

## **Coastal Housing Action Team Meeting August 8, 2017**

### **I. Introduction and Overview – Team Leader Elizabeth Swenson**

Attendees introduced themselves and provided a brief statement regarding background and interest in attending. There was some discussion about moving to a larger venue with possibilities of the library or town hall suggested. Attendees were encouraged to visit the Healthy Mendocino website where they could locate meeting times, minutes, status reports and other data.

### **II. Marie Jones, City of Fort Bragg Community Development Director**

#### **Danco Group Proposal**

The Danco Group from Arcata, who developed and built the affordable senior housing project Cottages at Cypress has submitted a proposal for “The Plateau” on South Street. The proposed project would provide for 21 market rate family units and 31 zero net energy, senior affordable housing units, with the possibility of an 80 bed assisted living facility at a later time. The City may apply for a Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) this fall which would provide for off street infrastructure with tax credits and bonds used for the remaining funds. If approved, the occupancy expected by the fall of 2018.

Several ideas and suggestions were made by attendees. A question was raised why the currently vacant building, where the Mendocino County Social Services were formerly located on Franklin Street, was not being used for housing the homeless. It was explained that the building is located in the Coastal Zone and is also zoned commercial, which would allow up to 24 units per acre. The commercial zoning required commercial units on the street, but would allow residential units in the back. However, due to the structure and design of the building, the residential units would not have any windows, so it would not be ideal for housing. Some attendees expressed frustration with the process and suggested that alternative options be considered, such as Sonoma Tiny House, Dignity Village and the Sustainable Economies Law Center. It was explained that the Danco Group Proposal was submitted to the City, not from the City. It was further explained that the City was willing to consider any proposals to address the housing shortage. This proposed project was from a private developer on privately owned land, who was funding the project. Since money was a primary barrier to building affordable housing, having a developer who was willing to fund the project was essential to ensuring the completion of the project.

#### **Vacation Rentals**

Vacation rentals are believed to affect the lack of housing within the City. As a result, the City allows units only in the downtown area in mixed use buildings. The City is in the process of identifying and enforcing the ban. Sarah McCormick, the Planning Technician for the City of Fort Bragg, has made some progress on compliance by finding unapproved Airbnb units and other illegal vacation homes in Fort Bragg.

There was some discussion regarding the large number of vacant properties in Fort Bragg, including possible causes and solutions. Marie Jones explained that there were a variety of causes for vacant residences such as, properties that were in trusts and houses owned by seniors on fixed incomes who were unable to fix up the properties and make them available. An attendee suggested that the team research SPUR, a nonprofit organization based in San Francisco, who has focused on planning and the housing successes of other areas, such as Seattle. An attendee expressed frustration in attending meetings that have good thoughts and ideas, but lacked the action to move the ideas forward.

### **Second Units**

It was explained that the City of Fort Bragg has worked to reduce some of the barriers preventing home owners from adding second units to their lots, including eliminating the requirement that the parcel is more than 6000 sq. ft. and provide off street parking have been eliminated. In order to further incentivize the building of second units, the city has 3 pre-approved second unit plans that are available at no cost.

### **III. Moving Forward – Team Leader Elizabeth Swenson**

Throughout the meeting, attendees made several suggestions on ideas and information that needed to be researched to enable the group to move forward. It was suggested that attendees sign-up to participate in one of the sub-committees to assist in this endeavor, with the plan of having sub-committee meetings before the next Coastal Housing Team Meeting. The sub-committees included Policy, Identifying Needs, and Model Programs. Attendees were encouraged to ensure their name and contact information was provided to ensure they were notified about the next meeting.