF SARASOTA COUNTY**  
([www.sarasotaalliance.net](http://www.sarasotaalliance.net))

**Economic Self Sufficiency Strategic Planning Work Group**

**August 20, 2007**

Members Present: Kirstin Fulkerson  
Phillip Gorelick  
Richard Martin  
Elliott Metcalfe  
Tom Pfaff  
Bryan Pope  
Steve Queior

Guests Present: Karen Curry, Sarasota Housing Authority  
Martina Guilfoil, Community Housing Trust  
Jane Hindall, Sarasota Office of Housing and  
Community Development  
Mike Jacobson, Habitat for Humanity  
Christine Lory, Florida Coalition for the Homeless

Staff Present: Pauline Tracy

Richard Martin and Steve Queior welcomed everyone and introductions were made.

**Habitat for Humanity**

Mike Jacobson, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity, stated that their organization did not have any land two years ago but they now have over 50 acres of property and a staff of 25. Habitat has raised over \$11 million (seed capital) and is now looking for second tier financing. They measure success by the number of homes built but believe that economic self-sufficiency and financial sustainability are extremely important and should be added as measures.

They have partnered with various agencies which serve parents and families such as the Women's Resource Center, to provide home ownership for their graduates. The average monthly rent for a house in Sarasota is currently \$950 to \$1200 per month. The average mortgage through Habitat is \$550 including taxes and insurance. Through Habitat, there is only a 3% delinquency rate on mortgage payments; only 1 foreclosure in 21 years; and, 95% of Habitat homeowners are still in their original homes. The need for more affordable homes is much greater than Habitat's ability to build or refurbish homes. There is currently more than 575 families on the Habitat's waiting list. Goodwill/Good

Homes is one of Habitat's partners and currently has a waiting list of more than 375 families.

### **Sarasota Housing Authority**

Karen Curry provided a report on the Janie Poe Public Housing:

- The first 50 families have moved from the housing complex.
- These families had the option of moving to Section 8 approved housing or to another unit within the Janie Poe complex.
- The Housing Authority is currently receiving resident input on the new complex.
- Jewish Family and Children's Services is providing case management services for families who relocate.

The Housing Authority currently has 20 to 25 staff and will establish a local Board again within the next year.

A HUD grant is used to address barriers to self-sufficiency and residents' needs. Self sufficiency programs for residents include:

- GED classes through SCTI
- Walgreens Pharmacy Technical Program
- Job skills, job readiness and placement services
- SCAT bus schedule
- Onsite child care services
- Disregard a portion of income when determining rent amount if resident used job skills program.
- Life skills (credit counseling and homeownership) classes

By the end of the year, the Housing Authority plans to offer Voucher Plus certificates which a resident can use Section 8 to pay a mortgage payment. There are currently 700 Section 8 rent vouchers used currently.

The Housing Authority has focused on public housing tenant leadership. There is a continuum in the community if people are willing to opt in. The Homeless to Habitat Program involves the faith-based community providing the leadership to change the "let's rent" paradigm. Renters need to understand how home ownership can help improve and strengthen their economic independence.

### **Sarasota County Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD)**

Jane Hindall reported that OHCD developed a 5-year consolidated plan in 2005 that included input from the community as to how to use their housing funds. Revenue from the State of Florida has flat funded for the past 3 years. OHCD

receives a total of \$9.8 million from federal and state sources. Their programs include:

- a down payment assistance program;
- public housing redevelopment (CDBG);
- home repair program;
- security and utility payments for Section 8 renters;
- Sarasota County Section 8;
- impact fee assistance for homeowners;
- impact fee assistance program for new construction of affordable housing; and
- Barrier Free program which makes homes more handicap accessible (Grants are provided for ramps, however, other work to retrofit homes is through a loan program which is forgiven after 4 years).

The current waiting list for Section 8 in the county is over 1500 families. The agency's website and advertising on television channels 19, 6 & 7 help get the word out about the various programs available. Jane state that the last time the down payment assistance program announced it would take applications, people camped outside of their office for 3 days.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds are used for programmatic needs. Next year the City of Sarasota will receive \$615,000 and the County will receive \$1.5 million.

### **Community Housing Trust**

Martina Guilfoil reported that the Community Housing Trust of Sarasota County was created out of concern regarding housing for working families. Subsidies received goes into development secured by the land. When the land is sold, the Trust keeps 75% in equity and homeowner will keep the remaining 25%.

Sarasota County Government gave the Housing Trust \$9.3 million to create a buyer-driven program. There are currently 28 units located in the Rosemary Garden area. By mid-December, it is expected that there will be 2,000 units under \$200,000 in Sarasota County and 3,000 units over the next 5 years. A link describing the homes available for sale can be found at [www.mycht.org](http://www.mycht.org).

The Housing Trust conducts orientations on how to buy a home and how to get preapproved. They focus on how to match buyers with a produce through partnerships with other housing and non-profit agencies, classes and workshops. The Housing Trust has worked closely with the Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice to develop a community for working families which should break ground next year. A percentage of the land will be held in trust and it is

anticipated that 100 of the 700 units will be for working families whose income is between \$40,000 and \$75,000.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting was scheduled for September 11 at 1:30 p.m., The Landings, green awnings, Room 128. At the next meeting, the group agreed to review all of the information they received from the various speakers over the summer and begin to formulate their top issues.