

**WESTCHESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING & PLANNING
MINUTES OF MEETING: JANUARY 19, 2010, 11:00 AM**

In Attendance:

Committee Members: Leg. William Burton, Chair; Legislators Judy Myers, John Nonna, Martin Rogowsky, Bernice Spreckman and Alfreda Williams. Committee Staff: Barbara Arrington Dodds.

Others: Karen Schatzel, Rosemary MacLaughlin, LWVW; Altria Webber, ADC; Hope Corbin, Intern; Katy Delgado, Office of CE.

Item for Discussion: Organization of Committee

Chairman William Burton opened the meeting at 11:15 pm.

Items approved by consensus:

- Quorums were set at three legislator members for official meetings and four legislator members for voting purposes.
- Regular meetings will be held on Tuesdays as needed at 9:00 am. [Later changed to 9:30 am]
- The Committee will include non-voting advisory members. Albert Annunziata, Marsha Gordon, Dennis McDermott and Tom McGrath from the former Government Operations Committee (GO) will be contacted by the chair to discuss their continuing service as advisory members of the Committee.

Discussion ensued regarding the primary issues to be taken up by the committee. They include:

The ADC Settlement Implementation Plan—Leg. Judy Myers and Leg. John Nonna who, along with Leg. Harckham and Betsy DeSoye, are part of a subcommittee that has met with the settlement monitor, pointed out that the stipulation allows for some flexibility and negotiation. For example, that 1 out of 3 units to be set aside for workforce housing for municipal employees is now proposed to expand to include employees of any business within the municipality. Leg. Rogowsky pointed out that issues such as the definition of workforce housing and limits on senior housing were very specifically spelled out in the original stipulation. Leg. Nonna commented that although the stipulation states that only 125 of the 750 units be restricted to senior housing, nothing prevents senior citizens to apply for any unit. The plan is due to HUD January 31st and must be reviewed by the Board of Legislators before then. Since this is January 19th, when do the legislators get to see a draft of the plan?

Section 8—Leg. Burton reported that no decision has yet been made as to whether Section 8 will stay in Planning or move to DSS as proposed last year. While DSS has had major impacts on Section 8, most of the maintenance and management of Section 8 has been in Planning under Norma Drummond. Leg. Burton said Section 8 is a major tool of how housing in the County is operated and we want to have a serious oversight on Section 8. An administration meeting will be held next week on the subject. Leg. Nonna reported that some of his landlord constituents say that they object to inspections and the way Section 8 is run. Leg. Burton explained that most municipalities have their own Section 8 office and inspections procedures and that the County has not much to do with those offices. But an individual voucher is portable and holders may use them in any locality. There are also project vouchers which do not move. During the term we will have to become more educated on how Section 8 works and how to make it more uniform throughout the County.

Homelessness & foreclosures—Leg. Rogowsky suggested that we might want to bring in the banks that the County deals with to find out what they are doing about the foreclosure problem

in the County. At the end of the day, it is about what the banks are doing to help stem the foreclosures.

CDBG & other Planning grants—There are a number of officials who need to understand whether there is a separate pot for some municipalities. We don't know yet who our contact person will be on this issue. Norma Drummond will continue to manage these federal grants.

Housing Opportunity Commission—Leg. Burton said that since County Executive Rob Astorino signed the last legislation extending the Commission when he was a legislator, we assume that the administration will be supportive. Several legislators indicated they had reservations about continuing the commission. Leg. Burton said within the six months that have been extended to the commission, many of the issues concerning its operation in this new housing environment will be reviewed.

Westchester Collaborative Assessment Commission—BOL passed a bond issue to do the flyover and street photography work and the contract. The Commission is meeting regularly. Leg. Rogowsky suggested that David Jackson explain his process after getting the tax information data from the municipalities on October 1 and perhaps tax repercussions can be known well before budget review.

Other issues to be pursued:

Source of Income Discrimination—The ADC states that the County shall also promote through the County Executive, legislation currently in the BOL to ban source of income discrimination in housing. Meetings on this issue will be held jointly with H&P and Legislation.

Parcel Q and other county surplus land—brings up the question of the right of first refusal—Leg. Nonna read from the settlement: the county should include in the implementation plan a commitment to amend county law to eliminate a municipality's right of first refusal with regard to fair or affordable housing land purchases by the county. However, it does not include sales by the county. This issue will also be dealt with in joint meetings of H&P and Legislation.

Universal Design requirements in affordable housing—Leg. Burton indicated that this issue will be dealt with in joint meetings with the Committee on Generational, Cultural and Ethnic Diversity.

Westchester Housing Land Trust—We will see how the new administration views the Trust. We can craft some standards that can be discussed with the County Attorney and the Legislation Committee.

General meeting times were decided for Tuesday mornings at 9:00 am **[but later changed by consensus to 9:30 am]**.

With no other business, Legislator Burton adjourned the meeting, moved by Leg. Rogowsky and seconded by Leg. Nonna. All were in favor.