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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.

1 **5. Agency Spotlight -- Habitat for Humanity:**

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3 Natalie Green introduced a presentation. April Estrada of Habitat for Humanity  
4 was unable to attend this meeting but she provided the presentation for Jan  
5 Lauterbach to give. The presentation included statistics of the program's activities,  
6 a breakdown of the requirements for clients to fulfill, a discussion of City  
7 involvement in funding and costs paid by the program, a map of single-family  
8 homes built in the past few years, and current plans for more homes. In the last  
9 16 years there have been 128 houses built. Habitat for Humanity purchases the  
10 land for the homes. The City helps with CDBG and HOME funds. Federal funds  
11 cannot be used to build on leased land. Habitat for Humanity does not yet have a  
12 home rehabilitation program in this area but they are working on it.  
13

14 **6. Recommendation Items: None.**

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16 **7. General Discussion:**

17 **a. Housing and Neighborhood Services Annual Project and Strategic**  
18 **Plan Review:**

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20 Councilor Bencomo started a presentation regarding goals and plans for the  
21 next budget year. Staff continued with a specific budget breakdown. There  
22 was further discussion of using the General Fund and GO Bond money to  
23 finance Tierra del Sol and Habitat for Humanity. The City is currently trying  
24 to purchase land for low-cost housing in Metro Verde, the Three Sisters  
25 project is already started on Hadley and Walnut, and the City has purchased  
26 the Brewer Oil parcel of land for Community of Hope. There was discussion  
27 of problems and planned improvements for Community of Hope. Properties  
28 will undergo environmental analysis before being improved. The City  
29 Housing Authority partners with Community of Hope to provide services to  
30 clients. The Home Rehabilitation Program was discussed. Staff hopes to  
31 make the Program more efficient and improve service. This Program is  
32 looking into installing solar for participating households. It was suggested  
33 that the Committee have discussion and invite experts regarding costs of  
34 electricity versus gas utilities for the households participating in the  
35 Program. Staff is looking into increasing efficiency for the Public Service  
36 Program and expanding staff duties. The application processes will be  
37 reviewed and possibly modified, as it has been two years since the last  
38 modifications. Suggestion was made to change HHS grant process to make  
39 it an internal review rather than presentations by applicants. Suggestion  
40 was made to ask the City Clerk and City Manager to send out lists of  
41 committees which are missing members so that those positions can be  
42 filled. Suggestion was made to expand the number of agencies working  
43 with the City on a contract base and who have a line item in the budget, in  
44 order to increase the amount of grants available to other nonprofits who  
45 have to compete for CDBG and other grant monies. Staff is planning to  
46 revise the grant application guide in the next budget year. Mayor Pro Tem  
47 Gandara asked how to advocate for increase in Federal funding for housing  
48 programs. There is a biweekly meeting with the Federal delegation

1 regarding housing challenges. The City is also a member of the National  
2 Community Development Association so there are lobbyists in Washington  
3 who send updates weekly or monthly. The 2016 Strategic Plan for Housing  
4 is also going to be updated soon. Staff has requested additional funding in  
5 the 2024 budget year to enable them to hire a consultant. The HUD 2021-  
6 2025 Consolidated Plan with Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing  
7 Choice is available on the website.

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

10 Postponed until February.

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13 **8. Future Items for Review:**

14 **a. Realize Las Cruces Infill:**

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

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22 Chairperson

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26 Approved: 2-15-22