

approved

senior tax credit task force

Minutes of the August 14, 2007, meeting

The Senior Tax Credit Task Force met on August 14, 2007, in the Ellicott Room, Howard Building, 3430 Courthouse Dr., Ellicott City, MD, at 2 pm.

The following members of the task force were in attendance: Ted Meyerson, Janice Bloodworth, Frank Chase, Don Dunn, Colin Burke, Sue Buswell, Sara Hamer, and Larry Lewis.

Others from staff in attendance were Linda Watts, Jeff Bronow, Leo Oken, Don Stitely, Jeff Meyers, Terri Hansen, and Diana Coll.

The meeting was open to the public and press.

The chairman called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m. Ms. Watts gave the task force an update, which was distributed separately. Finance has been receiving applications steadily on an on-going basis; however, it is likely that the total credits awarded will be less than \$1,000,000. Mr. Burke estimated that the total will be less than \$500,000. Ms. Hansen added that the Office on Aging helped about 50 applicants at clinics, made 3 home visits, and assisted others through 286 phone sessions. Ms. Watts indicated that a more comprehensive report will be presented to the County Council at the end of September.

Mr. Dunn reported on his unsatisfactory experience in getting his property tax bill and applying for credits.

The task force was briefed by Stacey Spann and Tom Carbo from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), which has little in the way of senior-specific programs. However, DHCD intends to expand and revamp a rehabilitation program, which could prove very helpful to seniors seeking to age in place.

DHCD and the Housing Commission have a shared equity product, which assists moderate and low income people who wish to buy homes. These individuals are now allowed to pay the portion of the property tax that is equivalent to the extent of their ownership. Formerly, they would have to pay the full property tax. This reduces the County's income, but there are less than 50 properties involved.

DHCD or the Housing Commission own or plan to develop a number of other projects, which are largely rental apartments. DHCD seeks to ensure that all projects use "universal design" features to ensure accessibility, which should benefit seniors. All of these projects have waiting lists. Mr. Spann promised to provide a document that describes the projects, their fiscal impacts, and the qualifications of applicants.

The chairman discussed the future work of the task force, which needs to issue a final report in November. The task force decided to hold a public hearing on the evening of September 26 so that people can describe their experiences in seeking the tax credit. During the first week in October, the task force will seek updated reports from the Department of Finance, the Budget Office, the Department of Planning and Zoning, the State Department of Assessments and Taxation, and the Office on Aging. The task force would meet second week in October to discuss the testimony and formulate recommendations. A draft final report should be available for discussion in late October.

The meeting adjourned at 3:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Meyers