

A TIME FOR ACTION

FORUM SYNOPSIS

February 8, 2005.

The Forum was held in the County Administration Buildings' Committee Rooms on February 8th, 2005 from 1-4 p.m. with 28 participants registered, this number does not include the members of the Housing Working Group.

Members of the H.W.G. and the Forum organizer acted as facilitators for the Forum.

Patty Park opened the Forum by welcoming participants and outlining the afternoons' activities.

Michele Leering then provided people with a short history of the origins of the Housing Working Group and the Affordable Housing Research Project the Group had sponsored under the umbrella of the South Hastings Access to Permanent Housing Corporation. She also talked about the goal of the Forum being the formation of two Task Forces, one for Community Capacity Building and the other for Bricks and Mortar. These Task Forces would be the beginnings of the establishment of the Affordable Housing Action Network as recommended in the soon to be released research project entitled "Boxed In" The Affordable Housing Crisis in Hastings County.

Anne Balding then invited participants to help themselves to refreshments and to attend the Task Force that most interested them.

Scott Robertson and Cathie West were facilitators for the Bricks and Mortar Task Force.

Patty Park and Anne Balding facilitated the Community Capacity Building Task Force.

Participants regrouped an hour and a half later after having held brainstorming sessions to identify the issues of their respective Task Forces and to formulate possible solutions to the problems. The issues were then bundled into categories, sub committees were formed and meeting dates were set.

Participants were provided with contact sheets and were asked to complete these sheets, which would provide the committee with identifying information as well as Task Force and sub committee preferences. These sheets would be collated and used for contact purposes.

Scott Robertson reconvened the Forum and gave a synopsis of the accomplishments and plans for the Bricks and Mortar Task Force workshop, Patty Park then talked about the accomplishments and plans for the Community Capacity Building workshop.

Participants were thanked for their interest and input and were invited to attend the inaugural meeting of the Affordable Housing Action Network on April 21st.

The members of the Housing Working Group left the Forum having accomplished their goal of forming the above two Task Forces and the beginning of the Affordable Housing Action Network.

A TIME FOR ACTION

COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP

BRAINSTORMING SESSION

- ❖ Determinants of health focus
- ❖ Need for collaboration among agencies.
- ❖ Need to look at housing as it relates to aging parents of people with disabilities.
- ❖ Rights of individuals (inclusion).
- ❖ Community awareness and education around the issues of poverty and homelessness.
- ❖ The development of a systems navigation procedure.
- ❖ Lack of services, housing, daycare to the Aboriginal community.
- ❖ Lack of access to services.
- ❖ Tenants rights - landlord/ tenant issues.
- ❖ Need more affordable housing.
- ❖ Need to make use of the "Observations from the Front Lines" document.
- ❖ Effects of unstable education on students education, attendance, ability to focus.
- ❖ Rural affordable housing.
- ❖ Look at adapting seniors model of housing for youth/ singles housing.
- ❖ O.S.S.T.F. may be able to provide in kind \$ and information to task force.
- ❖ Affordable housing for folks who are moving into independent living.
- ❖ No room to earn extra \$\$'s on fixed incomes.
- ❖ Working with community expertise to create default prevention kits.
- ❖ Establishment of the Affordable Housing Action Network.
- ❖ Invite people who need housing to become part of the Network.
- ❖ Use simple language when creating brochures, fliers, etc.

Priorities

What can we do?

Networking:

Encourage people who are experiencing substandard housing, at risk of being homeless or homeless people to join the Network.

Network around innovative ideas for housing for those who are going into independent living.

Explore the possibility of the integration of services for the prevention of eviction and other housing related issues.

Support:

Create supports for those who are going into independent living.

Create circles of support.

Hold "house meetings" in neighbour hoods to provide people with information as it relates to housing.

Advocacy/Affordability:

What could be done to help tenants acquire decent rental housing.

Advocate for more affordable housing.

Advocate for changes to the property standards act, municipal/provincial.

Advocate at the provincial/ federal level for the housing agenda to be advanced.

Look at the issues surrounding substandard housing. Disrepair issues.

Advocate at the municipal level for support for affordable housing.

Information Sharing:

Put together information re housing issues for use at public events, house meetings, etc.

Put together information around possible solutions to housing issues for use at public events, house meetings, etc.

Hold information sessions for service providers.

Linkages:

Look at applying for membership in the Canadian Housing Renewal Association and other related organizations.

Provide Lay Advocacy Training for those who are interested.

Find out what is happening nationally and how we can link with the people who can be supportive.

Link to emergency housing sources in the area.

Forge links with the disabled community, the Aboriginal community, the deaf community, etc.

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BRICKS AND MORTAR TASK FORCE

Workshop Proceedings

February 8 2005

❖ Brainstorming Session

- ❖ Cash back plan—get lenders involved, find out what bankers and other lending institutions are doing.
- ❖ Are there people who don't believe they can afford to own their own homes who in fact can afford it? (education).
- ❖ Low income tenants face discrimination from landlords. What can be done to prevent this?
- ❖ Find some way to make units sustainable (disrepair issues).
- ❖ Find landlords who will take over from “slum” landlords and purchase units to repair. Also need to identify these units.
- ❖ Find “slum” landlords who want to get out of the business.
- ❖ Educate landlords ---- incentives are available through C.M.H.C.
- ❖ Municipalities need to get on board --- & enforce by laws and codes to make housing safe for people.
- ❖ Need cohesiveness among municipalities so that everyone is using the same standards.
- ❖ People need more \$\$\$ to enable them to acquire safe, affordable housing. Need to lobby governments to give more money through O.W., O.D.S.P.
- ❖ Need contacts, i.e. Developers and Builders.

- ❖ Need more rent supplement units (we have a waiting list of landlords in Hastings County). Province may redistribute left over supplements. (We will know after March 31).
- ❖ Have connections to Hastings County with builders who want to build affordable units if rent supplements are available.

Meeting Date for the Affordable Housing Action Network is Tuesday April 26th from 9-11a.m, 3rd Floor Committee Room at the County Administration Building, 228 Church Street, Belleville.

PRIORITIES

WHAT CAN WE DO?

MOVING PEOPLE TO HOME OWNERSHIP

- ❖ Need to educate people on home ownership and how to get there
- ❖ Need to move renters to home ownership to free up rental stock.
- ❖ Need to target people who are paying market rent for home ownership.

RENT SUPPLEMENT FUNDING

- ❖ Send letter to the Provincial Housing Ministry informing them that Hastings County is interested in creating a pilot project in a rural area.

SUSTAINING EXISTING RURAL HOUSING

- ❖ Mobile Home Parks are in a crisis state. Owners do not have the financial resources to comply with the new legislation re the safe drinking water act.
- ❖ Need to lobby for a subsidy program for owners of Mobile Home Parks.

CREATING NEW UNITS

- ❖ Need to bring Landlords, Developers, Real Estate Agents and Bankers together.
- ❖ Need to bring on board representation from a more diversified group of people.
- ❖ Invite guest speakers who have successfully completed bricks and mortar projects.
- ❖ Identify a “champion” we can use.
- ❖ Develop a Habitat for Humanity in Hastings County.

- ❖ Look at housing projects on Territories as possible models.
- ❖ Use apprenticeship programs.

BRICKS AND MORTAR TASK FORCE SUB COMMITTEES

MOVING TENANTS TO HOME OWNERSHIP

- ❖ Provide information/education to potential home owners.
- ❖ Provide information /education to people interested in establishing secondary suites.
- ❖ Provide information/education to people that would assist them in keeping their housing.

COMMITTEE MEETING: March 1, 2, or 3.(to be announced).

RENT SUPPLEMENT FUNDING

- ❖ Write letter of interest to Ont. Ministry of Housing.
- ❖ Recruit letters of support.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Housing Working Group.

COMMITTEE MEETING: To be determined.

CREATION OF NEW UNITS

- ❖ Recruit people i.e. Builders, Bankers, etc.
- ❖ Guest speakers re “model projects”
- ❖ Challenge people ??????

COMMITTEE MEETING: Wednesday March 2, 9:00a.m. at Youthab.

SUSTAINING EXISTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- ❖ Safe water issue/disrepair issues ---Mobile Home Park.
- ❖ Hydro, insurance issues

COMMITTEE MEETING: Wednesday March 2, 9:00a.m. at Youthab.