



Affordable Housing Study Commission presents Preservation Strategy and Receives Public Comment on its Study of SHIP

BY ODETTA MACLEISH-WHITE

INTRODUCTION

The Affordable Housing Study Commission held its stakeholders meeting on September 7th, at the Florida Housing Coalition's annual conference in Orlando. Following an overview of the preservation strategy outlined in the Study Commission's 2006 final report, the commissioners engaged in a question and answer session with the audience about the SHIP program, the study topic for the 2006-2007 year.



Housing deny any such requests unless a compelling reason to do is presented.

SHIP IS THE 2006-2007 STUDY YEAR TOPIC

2007 is the 15th anniversary of the SHIP program, which is known as a model throughout the country. The Commission believes it is a perfect time to examine

SHIP's successes and consider what changes, if any, are needed to make this program even more responsive in the coming years. The Q&A session with the SHIP administrators in attendance yielded a number of interesting statements on the challenges of and best practices used in implementing this program across the state.

A STRATEGY FOR PRESERVING FLORIDA'S AFFORDABLE MULTIFAMILY HOUSING

With the release of its 2006 final report, the Affordable Housing Study Commission draws together nearly two years of study to offer updated expiration and aging data for Florida's affordable housing stock and recommendations for a strategy to preserve Florida's affordable multifamily housing.

The private sector must be encouraged to undertake preservation transactions through financial incentives that acknowledge the increased risks of preservation over new construction. State funding programs have historically promoted new construction and the Commission laid out recommendations for a number of state administered programs to provide a more level playing field for preservation deals. Gaps in the state's housing data make it difficult to focus precious resources and craft tailored preservation strategies, although the Commission did recommend that the Florida Housing Finance Corporation first direct its resources towards preserving units that receive project based rental assistance, as these units often house extremely low income families.

It is also important to expand the circle of entities that will take on preservation transactions, which is why the Commission recommended offering capacity building workshops for local governments, nonprofits and public housing authorities through the Catalyst program. Finally, the Commission addressed the growing trend of requests to convert units funded with Florida Housing programs to market rate housing. The Commission recommended that Florida

Some of the key issues included the challenges of enforcing expedited permitting requirements and addressing extremely low income families. To promote truly expedited permitting, some counties have created positions that facilitate moving affordable housing permits between the SHIP and building or permitting departments which have final authority to issue permits. Partnerships with established nonprofits can support SHIP programs in reaching extremely low income families although it was expressed that layering federal funds with SHIP dollars is often difficult and might benefit from the appointment of a facilitator to coordinate these federal processes with other agencies.

CONCLUSION

To read the 2006 Final Report in its entirety and a summary of the stakeholders meeting, please visit www.floridahousing.org/AHSC and click on the links for Annual Reports or Meeting Summaries respectively. The meeting dates and locations for the 2006-2007 year are also available at this website.



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