Attendees:
Please see attached sign-in sheet.

On October 9, 2012, the 9th meeting of the FAFB Encroachment-Housing Alternatives Project started at 9:30 am. Mayor Rushing opened the meeting, with introductions.

Mayor Rushing asked that the group move to the agenda item “Letter of Intent” to allow Mr. Venne time to arrive to discuss the Needs Assessment. Mr. Hatley stated that the City of Spokane was behind the project whole-heartedly. Mr. Braaten indicated he had not had any requests for information based on the LOI. Mr. Venne arrived and the group agreed to move back to the Needs Assessment. He stated there was not anything new to report.

The group then moved on to a discussion regarding potential site locations. The primary area of interest is the 20-acre parcels on the east side of Garfield Rd, south of the future east extension of 6th Ave. Mr. Hatley stated that an offer has been made by the group for the purchase of the property. It will involve some land swapping. Also, it is necessary to have “site control” before going for any grants or other funding. The offer is approximately $0.25/square foot.

Former Councilmember Charlotte Lawrence, also a resident in the target area, attended the meeting with a variety of questions regarding what the group is doing. The group responded to her questions and explained what the group was doing. One key point was that this was a voluntary process and there are no plans to achieve this through “eminent domain”. Also, the group articulated that this is a slow process and there has not been new news because there has not been anything new to report. However, that is changing and the City is developing a website it will keep updated as the project progresses.

There was some discussion regarding the zoning of the properties. Mrs. Lawrence asked whether the rezoning of those parcels would be considered “spot zoning”. Mr. Braaten explained that it would not because there are surrounding residential land-uses. Also, after the land swap occurs, most of the property, if not all, will be outside of areas of concern from JLUS.
Mr. McCann provided an update on the land purchase application process, and a general summary of how it proceeds. He explained that there is a scoring process involved, and if the proposal meets a certain threshold, it can get the tax-credits and potentially other funding. The application is in the pre-application scoring stage to determine if it has enough points to qualify. Mr. Venne announced that the City now does have a Qualified Census Tracts (QCTs), which allows a 30% tax bonus for any projects located in the QCTs.

A question was asked whether there are any other applications out there. The response was that as opposed to former years, the various housing groups are having a hard time determining who is going for what, because of the changes to the process this year. There is also a need for some sort of local commitment, whether cash or in-kind, that can be used to show the community has “some skin in the game.” Mayor Rushing suggested that that may be achievable through GFCs, which could present a substantial savings for the project. Mr. McCann stated that he would like to get the application submitted during this funding cycle. Mayor Rushing also commented that he has been in talks with the County regarding a potential countywide bond.

Mention was made of the proposed townhome lease-to-own project being developed by Whitewater Creek in Airway Heights. That led to a discussion regarding the different types of rental subsidization available for housing projects. One is actual rent subsidies that are paid to renters or the residential development to cover an individual’s rent at lower than market-rate and the other being a credit to the developer so the project can charge lower rents, but do not necessarily pay subsidies to renters. Mr. McCann stated that the APZ project’s replacement housing would use both types of subsidies.

Mayor Rushing provided a summary of the meeting the City had with HUD representatives. The main take away from that meeting was that the City must decide whether the project will be voluntary or forced. Once it chooses a particular route, it cannot go back. Because this project has always been envisioned as a voluntary process, it will continue as such and go for those funding sources. The City will not be able to go back later and force people to move if it begins the process as voluntary.

Mrs. Lawrence commented that one of her concerns is the fact that if a park owner desires to take the money and run, what recourse will the residents have? The response was that the City cannot control what a landowner does in that scenario at this time. However, the intent is for the City, or a non-profit organization, to eventually acquire control of the properties to help mitigate this. Also, there are HUD and State regulations that are also in place for MHPs that require at least 12-months notice of any such actions.

Mr. Hatley stated that both of Washington’s Senators support the project. They stated that there will be a need for a formal request in the near future, but indicated that they will notify the group when that is needed.

The discussion then moved on to the webpage. Mr. Braaten provided a summary of the work he has completed so far on the site. He distributed draft versions of the website he is working on for review and comment. He asked that the group review the documents and get back to him with any comments. The group decided that rather than have individuals contacting individual agencies, a single point of contact should be set up and that person can route the information requests to the appropriate agency or person. It was also recommended that a subtitle be added stating “Southside Housing Program” to the actual
The group asked for more time to review the Frequently Asked Questions page. The Needs Assessment was determined to be proprietary, and copies should only be released with a written request.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 20, 2012 at 9:30 am, in the AWRF Conference Room.

End of Recorded Minutes.