

MIAMI DADE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
NORTH CAMPUS
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Community Affordable Housing Strategies Alliance (CAHSA)

Community Forum

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COURT REPORTERS, INC. (305) 373-5600

CAHSA Community Forum
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Summary of Community Comments by Committees

Elaine Black: Public Information and Education

No Community Comments

Bill Thompson: the Public Housing, Section 8, Special Needs Housing Community Comments:

MR. HARDEMON: Yes, Roy Hardemon, 65 North 48 Street (mailing address). Under Section 8 program, as far as housing and urban development, in this Section 8 component, under the one strike-out you're out, even with the public housing piece, under one strike you're out, it has a serious problem, because when you actually start applying the one strike-you-out, it has a clause in there where it's actually not a one strike. You have an opportunity to help that resident that falls into harm's way. A lot of our residents from the Section 8 public housing have some type of subsidy agreements, and when they get caught up in that web, they're immediately being evicted out of these houses and then you cause another issue. A lot of folks that are moving under Section 8 and public housing, when they went there, they had a financial problem then, so by putting them out on the street, it even add more problem to the housing problem and crime. We need to really look at making our employees aware of how to work with these types of problems. And especially I know mostly about the Model City area, and in that Model City area, I know that the 1980 riot, it took a lot of jobs in our community and it really affected the housing stock as well, because now these folks that normally had jobs (inaudible) and all the businesses that was in the area no longer had their jobs and, therefore, a lot of people started getting evicted even on that. We're not really focusing on the housing and economic development portion. It is very, very important that this board or this committee focus on the job needs that are really in here. You know, we have this workforce housing. We have the wages program, but that wages program do not come in and say, well, on 62nd Street, it has no more businesses there. The business was taken down and we haven't put anything back in there. So I need this board to really focus on putting back into the community that was removed, that's businesses. Businesses drive the community. Without them, you have dilapidated neighborhoods without the businesses and job opportunities.

MR. EISE: Hi, John Eise (phonetic).

I just want to really applaud the work of the committee, particularly as it pertains to promoting poverty deconcentration, and fair housing and mixed-income environments for the -- for new affordable housing units. And, you know, I would like to see the -- and I think it's really important, as we move forward, that we don't repeat the mistakes of the past in which our affordable housing policies some had at times had the unfortunate end result of creating slums and that's had the unfortunate result of isolating low income communities and creating exclusively low income communities where people are economically segregated. And so I think that it's -- I think that's a vital point, an

overriding point of this particular committee. And I would like to see, either this committee or the general board, set a numeric goal or target for census tracts within Miami-Dade County to have no more than 40 percent of the population of living at or below the federal poverty line. I think that the biggest danger we have is not so much poverty, but the concentration of poverty. And, you know, I think our housing policies can really not only address the housing needs of this community, but the community development, needs as well.

MR. KNIGHT: Ken Knight, Overall Planning Advisory Council, Miami-Dade County Housing Agency. I'm here on behalf of our council president, Mr. Tommy Tribell (phonetic) and we want to put on the record about Ward Towers. Now we had a meeting yesterday, and the situation at Ward Towers is this. At the ALF facility, we had a meeting with those residents and there seems to be a situation where these residents have asked-- have been asked that they have to be relocated and there are some problems there. There's a lot of anxiety, there's a lot stress, because they haven't been told when that's going to happen. As you know, this is the holiday season. They need to know about the relocation. The resources, the money that's going to be given to them to do that. They're talking about their possessions as well. And at the same time, we're having some organizational issues, if you will, and basically by that I'm talking about this. When we put that facility, I'm talking about the ALF facility there, in Ward Towers, we have a president that's already installed there and that's Mr. Tommy, Tommy Tribell. And now what we created when we did that is now all of a sudden, now we have some other people that want to become their own council, but, as you know, there are rules that are governing that. Now, what we're saying is that Mr. Tribell, he has been serving the ALF facility, as well as Ward Towers. And there's no division here. And speaking for OTAC, we will not allow that facility to be divided or compromised or the leadership of OTAC to be compromised, but I think that, you know, when we put these other situations, and there, again, these various projects, they need to know that they're going to have to come under OTAC. That's Number 1. Number 2 is, like I say, we need to bring a crisis team in there right away to relieve the fears and the anxiety, particularly the Hispanic community, because as it was told to me yesterday. And they're seeing a lot -- when they first came upon the situation there, at the ALF facility, they were given the documents in English. They say they didn't receive anything in Spanish, or Creole or what have you and they didn't know, so you have some people that know, but the majority of them said they didn't know. So what we need to do is we need to change that situation. So like I said, I'm here for Ward Towers, I'm here for a lot of other things, too, but I'll limit it to Ward Towers.

MS. KELLY: Good evening, Panel, my name is Tracy Kelly and I'm a resident of Liberty Square Apartments. I have one question about the Section 8 voucher program. When I first moved into public housing, I obtained a voucher for Section 8 from the Emory (phonetic) decree, and I was unable to find a house, because, as you know, they give you a listing of the houses and it's like 500 other people are looking at those same houses. So, you know, it's like it's a big thing to get one of those houses, and I was not able to obtain a house for me and my kids, so I had to relinquish the voucher. And, also, it's the fact that when you're looking in the newspaper or you're going through private

rentals -- I'm looking in a newspaper now. Right now, I'm okay. I'm happy where I'm at right now, but I'm a person, and I'm a resident that's trying to become self-sufficient. I'm in school and everything now. And I want to know why is there a problem with the landlords accepting the Section 8 voucher from the Coral Way office? Because when you look in the paper now, that's all you see there. What is the problem with this office and why can't a person like myself obtain a voucher like myself again.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hello, good evening, my name is (unintelligible) and I'm a case manager at Jackson Memorial Mental Health, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Unit and my concern is there are no offices or one-stop places where somebody with a disability, including the deaf population, can go to apply, you know, to drop off an application or file a complaint or request accommodations. So I'm also including, you know, we're talking about also providing interpreters for deaf persons, so that they're able to voice their own complaints or to make requests. So I think maybe something needs to be set up, if possible.

MR. TADFIELD: Hi, My name is Tony Tadfield (phonetic). I currently work with this construction, builders trying to get affordable housing and I worked prior to this with other developers and stuff. I got -- over the past three, four, five years, I've been in the affordable housing development field, and I got a lot of feedback from residents and people and stuff. A couple of the things that -- one of the things I want to talk about is the monitoring of existing affordable housing. Affordable housing has been here in Dade County for quite sometime. Different projects were built, because there's always been a need. There's always been research. I think what we also have to do is also go back and do audit for these projects, why have some projects failed, why have some projects had problems, what are the concerns of these residents. Sometimes some of the residents can't even get here. Some of them can't -- I know people try to do surveys and they're just now getting the feedback of problems they have with their development, with their environment, frustration with different affordable housing programs. You just heard a couple of residents here with some concerns. That's only a few of some of the complexes that I've developed where there's 300, 400 residents in there. There are a lot of issues. And I just think if there was a way, I don't know, maybe a representative going to different affordable housing communities, setting up a day, a workshop at these communities and saying, hey, guys, you know there's a representative here to hear your concerns. We're going to be embarking on new development for the affordable housing market, what have been your last problems in terms of the last 10 years? What's been bothering you in terms of, you know, some people just said the quality of the construction, just the environment, the housing policies and different issues like that, so that's one thing I want to talk about. The other thing was mixed income. I know a lot of people are afraid of gentrification, where you have people with-- you know, people are scared that people with a lot of money come in. I know we talked about mixed-income areas. When you start having mixed-income areas in areas such as Liberty City and stuff, how is that going to be worked out? I always see a conflict when people are scared of gentrification in poorer areas, then you're going to tell them we're going to have mixed income, how is that supposed to be resolved? How do you calm local residents' nerves on that?

MR. HAGAN: Steve Hagan, 725 Northeast 73 Street (in the City of Miami). Whatever the City builds, or the County builds or private developers build, we have a problem in the City of Miami, it's a disease and it's called out-of-place buildings. And I'm referring to the fact that who's going to be living in this building, I'm talking about the size, the bulk, the scale of buildings. We have two affordable housing units that are going up on 79 Street. I think you're all familiar with that, east of I-95. It is a two-story -- a one and two-story neighborhood with existing one and two-story single-family homes. And what do we have coming up? A 17-story and 19-story affordable housing units? Now, what a lot of us contend that this is going to do more damage to the existing neighborhood in terms of skyrocketing land prices than it's going to do good. It's using HOME dollars. And I know the HUD requirements speak of north and south markets in the five and six-story range and here we have 11 -- 17 and 19-story towers going up, so this must be addressed. I mean, the City of Miami, it's a disease right now. It needs -- what I'm talking about, as you all know, the private buildings that are going up, the land values through the ceiling. And by using affordable housing complex, you're doing the same thing. You're going to be driving -- I have friends that own properties within a few block ranges of these towers that are going up. They can't raise their rent. They're being forced to sell their -- what is affordable low income housing units. They can't raise the rents. The only alternative is to sell to some developer who's probably going to want to put up another tower.

MS. LACROIX: Good evening, my name is Sophia Lacroix, with the Haitian Neighborhood Center. The population we serve, low income, mostly Haitian families who are concerned, focus on those that are renting and have trouble affording -- finding rental assistance, especially those that are served with eviction notices. Now I refer them to a couple of places where they require a five-day legal eviction notice, but most of these people bring three-day eviction notices signed by their landlord. What I am hoping to find is resources that can accommodate these people, that they don't have to wait and continue to be intimidated by their landlords and threatened. The landlord doesn't want to go to the trouble of getting the five-day legal eviction notice. I wish it would be possible to find resources just to accommodate those people that have these kinds of notices or even a three-day legal eviction notice and to establish a standard to just help people that -- don't exempt, don't leave out these people who don't have that one type of specific form that's so difficult to come about.

MS. CABAN: My name is Lilian -- her name is Caban (phonetic), and she is somebody who lost her Section 8 lotto voucher and she's going to explain why. I went to go to see the house for the interview. First of all, she realized she won the lotto from an agency, so she went to the house, just following the directions to get to the house, but was frustrated because there was no interpreter to help her communicate and she showed the I.D. card that she was deaf saying, "I need an interpreter, I am deaf," and they ignored it. And then I went to another interview and still again I couldn't understand they're reading -- you know, my English is not very good, whether it be English or Spanish. Again, no interpreter. And then after the fourth or fifth letter, I keep trying to go to all different

apartments, I ended up losing the Section 8 lotto voucher, and then I was out of the program and I'm very upset because I have two kids.

MR. MILLER: My name is John Miller. I serve on the County Commission for Disability Issues. And as related to the special needs housing, in our last meeting, of this last month, there was -- I need to speak up? Okay. My name is John Miller. I belong to -- I'm a member of the County Commission on Disability Issues. And related to the special housing issue, in our last month's meeting, there was some discussion about accommodations for disabilities that exist in some of the rental houses and there was some concern about the possibility of when the inspections are done on the houses, which is an annual process for the houses being approved for continued use, that there might be a mechanism established that, through the inspection process, you might be able to pinpoint houses that had accessibility provisions in them that could somehow be part of this information process, made available to potential residents, not necessary -- I don't think it's possible for you to require -- I wouldn't -- we're not talking about requiring the Section 8 houses of homeowners to provide specific things, but somehow in the process of inspecting the houses, if there was some sort of list that the inspectors could be made aware of, so as they went through the houses, they can make note of it and that information could be made available to the disabled community, who might qualify for Section 8. Also, I noted in this particular report, it was wrapped up by saying that there was -- they felt that the work of this committee should be carried on somehow and I understand that there are some limitations to that, but I feel the County would probably be in favor of continuing this, because it's a large body of work that's being entertained here. And probably, if there's some mechanism that could be instituted to continue the influence of this committee so that this process --

MS. HERMANTIN: Good evening, I'm Leonie Hermantin, also from the Haitian Neighborhood Center. And to piggyback on Sophia Lacroix's concerns and to sort of address the question of the committee member here. I would like to say that while there may be resources available at some point for rental housing, for rental assistance, the reality is that those funds are very quickly depleted. One call to the county line number will definitely be evidence of that. We've called them numerous times for clients who cannot -- who don't fall within that three to five and there's nothing. I mean, we call, we call. There's nothing available. There may be funds at some point. You know, you call, you make the rounds to all the resources and they're usually depleted very, very fast, so I think that, yes, there are resources, but the reality is that the need is such that they are very, very quickly depleted.

MS. BROWN: Good evening, my name is Brenda Brown, and I have tried to apply for low income housing and I was told that my income was too low and that I needed a co-signer. And if I get the co-signer, if this person made more than what I did, they would charge me according to their income, which made no sense. So at one time I couldn't afford a house, now I can't afford to rent. So I hope (inaudible) program, but in the meantime, I'm homeless, and I'm trying to find a place for my children and myself, but my income is too low. I need a co-signer.

MS. METELLUS: Good evening, everyone. Thank you so much for this opportunity. While I think all of us are very appreciative -- I'm sorry, Gepsie Metellus, also from the Haitian Neighborhood Center. We're very appreciative, I think, this entire audience, those of us who are both on the consumer side, as well as on the service provider side. While I take this opportunity to dialogue and want to be partners in this endeavor to resolve this crisis, clearly this is going to involve and need the involvement of every one of us. But I stood up here to briefly point your attention to the fact that, as I scan the committee makeup, the CAHSA committee, the CAHSA committee makeup, it struck me that you are lacking, I think, in some very significant community voices, and that is, those voices that can help you understand the specificities of certain communities, the needs, the issues, the strategies that certain members of our community deploy to house themselves, to help themselves out. Yes, to help themselves out. And so I think that the richness of your -- I recognize a number of names of these various committees, but I think that's lacking and I wanted to stand up and say that, for the record.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'd just like to say that when you are scheduling community forums, particularly about an issue where it would have been very important to get input from the disability community, that you try to schedule your meetings with at least a couple of weeks advanced notice, because with people with disabilities, it can be very difficult just planning the transportation to get from one place to another, but for us, as a disability providers that (inaudible) on living, we need time to be able to contact parents, to get the information to them, to help them with the scheduling and then to make sure that they get there. So we need advance notice whenever possible.

**Olga Golik: Rental Homeownership and Rehabilitation,
Community Comments:**

MR. HARDEMON: Roy Hardemon again. In this presentation, one of the things that she spoke about is an oversight board. OCED is that Board. The subcommittees that they have under ModelCity, Perrine, you've got Opa locka, you've got Miami Gardens CDC that actually oversee both -- overseeing these projects, where they have the Board of County Commissioners and the County Manager's Office has traditionally disrespected these boards and it causes a lot of these issues. If we just bring that portion back, bring the Homeless Trust, as well as the Surtax dollars and stuff under this one umbrella that would help this housing crisis very much. The issue about building, and I speak a lot about Model City, because I (inaudible) try to go outside my neighborhood most of the time, but in Model City, the crisis we have -- we have over 500 vacant lots that's available for construction, but it seems that we don't have the skills set from staff through OCED to -- and the Surtax program to come in and match these programs and to actually put these dollars to construction. This Surtax project that I think about, you know, and I hate to say this word, Black folks, haven't heard about this program. These dollars start easing out. You know, the word Surtax to me was a Greek word till a year ago. Now, you know, I hear it all the time. And every time I sit on this dais that I sit on, I see packages come forward and there is no dollars out of these developers' pocket. It's all Surtax, HOME, Ship. You name it, it's that program. And to know these dollars are available and you all, as the County, can't get it together, can't get it correct, that we

need to (inaudible) bring ahead and allow to assist us also to build these houses within our community.

MR. EISE: John Eise again. I really like the idea about having housing or just, you know somebody who's within the County Manager's Office, who really moves these projects forward. And Andy Parish with Wind and Rain suggested something along the same lines. He basically limited the role of this housing czar position to, one, attain lots. Two, get through the permitting process for the developers of affordable housing. Three, coordinate the subsidized mortgages. And, four, problem-solve with the various departments. And that's it. That is the role of the person who is the housing czar position and that is empowered to make this bureaucracy really work in harmony with one another. And, also, just going back to this whole issue of the housing one-stop center. I think that, you know, we need to not only think about housing one stop or the housing issue as just a housing issue. I think it's a workforce development issue. I think it's a primary education issue. It's a human service issue. And I would like to see us, when we're talking about the development of the housing one-stop approach that it does incorporate, say, the South Florida workforce one-stop centers, DCF and the whole public benefit support for individuals. I think that we should not get into the box just thinking about housing problem and the affordable housing crunch in this County as just a housing issue. It's much broader than that. And people have a myriad of needs that is being manifested in the housing issue, but it's much more expansive than that.

MR. GROSS: Thank you. Oliver Gross, Bureau of Greater Miami. And, again, I applaud the committee and thank you for this opportunity. I've got three, I think, real brief points and I'll try to be as (inaudible) as I can. First, as it relates to the revised audited process, I think it's important to recognize that as we revise our process, that we stay cognizant to the whole development process as a whole in terms of how it works. As I understand, I think there's a movement in terms of standardizing the RFA process, particularly for the Surtax and for food dollars to once or twice a year. On the face, that sounds great, but, unfortunately, in the real world, the development world, development does occur once or twice a year and I think the ability to be able to have developers to go back and to be able to access those funds, I think is very, very key to having consistent production of affordable housing and I think that you might want to again just rethink that whole process, because as things occur, during the course of development, you can't wait six or seven months in terms of having to respond to them for additional funds. And you can't do affordable housing anywhere in the world without having significant public participation in that whole process. It does not work. And that is why I think you see the majority of private developers steering away from it, is that you can't do it without the public support and I think it is important that public support be responsive and be tied into that whole process. My other point is that I think it's important to be able to coordinate the underwriting relative to the allocation of dollars and to be able to coordinate that or to make it consistent with that, which is being undertaken by the private partners in this process. Again, the financing structure for all affordable projects has three components. That is public participation. You've got private contributions. By that I mean from banks and institutions like that and then there's Emory (phonetic). You cannot do it with a different kind of structure. And Often times what delays this whole

process is that once you've gotten through these other two layers in terms of debt financing or other kinds of private industry financing, you still have some underwriting that is just drawn out as it relates to the County agencies and you've got to find a way in terms of being able to bridge that gap, because in development, it is all about timing and about timing in that whole process, if you're going to be able to get your arms around the delivery of the project – the product and the projects. And, finally, as I heard somebody talk about in terms of neighborhoods that are historically separate, because of disinvestment and the lack of development, I think that there ought to be special attention as we talk about the deployment of economic resources into those areas that have historically been disinvested in and you can't do it in the same without --

MR. KING: Thank you. Jersey King. I'm a property owner in Miami area with rental units. Two-fold question. (Inaudible) with other property owners and as the taxes in Miami, as the insurance and all these things continue to increase, we are talking about affordable housing. How do I get my tenants the information so that they can get public housing assistance in order to maintain their ability or their affordability to stay in a low income housing range? One of the things that I'm finding difficult is, I'm really not sure where to go for my tenants to help them get some assistance. Many of them are on fixed income, whether it be SSI or elderly patients, so it's kind of cumbersome. I'm finding for them to be able to have some access to the Internet, and I think that's a wonderful thing for people where they have that access, but I'm finding that's not reality for a lot of the people that are tenants in my building, so I think that's something that we might need to figure a way to --

MR. TADFIELD: This is Tony again. We were talking about expedited permitting. I also wanted to include that we should also have expedited revisions and inspections. A lot of times we forget the development aspect and you kind of get held up in your construction schedule because of inspection issues and going and getting the plans revised. I know I've had a time -- the plans expedited, but then I had a problem with the revision where I'm stuck in the back and forth.

MR. TADFIELD: One last piece. The other thing is, we're also talking about getting funding for affordable housing. There's also for innovative affordable housing. There are a lot of different types of housing we can do in Dade County that they're doing in California, such as dome housing, which, as you know, construction costs are way high. That's one of the reasons we don't have affordable housing out here. Developers can't afford to build out here. There's dome housing, solar power energy that a lot of rental units could used to off-set a lot of the utility costs that are going up, 'cause as, you know, electric, everything is going up. I think if there are little incentives that can be brought up from the public housing side for innovative affordable housing that would be good for solar energy, greenhouses, dome housing, and look at different types of housing than what's down here. Go to California, the west coast, you can see a lot of these affordable innovative housing kinds of things.

MR. DENNIS: Brian Dennis, 6825 Northwest 15 Avenue, Executive Director of Brothers of the Same Mind. That word affordable, that's like (inaudible), because

nothing in Miami-Dade County concerning housing is affordable. When you're looking at affordable, I'm going to take on a little trip. That's on 22nd Avenue and 67 Street and look at them million houses that they threw up over there. Before they put -- before they put the roofs on top of the shells, before they combined the houses, I was in there with the developer and this developer did some all right work in the houses around the community. For a family of four to go inside their homes right now, and they don't section the houses off, they have outgrown those houses before they move into those houses. You really need to go look at this. When you are talking about Habitat of Humanity building the houses, and they have their name on it, and what the lady told me at Habitat, at the town hall meeting in Overtown at the (inaudible), she said that Habitat of Humanity don't make any money off these houses. Well, the CAHSA Board need to go look at it in what I call match box city, because that is how small those houses are. I remember someone saying that they were trying to build affordable houses like in Coral Gables or Aventura. They would not put those houses in Coral Gables or in Aventura. They wouldn't do that, because when you look at the minimum size of these houses, that's not affordable. The thing was, according to the housing guidelines, is for low and very low income people. That's what the HUD guidelines were saying at the 30 percent of the community workforce with the Section 3 program. That's what HUD was talking about. When you say affordable, affordable for a first-time home buyer was supposed to make anywhere from \$10,001 to \$45,000 a year. I was looking at a use of an apartment building going to be risen on 14 Avenue and 54 Street, a family of four has to make \$33,000 a year, just to live in an apartment building when you usually can make \$33,000 a year and buy a home. What is affordable when you're pricing us out, our own neighborhood? What is affordable when we're not working in our own neighborhood? This Board, understand what you all are doing, and I applaud you with your committee work, but you're not the board that needs to be sitting here. We need to be sitting here talking about the Miami-Dade Housing Finance Authority, because that's the board that appears to be under the guise of the Miami-Dade County Commission, the OCED appears to be doling out all this money. I could care less about the 87 million dollars that was lost, when we're losing way more than 87 million that everybody seems to go quite on. This Board does not makeup the community, because the community where I live that's being priced out and thrown out into the streets --

MR. HAGAN: I like the idea of some sort of czar. I don't know that much.

18 about housing, but it sound reasonable. What doesn't sound reasonable, though, is bypassing the Community Council process. I think the community conscience needs to be in the process, and maybe I'm paranoid coming from the City of Miami, 'cause it goes back to my last comments of, you know, extremely tall, out of scale, out of bulk/scale buildings going into an area. Living in the city, I don't get that involved with much community councils. However, I did get involved with one immediately about 20 blocks from me, off Biscayne Boulevard, a little while ago where the County Commission was trying to create another CRA. Had we not -- and I don't know where that stands right now, but had the Commission not stopped that, we would have had 20-story towers going up next to single-family homes and I don't think that's the type of thing you want

