



City of Naples

CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

Workshop Meeting 9-23-91

City Council Chambers
735 Eighth Street South
Naples, Florida 33940

-SUBJECT-

PAGE

INTERVIEW CANDIDATES FOR THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMISSION:

Robert G. Blascoe
Johnny Cannon
Lance D. Donovan
Dorothy J. Fitch
Clifford "Chip" Olson
William Poyer
James P. Smiley
Elizabeth St. James-Garland

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Date September 23, 1991

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Lance D. Donovan Dorothy J. Fitch Clifford "Chip" Olson James P. Smiley Elizabeth St. James-Garland					
Those applicants who did not attend the interviews were:					
Willie Anthony David S. Bennett Carl J. Kuehner William Poyer John Ryan John Turner					
<u>Robert G. Blascoe</u>					
Mr. Blascoe, founder of the South Florida Welfare Association, told Council that he recognizes the City and County's need for supplying affordable housing, however, he also understands why some people do not want that housing "in their backyard." In answer to Council Member Sullivan's question, Mr. Blascoe said that the majority of Naples residents who need affordable housing earn between \$8,000 and \$20,000 a year. Rents in the range of \$400 to \$500 per month would satisfy most of their needs, he added.					
Council Member Muenzer asked how affordable housing could be financed, and Mr. Blascoe answered that there are federal monies available. In addition, he said, the City and County need to work with the local bankers and developers to devise a good, solid plan. Mr. Blascoe noted that more research must be done before determining affordable housing sites in the community.					
Mr. Blascoe told Council that South Florida Welfare Association's average client had lived in the area for eleven years. The Association takes pride in the fact that it does not give handouts, he said, but offers people an opportunity. Mr. Blascoe emphasized that in his opinion, the					

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area's affordable housing needs were under-exaggerated, adding that the Association sees an average of three homeless families per day.

Mayor Anderson asked Mr. Blascoe to state his opinion of the mission of the Affordable Housing Commission. He responded that this group should devise a feasible plan which would address the affordable housing needs without doing harm to anyone. Mr. Blascoe added that neighbors, bankers, and developers should also be considered. He concluded his interview by saying, "I have a lot of knowledge in this area and could give lots of input. Hopefully, this task force will find the answers."

Johnny Cannon

Council Member Korest asked Mr. Cannon why he had applied for the Affordable Housing Commission. Mr. Cannon said that he had been aware of the housing problem in Naples since 1956, noting that income levels here are misleading, since affordable housing costs based on some guidelines could be very difficult for most people. He told Council that he was well known in the Naples' black community and would act as a liaison with those people unwilling to come forward to state their needs. "I think the problem is more serious than we realize," Mr. Cannon said.

Council Member Herms asked if Mr. Cannon had any specific ideas as to the best way to provide affordable housing. Mr. Cannon said that the first step probably would be to hold a meeting at which those segments of the population needing affordable housing could voice their needs. He told Council that he had never been able to understand why Naples could not institute something similar to Habitats for Humanity. Mr. Cannon said that affordable housing should include a combination of privately owned and rental properties, and that application for

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Section 8 funds should be made. He emphasized that he supports the concept of volunteer labor.

Mr. Cannon said that he did not view the lack of public transportation as a major problem because very few families are without transportation. Referring to possible sites, Mr. Cannon said that he had no specific ideas at this time.

Mayor Anderson asked Mr. Cannon, "If you could draft a program for the Commission, what would be your goals and objectives?" He answered that he would first gather as many people as possible together in order to obtain their input as to what their needs are. Mr. Cannon said that he would "grab a newspaper, look at every type of housing, rental, option-to-buy, and start to work first with what is immediately available."

When asked about his working ability with State and Federal funds, Mr. Cannon said that every job he had held since 1965 had been with the government, and he had the necessary experience. He concluded his interview by telling Council, "I'm a concerned citizen and I think I can contribute. I would be honored. I pretty much make my own schedule and can get to meetings."

Lance D. Donovan

City Manager Woodruff pointed out that Mr. Donovan would qualify as either the City-at-large or real estate representative. Mr. Donovan told Council that the Affordable Housing Commission should address primarily low-to-moderate income people, adding that there was a definite need in the City for affordable housing.

With regard to financing, Mr. Donovan said that there were a number of Federal and State programs available, however, private-based financing and other forms of assistance were available as well.

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He stated that the Commission should put itself in the position of taking input from property owners to ensure no possible sites were missed.

Mr. Donovan suggested that impact fees on commercial developments were a viable way in which to generate affordable housing funds. In developing commercial properties, he said, jobs are created, and affordable housing for those people should be addressed. Council Member Herms asked who would be the ultimate payer of impact fees. Mr. Donovan said it would be a combination of the purchaser, developer, and owner, and ultimately passed on to the retail customer.

Mr. Donovan said that in his opinion, a combination of rental and privately-owned residences should be combined in an affordable housing project, however, a task force would need to determine what the community wants.

Council Member Korest remarked that affordable housing had not been a very successful endeavor and asked Mr. Donovan for his opinion. Mr. Donovan admitted that dealing with affordable housing was a very difficult job; "the public is screaming for it, yet saying they do not want it next door." The task force must identify why affordable housing does not exist, and hold a public forum to deal with the issues on an on-going basis. He emphasized that public education on the topic was imperative.

Mayor Anderson asked Mr. Donovan what his goals would be, should he be appointed to the Commission. He answered that his first "plan of attack" would be to continue addressing existing affordable housing stock, then find ways to ensure that that stock would be maintained. Mr. Donovan said that homeless families need to be considered. He suggested surveying other cities in order to determine what concepts work. Mr. Donovan assured Council that since he was an independent contractor, he had ample time to serve on the Commission. With respect to funding, Mr. Donovan remarked that he was

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familiar with tax credit programs. In closing, he said that he had a long-term perspective with regard to affordable housing, could assist in the process, and would be honored to be considered.

BREAK: 9:28 a.m. - 9:35 a.m.

Dorothy J. Fitch

Mrs. Fitch told Council that she had been a member of the Collier County Affordable Housing Task Force and that she would definitely support the City's needs should she be appointed to the Commission. Mrs. Fitch commented that the Commission should be established with City Council and County Commission guidance, and involve a City or County staff person who would offer firm direction.

Mrs. Fitch emphasized that a good publicity campaign was needed in order to make people aware of affordable housing needs and solutions. In answer to Mayor Anderson's question, Mrs. Fitch said that she would hope that the private sector would be able to achieve and administer a well-balanced affordable housing program, however, City and County overview capabilities would probably be beneficial.

Clifford "Chip" Olson

Mr. Olson explained that he had applied for appointment to the Commission as a property owner and felt that it was his duty to get involved in local government. When asked by Council Member Sullivan to describe his concept of affordable housing, Mr. Olson said that the American public has the right to a roof over their head, yet there is a serious lack of housing. That problem must be straightened out, he noted, and housing provided.

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Mr. Olson addressed the issue of financing, noting that currently there are two well-known programs, one with the Federal Banking Board and the other with the State Department! He added that he believes those are the best Federal fund programs. He went on to say that developers need to be included in affordable housing plans. Mr. Olson told Council that his firm was in the process of buying small two-bedroom homes which will be renovated and leased with an option to buy; that method could also be implemented in affordable housing plans, he noted. Mr. Olson stated that the Commission should educate groups since so many people do not seem to understand the concept of affordable housing.					

<u>William Poyer</u>					
Mr. Poyer said that he wanted to give something back to the Naples community and he believed he could offer many good ideas. He told Council that he had a "good feel" for land-use values. Mr. Poyer said that he would encourage the private sector to get involved in affordable housing and that the use of guest houses should be encouraged.					
Addressing the issue of financing, Mr. Poyer said that the Commission would have to pursue every available funding opportunity that existed. Affordable housing must be addressed everywhere, he commented, and perhaps Naples could be innovative in this important issue.					
<u>James P. Smiley</u>					
Council Member Sullivan asked Mr. Smiley to describe his philosophy with respect to affordable housing. Mr. Smiley replied that the working segment of the community should be guaranteed housing and any working family should not have to pay more than 25% to 35% of their income for housing. He had been involved in the planning, financing and building of low and					

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moderate income housing in Ohio and Kentucky and had always tried to strive toward private ownership. That should be the ultimate goal in Naples, said Mr. Smiley, although rental and lease-to-own options must be available as well.

In answer to Council Member Korest's question, Mr. Smiley said that leadership of the Commission should be a combination of the government and private sector. If appointed to the Commission, said Mr. Smiley, his objectives would be gathering all necessary statistics and obtaining a mandate from the City and the County as to what the Commission's obligations are. He emphasized that the Commission should follow, not set, policy.

City Manager Woodruff asked Mr. Smiley what his opinion was with respect to the possibility of the City paying impact fees for affordable housing and Mr. Smiley replied that it would be of "immeasurable value." In conclusion, Mr. Smiley said that he would love to have the opportunity to get back into the field and that it would be a welcome chance to repay the City.

Elizabeth St. James-Garland

Ms. St. James-Garland told Council that she had been a licensed builder and broker, had experience in property management, had managed subsidized housing in Detroit and Ann Arbor, Michigan, and had chaired the Ann Arbor Affordable Housing Commission. She said that she thought of affordable housing as an emotional issue and that anyone could find themselves in the position of being homeless. Relative to affordable housing in Naples, Ms. St. James-Garland said that first, density requirements should be considered and sufficient land acquired. She noted that a great disparity in incomes existed in Naples. In fact, she added,

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Ms. St. James-Garland told Council that should she be appointed to the Affordable Housing Commission, her first goal would be to determine what is presently available, adding that education should be an on-going process. With regard to any possible disparities between the City and the County, Ms. St. James-Garland commented that anyone appointed by the City would need to protect the City's best interests. She assured Council that she would have time to devote to the Commission, saying, "We all make choices to find the time for what is important. It's real easy for people to say 'it will never happen to me.' It can happen to anyone." In conclusion, Ms. St. James-Garland commented that her relative newness to the Naples area was an asset. People must be committed to this project, she said, otherwise it would be a waste of time.

It was the consensus of Council that the following people be appointed to the Affordable Housing Commission: Johnny Cannon, to represent the City at large; John Ryan, to represent the legal profession; James Smiley, to represent the development community; and Elizabeth St. James-Garland, to represent the real estate profession. This item will be on the City Council agenda for formal approval on October 2, 1991.

ADJOURN: 1:14 p.m.

KIM ANDERSON, MAYOR

