The following are summary minutes for the meeting of the City of Las Cruces – Housing Policy Review Committee on January 18, 2023. The meeting was held via Zoom and in Room 2007A at City Hall, 700 N. Main Street, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Members Present:
- Kasandra Gandara, City Council
- Johana Bencomo, City Council
- Yvonne Flores, City Council (arrived 2:05)
- Benjamin Beard, Las Cruces Home Builders Association

Members Absent:
- Justin Carmona, NM Mortgage Finance Authority
- Juan Olvera, Mesilla Valley Public Housing Authority

Others Present:
- Natalie Green, Housing Neighborhood Service Manager
- Jan Lauterbach, Housing Development Coordinator
- Rene Romo, Office of Senator Ben Ray Lujan
- Sergio Ruiz, Policy Analyst
- Cynthia Villanueva, Management Analyst
- Catrina Godinez, Neighborhood Program Specialist
- Nicole Martinez, Director, Mesilla Valley Community of Hope
- Kevin Wilson, Housing Development Coordinator
- Raymond Burchfield, Neighborhood Program Specialist
- Lorena Rivera, Mesilla Valley Housing Authority Deputy Director
- Alexis Espinosa, Student Intern
- Sidney Cruz, Intern
- Ikani Taumoepeau, Assistant City Manager
- Ruth Jaure, League of Women Voters Housing Committee
- Beth Bardwell
- Becky Baum, RC Creations, Transcription

1. Call to Order: Councilor Bencomo called the meeting to order at 2:05 pm.

2. Conflict of Interest: No conflict of interest was proclaimed.

3. Acceptance of the Agenda: Motion to accept the agenda by Councilor Flores, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Gandara. Motion passes.

4. Approval of the Minutes:
   a. Housing PRC Meeting of September 21, 2022 and November 29, 2022: Motion to accept the Minutes by Mayor Pro Tem Gandara, seconded by Councilor Bencomo. Motion passes.
5. Agency Spotlight – Habitat for Humanity:

Natalie Green introduced a presentation. April Estrada of Habitat for Humanity was unable to attend this meeting but she provided the presentation for Jan Lauterbach to give. The presentation included statistics of the program's activities, a breakdown of the requirements for clients to fulfill, a discussion of City involvement in funding and costs paid by the program, a map of single-family homes built in the past few years, and current plans for more homes. In the last 16 years there have been 128 houses built. Habitat for Humanity purchases the land for the homes. The City helps with CDBG and HOME funds. Federal funds cannot be used to build on leased land. Habitat for Humanity does not yet have a home rehabilitation program in this area but they are working on it.

6. Recommendation Items: None.

7. General Discussion:
   a. Housing and Neighborhood Services Annual Project and Strategic Plan Review:

   Councilor Bencomo started a presentation regarding goals and plans for the next budget year. Staff continued with a specific budget breakdown. There was further discussion of using the General Fund and GO Bond money to finance Tierra del Sol and Habitat for Humanity. The City is currently trying to purchase land for low-cost housing in Metro Verde, the Three Sisters project is already started on Hadley and Walnut, and the City has purchased the Brewer Oil parcel of land for Community of Hope. There was discussion of problems and planned improvements for Community of Hope. Properties will undergo environmental analysis before being improved. The City Housing Authority partners with Community of Hope to provide services to clients. The Home Rehabilitation Program was discussed. Staff hopes to make the Program more efficient and improve service. This Program is looking into installing solar for participating households. It was suggested that the Committee have discussion and invite experts regarding costs of electricity versus gas utilities for the households participating in the Program. Staff is looking into increasing efficiency for the Public Service Program and expanding staff duties. The application processes will be reviewed and possibly modified, as it has been two years since the last modifications. Suggestion was made to change HHS grant process to make it an internal review rather than presentations by applicants. Suggestion was made to ask the City Clerk and City Manager to send out lists of committees which are missing members so that those positions can be filled. Suggestion was made to expand the number of agencies working with the City on a contract base and who have a line item in the budget, in order to increase the amount of grants available to other nonprofits who have to compete for CDBG and other grant monies. Staff is planning to revise the grant application guide in the next budget year. Mayor Pro Tem Gandara asked how to advocate for increase in Federal funding for housing programs. There is a biweekly meeting with the Federal delegation.
regarding housing challenges. The City is also a member of the National Community Development Association so there are lobbyists in Washington who send updates weekly or monthly. The 2016 Strategic Plan for Housing is also going to be updated soon. Staff has requested additional funding in the 2024 budget year to enable them to hire a consultant. The HUD 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan with Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice is available on the website.

b. Affordable Housing Land Bank and Trust Fund Committee Changes:

Postponed until February.

8. Future Items for Review:
   a. Realize Las Cruces Infill:

9. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:33 p.m.

Approved: 2-15-22

Chairperson