Memorandum

From: Derrick Braaten, City Planner
To: Attendees, City Manager, File
CC:
Date: 5/7/2012
RE: April 9, 2012, FAFB Encroachment- Housing Alternatives Project Meeting Minutes

Attendees:
Please see attached sign-in sheet.

On April 9, 2012, the 4th meeting of the FAFB Encroachment-Housing Alternatives Project started at 9:30 am. Mayor Rushing started off the meeting with introductions.

Mayor Rushing started the meeting off requesting an update from the Housing Needs Assessment subcommittee. A copy of the proposed resident survey was distributed for review by the group. During this time, representatives from Catholic Charities, HUD, and AMHO arrived. It was proposed as an incentive for residents to fill out the survey, that if they completed the survey, they would receive a $10 gift card for Yokes.

Mayor Rushing asked about question #11 in the draft survey, regarding the disability status of residents. He asked for whether that might be something better covered during the building phase. The response was to determine two things with that question. First, it will help determine who would need help with moving or other things requiring personal mobility. The second would be to get an idea of the number of people that would need ADA accommodations in a new project. The subcommittee’s idea is to keep the survey pretty broad at this time. The group determined that the best language would be “Do you have any disability?” – making the question even broader.

One concern is how to track who has responded? Much of the personal data is optional, but there is a need to ensure that there is not duplication or the same person submitting multiple surveys, and thereby skewing the results. The discussion continued, with the end result being a broad-based, general survey at this stage.

The group then began discussing the process that is going to be used to distribute the surveys. Generally, the process will be to invite residents to attend the meeting. Those respondents will be noted. The next phase will be to have surveys hand-delivered to those addresses that have not responded. There would be a cover letter included that provides a summary of the project, and why this is being requested.
Councilmember Lawrence was asked, as a resident in the area, if he had any feel for what the other residents were thinking about this project. He responded that the general consensus was “I’ll believe it when I see it”. That was received by the group as a healthy skepticism, and better than a “No”. It was then asked if there was any estimate as to the number of likely respondents or attendees for the upcoming meetings. It was suggested that there should be a “door-to-door” campaign to notify residents of the meetings. Mayor Rushing and Councilmember Lawrence volunteered to participate in this activity.

Clarification was then sought regarding the number of units/residents in the area. There are about 150 MHs and another 150 residents in Solar World. It was requested that this number be confirmed. It was also requested that if someone runs into a resident from that area to get a feel for whether they are planning on attending. Further discussion was held on how to spread the word about the event. It was recommended to keep things general at this stage and not get into specifics, and to make sure residents are aware that this is not an eviction program. It is an opportunity to offer alternative housing choices.

Councilmember Lawrence asked about question #13, referring to the financial situation/stability of the residents. Is there a difference if there is a negative financial impact from medical bills or other things outside the control of the resident? It was suggested to just add an “other” line to cover those items not listed as the cause. It was then asked why there is both a question asking about “excessive debt” or “past-due-accounts” and whether there is a difference. The response was that there is a difference, in that one could have excessive debt, but still be paying their bills.

The question of the $10 food cards was raised. The general consensus was that this was a good idea, but would only be given if they complete the survey. It was also suggested that there be a sign-in sheet as well to track attendees. The surveys should be numbered to help ensure tracking and the prevention of duplication.

It was suggested that rather than having “What Manufactured-Home Park”, in question #3, it may be a good idea to just have something that says “physical location” instead. Further discussion was held regarding how to determine rent fees and mortgage payments. It was suggested, and agreed to, to ask “Do you own or rent the land your house is on”. The rest of the survey questions were gone over, with no disagreement as to how it was ordered or what questions were being asked.

Discussion shifted to trying to get an idea as to how to get the residents to work with the City to provide the needed information. Trying to make sure they understand how an individual’s specific finances can affect which programs they can qualify for was considered an important idea that needs to be understood by the residents. It was suggested that the income levels listed could go lower in amounts. The response was that the listed amounts were HUD qualifying levels, based on the number of residents in the home. It was agreed that a new line should be added to allow for an “Other” column to ensure residents that do not meet the specific scenarios envisioned under these qualifiers have the option to fill in another amount.

It was asked whether the question asking what residents like/do not like about their neighborhoods should be included (#14). The general consensus was that this was not necessary information.
The discussion shifted to a question asking if there were any restrictions on where a person could live (#17). This is to ensure that individuals with restrictions on where they are allowed to live (distances to schools, etc.) are not offered a product or location they cannot use. The general consensus was to change it to a generic question such as “Describe one thing that we can help you with”.

Councilmember Lawrence asked what the timeline was for the survey being distributed. He was informed that the first distribution would be at the April 26th and April 28th meetings. Discussion then turned to working out details regarding the two meetings, such as finalizing the location for the meetings. The discussion then turned to providing refreshments. It was agreed that there would be some provided, but the exact type and amount will be determined after getting a feel for the number of participants and potential donors. It was also determined that the invitations need to go out at least 10-days in advance of the meetings. It was also determined that it should be mailed and hand-delivered. Further discussion was held on the overall design and the City volunteered to design and send out the invitations.

Funding was then discussed. On top of the initial $20,000, the City of Spokane and Spokane County declared they will provide an additional $5,000 each. A discussion was held regarding whether to reduce the amounts from Catholic Charities and GSI to $5,000, raising the overall budget to $25,000, or just keep the amounts as is, and take the $10,000, for a total budget of $30,000. Concern was raised that the marketing aspect of the program would be very lean with a $20,000 budget.

The discussion then shifted to the timing associated with the compilation and review of the data from the surveys. This is a concern because it is important that the information is ready for the next funding cycle. It was determined that a separate account would be setup to handle all funds associated with the project. The communication element of the process was determined to be very important, and the additional funds should be used towards that purpose.

City Manager Tripp then provided a brief summary of the items included in the MOU that outlines who all is involved in the process and the expectations for the various partners. The second agreement outlines who will be doing the survey, and what the scope of the survey will be. He explained that the City Council will be taking action on these items on April 16th.

Discussion then shifted to the public engagement process. Mr. Hatley commented that the actual park/land owners have not been approached regarding this issue. He recommended sending them notice of what is going on and bring them into the discussion as to what is being proposed and what their concerns would be. It was stated that the landowners are often hard to contact.

The question was asked how was this being presented to the landowners regarding this project. It is important to have in place a process that prevents replacement of residents or homes as they move out. The City will be putting into place some type of zoning that will do this. There is concern as to how these items/actions will be perceived by the public.

Ms. Patton commented that in some of the parks, there are agreements in place stating that if a resident moves out, they cannot take their manufactured home with them. It was explained that the park owners often have a right of first refusal regarding the purchase of the units, but they cannot take units that are owned by the residents just for moving.
City Manager Tripp provided a recap of the meeting and who will be doing what between this meeting and the next.

The group moved on to “New Items”. Councilmember Lawrence asked about some HUD housing located north of SR-2, and whether there is an opportunity to transfer some folks to these existing units today. It was determined that it would be a good idea to develop an inventory of existing housing that may be available/suitable. There was concern that if it happens today, there is nothing in place today to prevent the unit from being used after someone moved out.

Another concern was how to ensure new potential residents are aware of what is going on with these units. It was asked whether the real estate professionals are aware of what is being done. It was then explained that most of these transactions do not involve real estate professionals. Mr. Tripp explained that the City is reviewing its code and is working on developing language to address this.

Mayor Rushing then asked if there were any other items for discussion at this meeting. Hearing none, the next meeting date was discussed. It was desired that the group meet after the survey results were in. A date of May 21, 2012, at 9:30 am was agreed to. The meeting was adjourned.