

**TOWN OF BLACK MOUNTAIN
HOUSING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
September 16, 2008**

The **Black Mountain Housing Commission** held its regular monthly meeting on **Tuesday, September 16, 2008 at 10:00 a.m.** at the Carver Community Center, 101 Carver Avenue, Black Mountain, North Carolina.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order with the following members present:

Joanne Brannon, Chair
Ellen Farris, Vice Chair
Dot Jones
Ronald Krantz
Connie Pruitt
Jessie Sherrill
Dawn Wilson

Absent:

Ruth Gleeson

Staff:

Rosa Hilbert, Senior Administrative Assistant

Other(s):

Alderman Joan Brown
Dave Bassett, Habitat for Humanity

Vice Chair Farris declared a quorum present and the meeting was duly constituted and opened for business.

II. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Joanne Brannon made a motion to adopt the agenda. Connie Pruitt seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

III. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Connie Pruitt made a motion to adopt the minutes of August 19, 2008 with modifications in the wording on page one and page two. Jesse Sherrill seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

1. Housing Trust Fund

The Commission agreed by consensus to continue discussion about the Housing Trust Fund at the next meeting.

2. Clevenger Master Plan Adopted

There were no questions or comments about the memorandum and Clevenger Master Plans

3. Other work item reports from Commission members

Dawn Wilson, in a follow up report about the property in Ridgecrest and on Cragmont Road, said that she and Dave Bassett, representative for Habitat for Humanity, walked the property. The issue with both properties is zoning because it is residential, low density which means one house per acre and it is not

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dense enough for Habitat to build. She added that both properties are under the Hillside Development Co-ordinates for the county and you cannot develop the property. She said that sewer was readily available at the Ridgecrest location.

Dot Jones said that the Fortune property across the street from the Carver Center is sellable but the property owners are not ready to put it on the market.

The Commission discussed the Clevenger and Ashe Street properties. Vice Chair Farrow said it does not appear that Habitat can use the Ashe Street property because of floodplain issues. Alderman Brown inquired whether the property could be built up enough to be usable. She spoke in favor of the Ashe Street property being utilized by Habitat or Mountain Housing Opportunities and said that it was a priority with the Board of Aldermen. Dave Bassett said that Habitat would have to put a lot of money into the land to build it up. There were recommendations that the Commission approach Bob Ingle or Rick Watson about contributing fill dirt for the project and contact Keith Levi at Habitat to see if the Ashe Street site could be considered if fill dirt was provided.

Dot Jones reported on the coordination of volunteer groups for home repairs. She said that Recovery Venture in Old Fort and Recovery Inc. in Ridgecrest charge for their services to assist with home repairs. She made contact with Covenant Community Church who has volunteers to assist with home repairs. There may be a minimal charge for materials. Ms. Jones brought a recent newspaper article about the Warren Wilson College Volunteer Program and will follow up and report at the next meeting. She distributed a brochure about Community Action Opportunities in Asheville. Their program provides services through its Weatherization Assistance Program. They have trained personnel who can access home repairs and determine the best approach to improve the home's energy efficiency. Ms. Jones contacted Lib Harper about the inmate volunteer program. The Black Mountain Correction Center for Women is under contract with the Town. She will follow up on how to obtain their services as well as contact Montreat College for information about their volunteer program.

Joan Brown suggested the Commission contact Renae Brame, Director of the Swannanoa Valley Christian Ministry, for information about its summer program with the inmate work crews.

Chair Brannon noted that the home repairs could directly affect landlords and asked about rental property in the Town in need of upgrading. Dawn Wilson said we do not have an inventory of rental properties because a Certificate of Occupancy process is not in place at this time. The Commission discussed situations involving landlords who increase the rent when they have to make repairs to the property. The general consensus is that renters will not report or complain about unsafe/substandard living conditions because it usually means increased rent which they probably cannot afford.

Vice Chair Farrow asked the Commission to continue working on language to address housing safety with rental property in the zoning ordinance. Connie Pruitt recommended presenting evidence of substandard living situations to the Planning Board. Dawn Wilson said the current ordinance addresses non-owner occupied rental housing. The ordinance does not cover a tenant who is renting a room in a house or renting a trailer in a park where the park owner owns the land but the trailer belongs to the tenant. (Note: The Commission was provided a copy of the Summary of Recommendations from the Housing Commission in the July 15th, 2008 agenda packet that was forwarded to the Planning Board and Board of Aldermen.) The Commission discussed housing standards and options for landlords to ensure safety for their tenants.

Dawn Wilson made a motion that the Housing Commission ask the Planning Board for an updated written report about discussions on the Certificate of Occupancy and minimum safety requirements. Dot

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Jones seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Joan Brown suggested that members of the Housing Commission speak directly to the Planning Board about housing concerns you would like to include on their agenda. Connie Pruitt will contact Elizabeth Teague, Planning Director, to schedule a slot on the Planning Board Agenda at their next meeting.

The Commission discussed the possibility of contacting Buncombe County for assistance in approaching the housing concerns. Chair Brannon suggested waiting until after the election to assess the political climate.

V. NEW BUSINESS – none

The Commission members would like to schedule a field trip to some of the sites where there is affordable housing, town owned properties and other sites of interest.

VI. STAFF AND MEMBER REPORTS AND COMMUNICATION - none

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT - none

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Brannon made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:15 a.m. Dawn Wilson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Ruth Gleeson, Secretary

Rosa B. Hilbert
Senior Administrative Assistant