



*Chief of Housing for Albemarle County Ron White*

One of the recommendations of the Joint Task Force on Affordable Housing was that the City, County and University of Virginia explore the creation of “single-room occupancy” (SRO) units. These would involve clusters of studio apartments which would be built at a high enough density to allow them to be rented out at affordable prices.

There are several SROs in San Francisco that were placed in converted hotels. The topic was explored at the most recent meeting of the Planning and Coordination Council (PACC) on February 19, 2009. PACC is a joint council with representatives from Charlottesville, Albemarle and the University of Virginia.

Download the podcast: [Download PACC Affordable Housing Task Force](#)

The PACC discussed ways that the University can help Charlottesville and the County to receive state and federal stimulus money in order to accomplish some recommendations of the Task Force. Mayor Dave Norris pointed out that UVA has already been helping with the development of the SRO idea.

“Lending their intellectual resources and their energy to the project really took that project to a whole new level,” Norris said.

Norris explained that SRO units would be a good way for Albemarle County to participate in providing affordable housing without having to raise taxes or take money away from other initiatives. He suggested that the County could participate by designating rent vouchers for this project which could be leveraged to raise other funds.

“There are ways to make real gains without necessarily spending money,” Norris said.

Supervisor Dennis Rooker (Jack Jouett) asked representatives from UVA if they would be supportive of the SRO idea.

“It is something we should pursue to see if we can obtain stimulus money to make it happen... it would be helpful to have UVA participate,” said Rooker.

Additionally, the Task Force recommended that University of Virginia consider higher density development when constructing new housing for graduate students and employees. Ideally, this would free up some of the affordable units surrounding the University for area residents. The Task Force recommended that UVA continue to provide housing for first year students and provide more options for other students. The task force also recommended that the University support a regional transit authority and try to move towards a living wage for University employees and contracted workers whenever possible.



*The Planning and Coordination Council*

County Supervisor Ken Boyd (Rivanna) and Supervisor Rooker explained to the group that while some of the additional recommendations for the County may be sound, the County has little money to direct towards new affordable housing funding at this time. Rooker expressed concern that federal and state funding for affordable housing would continue to decrease.

“We are rapidly finding ourselves in more and more areas that have been previously met by the state and federal government,” Rooker said.

Boyd suggested that he would like to know where Albemarle County stands relative to the rest of the nation in money designated for affordable housing. He expressed concern that County money was not being spent on the affordable units for those who need it the most, those at the lowest end of the income range.

“We might have to figure out a new way to slice up that pie,” Boyd said.

Fania Gordon & Sean Tubbs

TIMELINE FOR PODCAST: