



Howard County

Internal Memorandum

Subject: Testimony on Council Resolution No. __-2021, requesting approval of an APFO Waiver for the Greenfields Development

To: Lonnie Robbins, Chief Administrative Officer

From: Kelly Cimino, Director of Department of Housing and Community Development
K. Cimino

Date: October 18, 2021

Background

The County will grant funds to iHomes, Inc. (the “Developer”), to own, develop and manage the construction of three (3) single family detached houses, with three (3) bedrooms in each house on three-quarters of an acre of land located at 8120 Hicks Road in Jessup. The Greenfields project (the “Project”) will be rented as single-room occupancy units to nine (9) low-income individuals that have physical, developmental and intellectual disabilities. No residents under the age of 18 will live in the units.

The Howard County Housing Commission purchased the property for \$325,000 on February 16, 2016. At the time of the purchase, there were 3 vacant, blighted residential buildings on the property. The buildings were constructed in 1963 and were previously used as rental properties. The Commission’s plan was to purchase the property, demolish all three existing buildings and construct three new, single family detached, modular homes on the property. The property is connected to public water and sewer. The plan would require a minor subdivision approval before the new construction could take place. The plan was to lease the new homes to the Department of Corrections as re-entry transitional housing for occupancy by 9 returning citizens.

Due to concerns raised by neighboring communities, the Housing Commission decided not to pursue plans to use the property for re-entry transitional housing. The County approached the Commission about donating the land to the Developer to address the shortage of affordable rental housing for persons with disabilities. The Commission donated the land to the Developer for \$1 on June 22, 2018. The deed is recorded in Book 18385, Page 341.

Federal Home Investment Partnership (HOME) funds may be used to acquire, demolish and construct new homes. The Developer is the County’s only Community Housing Development Organization (“CHDO”). The Developer applied to the County for HOME funds in 2019. The project is eligible to receive grant awards from the County’s allocation of HOME funds and from

the Department's Community Renewal MIHU fee-in-lieu program funds. The Developer proposes to use the grant funds to develop highly sustainable houses that are classified as zero energy. Zero-energy homes are built with renewable energy systems, such as solar energy, that will produce the energy the home requires at little or no cost to the owner.

A zero-energy home has high efficiency components, increased levels of insulation, Energy Star appliances, high efficiency HVAC systems and windows designed to reduce the required electricity kilo watt required annually. Upon completion, the units will be available for immediate occupancy. The Project will also provide opportunities to create a sense of fellowship with the surrounding neighborhoods by installing a shared community garden and leading other community activities. The community garden will not only add aesthetic value to the site, it will provide therapeutic care to the residents and provide an opportunity for the residents and community to grow local vegetables and herbs together.

The Developer has an existing partnership with Humanim Inc., which is a private nonprofit human services agency serving individuals with disabilities. Humanim will provide support services, which include day programs, transportation, medical assistance, life skills and more, for the adult residents. Residents will have incomes at 30% or below of the area median income for the HUD Baltimore-Towson-Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).

Consideration of Special Affordable Housing Opportunities Exemption

As part of the minor subdivision process approval, the technically complete letter from the Department of Planning and Zoning to the Developer indicated that the schools in the area were currently closed to development. Because this Project meets the language specified in the Special Affordable Housing Opportunities Exemption, the Department is requesting Council approval of a resolution authorizing the project to proceed considering the following factors:

1. The capacity utilization at the school or schools impacted by the project and at adjacent schools, including limiting the potential impact on any elementary or middle school with a capacity utilization rate greater than 115 percent unless an adjacent school with the same grade levels has a capacity utilization rate of 100 percent or less;
2. Estimated student generation from the project;
3. Any potential for the Board of Education to add capacity to the impacted school or schools through redistricting, facility expansion, or other programs; and



Howard County

Internal Memorandum

4. The need for affordable housing in the County, including factors such as the housing cost burden on families, the availability of housing for individuals with disabilities, and the extent of homelessness among families and school children.

This project will only serve adults that are over the age of 18. The Project will not generate any school age children. This project will address the unmet need and availability of housing for individuals with disabilities and provide new, low cost, energy efficient rental units for a segment of the population that has extremely limited housing choices.

Fiscal Impact

Funding sources include grants from the Weinberg Foundation (\$400,000.), the County's federal HOME program funds (\$322,409.50) and the County's Community Renewal funds from the MIHU Fee-in-Lieu program (\$92,000.) for a total of \$814,909.50. The Developer is not seeking a PILOT from the County.

The fiscal impact to the County from approval of this resolution is minimal. The County will make one-time investments of federal HOME funds and County MIHU FIL funds for a total of \$414,409.50. There is no ongoing fiscal impact after year 1.

Cc: Elizabeth Walsh, Council Chair
Opel Jones, Council Vice Chair
Christiana Rigby, Councilperson
Deb Jung, Councilperson
David Yungmann, Councilperson
Michelle Harrod, Administrator
Craig Glendenning, County Auditor