

**ST. PETERSBURG CITY COUNCIL  
Committee Report  
Council Meeting of May 7, 2009**

**TO:** The Honorable Jeff Danner, Chair, and Members of City Council

**FROM:** Housing Services Committee: Leslie Curran, Council Vice-Chair, Herb Polson, Councilmember, Karl Nurse, Committee Vice Chair, Jeff Danner, Council Chair, Wengay Newton, Councilmember, Bill Dudley, Councilmember

**RE:** **Housing Services Committee Meeting of April 23, 2009**

**New Business:**

**Update on the Energy Conservation Program (Tom de Yampert, Manager, Finance and Rehabilitation)**

Mr. de Yampert began by discussing the Energy Conservation Program that Council approved a few months. Council approved the program whereby the Housing Department can provide a \$3,000 grant and up to a \$15,000 loan for eligible households to implement energy conservations, initially to be combined with Progress Energy Rebates and Water Resources Energy Saver Programs. To date, over 600 letters have been mailed out to the Bartlett Park Neighborhood. Council did provide the Mayor authority to implement the program throughout all neighborhoods of the City. Progress Energy has scheduled over 50 Energy Audits, of which they have performed over 25. The W.I.N. Department has received three loan applications to date with more on the way.

One of the reasons for the tremendous response was that two weeks ago Councilmember Nurse walked the neighborhoods and knocked on approximately 275 doors. Progress Energy reported that the response from the community was very positive. \$150,000 is currently budgeted from the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) Program for this strategy. Mr. de Yampert is hoping to bring back a report within two months to request that the funding needs to be replenished, as there are about \$500,000 of SHIP funding that can be appropriated to replenish the fund. He also is beginning discussions with Tampa Electric Company to have their energy rebates with gas to be included in the incentives.

A question was asked whether a person who qualifies for the Energy Conservation Tax Rebates of \$1,500 also qualify for this program? Mr. de Yampert responded that they would, and that we are looking for rebates from Water Resources, TECO, and tax credits from the federal government. He also mentioned that the City would like to combine its Hurricane Hardening Program with this activity.

**Action:** No action taken.

**Update on Pinellas HOPE (Tom de Yampert, Housing, Finance, and Rehabilitation Manager)**

Mr. de Yampert advised that there are members of General Home Development (GHD) in the audience if there are questions about the Pinellas HOPE development. GHD and Catholic Charities are the development partners in this project. He discussed that Catholic Charities will go before the Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC) on June 5, 2009, for the \$3 million in funding that was identified for this project. The City has worked in a supportive role to help Catholic Charities gain access over the property and the DOT Lands, work with Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) in the permitting process. The underwriting will be totally completed before the June 5, 2009, date. Pinellas County, City of Clearwater, and the City of Largo are preparing extensions on their commitments to fund Pinellas HOPE.

A question was asked to inquire when will units be located at the site? Mr. de Yampert responded that it should be mid-to-late next year.

A question was asked whether some of the \$914,999 in Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing (HPRP) funding could be used for operational costs or to help build the facility. Deputy Mayor Metz responded that those funds cannot be used for operations or to build structures, but are eligible to be used for financial assistance to homeless persons, housing relocation and stabilization services and data collection and evaluation.

**Action:** No action taken.

**Update on Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP), Stephanie Lampe**

Ms. Lampe reviewed a PowerPoint presentation with the Committee to show the activities that have been engaged in by the NSP Team in its efforts to begin implementing the Neighborhood Stabilization (NSP) Program. She discussed that Real Estate and Property Management has sent out just over 100 proposals to lenders who hold foreclosed properties in the Priority Areas of the City, extending an interest in the opportunity to purchase those properties, subject to receipt of good appraisals. From the initial 100, twenty properties have responded with interest in selling to the City. Two were outside of the Priority Areas. Another sold fairly quickly, leaving seventeen properties. After receipt of the response from the lenders, the NSP team performed a site visit of the available properties and as a result of those visits one of the properties was eliminated from consideration, due to not fitting into the program criteria.

Appraisals were ordered on the sixteen properties in order to establish a final sales price, and at this time appraisals came back on five properties which were fairly low. Ms. Lampe reviewed a map of the priority areas which show the beginnings of a cluster of potential acquisitions with the five properties for which appraisals have been received and 11 properties for which appraisals are underway.

Ms. Lampe provided updates on the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) from General Contractors who will perform the rehabilitation work on properties acquired by the City. Twenty-five responded with 21 to be recommended to participate in the program. The item will be on the May 7, 2009 Agenda of City Council.

Ms. Lampe also provided that the announcement of the RFQ for Non-Profit Services for Multi-Family Housing resulted in the receipt of responses from three agencies which are being reviewed. Administration anticipates bringing back a recommendation for approval of recommended vendors within the next 45 days.

Ms. Lampe discussed observations from the site visits to include bringing back a request to amend the NSP Plan to include a Redevelopment and Financing Strategy which will allow for more demolitions and redevelopment of units, and for downpayment assistance, should the State of Florida discontinue the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program. She discussed our workshop in Jacksonville on April 14, 2009, where all of the local governments discussed having the same problems with trying to acquire property. Discussions were also held about the practicality of spending \$40,000 to rehabilitate a home acquired for \$20,000 versus building a new home at a total cost of \$150,000.

A question was asked whether the City could participate in acquiring properties offered for short sales. Mike Psirikis, Sr. Real Estate Coordinator, discussed that the City cannot participate in short sales with NSP funds as the funding can only be used to acquire foreclosed properties. He also discussed the effort it takes to educate the banks and other participants about the NSP. Mr. Psirikis further discussed the problems associated with having as much as 60-days before the City can act to acquire a property compared to the private sector, and the banks unwillingness to wait for the City to go through its acquisition process, required by HUD and the City.

Mr. Psirikis advised that the Real Estate and Property Management Department will work with the Pinellas Board of Realtors where they will try to conduct individual classes and prepare web based information to get the message out about the program.

**Action:** No action taken.

**Multi-family Development Update (Stephanie Lampe)**

Ms. Lampe discussed the chart associated with funding available or committed to multi-family production and that even though the chart reflected a shortfall, the item was brought before City Council on April 16, 2009, as an amendment to the Consolidated Plan where funding was moved to cover the additional funding needed by the Booker Creek development. She provided an update on multi-family units that are in process of development and discussed that the other charts reflected single family units and strategies completed during FY 2007-2008, and the status of single family assistance through March 31, 2009.

Chair Curran discussed her tour of the Columbian and that she is really excited about the project.

**Action:** No action taken.

**Follow-up (information only)**

Provide a list of projects that are under development, or scheduled for redevelopment.  
Provide spreadsheet of funding available for the production of multi-family developments.

**Next Meeting:**

Next meeting: May 21, 2009

**Topics:**

Update of the Neighborhood Stabilization Program  
Update of Meeting with the National Community Stabilization Trust (4-23-09)

**Committee Members**

Leslie Curran, Chair  
Karl Nurse, Vice-Chair  
Herb Polson, Councilmember  
Jeff Danner, Council Chair  
Bill Dudley, Councilmember  
Wengay Newton, Alternate