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Glades Technical Advisory Committee Minutes

Speaker: Mr. Jose Cintron, Director HUD Miami Office
Dr. Uche A. Oluku, Director HUD Office of Public Housing

Facilitator: Mr. Houston Tate, Director

Scribe (recorder): Derrek Moore, Senior Planner

Date/Time: June 23, 2016, 9:30 AM – 11:00 AM

Location: South Bay City Hall

Meeting Attendance:

1. Mayor Keith Babb	Mayor of the City of Pahokee
2. Leondre Camel	City Manager – City of South Bay
3. Jose Cintron	Director – HUD – Miami Div.
4. Diana Colunga	PBC Farm Worker Career Dev.
5. Julius Dent	City of S. Bay – Code Enforcement
6. Dr. JoAnn Finney	Delta Sigma Theta Sorority
7. Sgt. Jeff Garten	PBSO Dist 11 – S. Bay
8. Joe Glucksman	McCurdy Sr. Housing – Belle Glade
9. Larry Greenberg	PBC Housing Auth. – Sr. V.P.
10. Julia Hale	Director – Pahokee Housing Authority
11. Clara Hessing	PBC Youth Services Dept.
12. Mayor Joe Kyles	Mayor - City of South Bay
13. Jason Larrimore	City of Belle Glade Resident
14. Cartheda Mann	Delta Sigma Theta Sorority
15. Cylenthia Mann, Director	Bridges at Pahokee
16. Eugene Mann	Boy Scouts of America
17. Monica McCoy	PBSO
18. Dr. Uche Oluku	HUD, Dir. of Public Housing
19. Derrek Moore	OCR Senior Planner
20. Satuam Polineni	Pahokee Housing Authority – Fin. Dir.
21. Martie Parker	City of South Bay
22. Eddie Lee Rhodes	Belle Glade – Resident – Tri-Cities Educ. Comm.
23. Courtland Rodriguez	City of S. Bay – Code Enforcement
24. Trenesia Rozier	Bridges of Belle Glade
25. Isabel Steube	Urban League of PBC
26. Houston Tate	Director, PBC OCR
27. Javin Walker	S. Bay Resident & Contractor
28. Ralph Walker	2SBW
29. Vernell Williams-DesRosier	PBC School District – Dept. of Safe Schools
30. Chandler Williamson	City of Pahokee – City Manager
31. Lisa Wilson	Commissioner McKinlay's office

Some Attendees Did Not Sign-In

Meeting Minutes

1. Prayer & Pledge:

Mr. Tate called the meeting to order at 9:27 a.m. and introduced **Mayor Joe Kyles** (City of South Bay) to lead us in prayer. Mr. Tate asked Mr. Eugene Mann to lead us by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Mann is a Committee Chair & Scout Master for Pack 605 Boy Scouts & Cub Scouts of America.

2. Welcome & Presentations:

Mr. Tate welcomed the attendees and continued the meeting by asking everyone to move towards the front of the room. We circled the chairs to face each other to literally have a round table discussion in a circle. Mr. Tate introduced Mayor Babb and Mayor Babb welcomed the representatives from HUD. He also introduced Mrs. Lisa Wilson from Comm. Melissa McKinlay's office. He encouraged open dialogue and explained that HUD representatives would not be doing a traditional speech but wants to have an open dialogue and discussion with the attendees.

Mr. Tate asked everyone to introduce themselves. After everyone introduced themselves, Mr. Tate turned the meeting over to the speakers for the day, Mr. Jose Cintron, Dir. of the HUD's Miami office & Dr. Uche Oluku, Dir. of Public Housing, HUD's Miami office, introduced themselves and shared a little about their backgrounds and roles with Housing & Urban Development (HUD). Mr. Cintron explained that they are here to listen. They are here to support OCR's motto to: "Educate, Engage & Connect". They thanked everyone for coming out to the meeting.

Mr. Cintron also briefly discussed their roles at HUD. They by asking the question: What does HUD do? He actually posed the question from his daughter, which asked about his role at HUD and what HUD does. He explained that they do things within communities with "other people". They provide money, technical assistance, oversight to make sure that the dollars that HUD provides are spent in accordance with the agreements executed with HUD; however, none of this occurs without the people that are in the room and others representing communities across the country. HUD attempts to engage with the communities that it serves to provide best practices, to provide guidance, to make sure things are progressing in the manner that they are suppose to be progressing, and to respond to your needs; to let you know how you may be able to utilize HUD's program funding.

HUD has four main offices: FHA – Federal Housing Administration – provides insurance for construction of multi-family and single family homes (home buyers). This is a big part of what HUD does. The Office of Community Planning & Development – engage with local entitlement communities to make sure the funding that HUD is providing (HOME, CDBG, NSB) funding & making sure that it's spent prudently. Department of "Leveling the Playing Field" or "Department of Fair Housing & Equal Opportunity Office" – this office ensures that folks are not discriminated against because of any of the protected classes, whether it is race, class, gender, age. This office handles those situations involving instances where people feel that they have been discriminated against, because of one of the reasons or classes above. We conduct investigation and hold people accountable. This is the leveling the playing field portion of our mission.

HUD has a Secretary that joined the staff about a year and a half ago who rebranded the department. He has taken HUD from being called the Dept. of HUD, our official name, to being called the "Dept. of Opportunity". We really want to engage with folks and create opportunity for people to be able to better themselves and improve their status in life, by becoming self-sufficient and live lives that we all want for ourselves.

Mr. Cintron went on to mention say that the above is HUD's main goal and objective. Mr. Cintron introduced Dr. Oluku and explained a little about his background. He has been in his present position for just over 12 months, but has been with HUD for over 13 years.

Dr. Oluku further explained his background & experience with HUD and prior to coming to HUD. Dr. Oluku explained that Florida has approximately 100 housing authorities across the state and his office in Miami works with about 50 of the 100 total. The office in Jacksonville works with the other 50 housing authorities in the state. He mentioned Victor, the Division Director and that he could not join them today; however, he is a vital part of what they do at the HUD Miami office. They have production staff in the Miami office that can work with housing authorities when it comes to bringing new housing. That is uncommon in public housing. Typically we just help with the existing public housing units that were built 50 or 60 years ago. HUD has been assisting developer with building housing units through the use of mixed financing. They have recently been involved in the development of housing in Tampa, South Bay, and Pahokee as well. We do what we can to assist with funding for the development of new housing. We also subsidize most of the low income residents that live in public housing with vouchers. We cannot create any additional vouchers without going to Congress for approval. HUD does not have the authority to create vouchers without Congressional approval. **Mr. Citron** interjected that HUD is not allowed to lobby on the issue of additional voucher and they are not advocating or encouraging anyone from the audience to contact Congress about this issue.

Dr. Oluku went on to explain that HUD has a whole range of programs and it is difficult to go through all of them. They are here to discuss anything that the group wishes to discuss. **Mr. Cintron** mentioned the need for affordable housing, particularly in the state of Florida. Several partners and sources of funds are typically necessary to fund construction housing projects. HUD is just one piece to the bigger puzzle. He explained that FHA is simply a credit enhancement tool. That's really what insurance is; an enhancement to your ability to get credit from commercial lenders. HUD takes on the exposure to a large degree that the bank provides for the construction of the project. We also provide subsidy on the back end of projects for operational costs. This is done through the housing authorities.

Mr. Leondre Camel thanked HUD representatives for the project that is being done in the City of South Bay that is supported by HUD. He mentioned that the contractor was also present. Marshall Heights and New South Bay Villas are two projects being done in South Bay. He also mentioned the willingness to lobby for those additional vouchers and funds for HUD to support local Glades cities. **Mr. Cintron** explained that the City does not have a non-lobbying bar; however, HUD does. The cities are certainly welcome to lobby for the resources that are needed for their respective communities. **Mr. Cintron** stated that what they can do is educate the public about where the needs are and provide assistance with identifying those shortfalls in funding and support. Mr. Moore interjected that Congressman Alcee Hastings will be joining us as the speaker for GTAC in the month of August; he is the Congressman for the Glades area. He encouraged everyone to come out to join the meeting with the Congressman. Mr. Cintron stated that the Congressman has been very supportive and HUD has his support. Mr. Camel stated that he had an opportunity to meet with the new Secretary back in March and he spoke with him about CDBG funding. He thanked Palm Beach County and mentioned that he has staff members that are funded through CDBG dollars in Code Enforcement. They are present today. He stated that it is not enough considering the need in the area. He stated that it wasn't difficult for the area to adjust to the economic downturn, because we were already there. The additional CDBG and other funding is needed to assist this economically depressed area to get back on its feet. This area serves and feed the world. When funding becomes available, please think of and remember the Glades. An extra \$10k goes a long way in the Glades. While we need more, small amounts have a large impact in the Glades. He, again, thanked HUD for the projects that are being done in South Bay and Glades as a whole.

Mr. Camel broached the subject of the federal government's disallowance of local preferences, contractually. **Mr. Cintron** agreed with Mr. Camel on his statement, but stated that they love local participation; however, he explained that HUD has a program called "Section 3", where you can provide preferences for Section 3 residences and businesses. That is how most folks get the local participation. As a part of the procurement documents and process, we're going to give bonus points to respondents that provide priority or preference to Section 3 businesses or residents. Most of our housing authorities have that language in their procurement documents. Any federal dollars that are applied, whether it's HOME or CDBG funds, you can use the Section 3 preference in your procurement documents/process. **Mr. Camel** thanked Mr. Cintron for that information and stated that he was not aware of the program. **Dr. Oluku** provided an example of how that works. Miami Dade is currently in the process of trying to redevelop Goal(?) Square. The commitment of the developer is that at least 30% of the jobs will go to residents of the Goal Square (Section 3 residents). In order to do that, there is a partnership with Miami Dade College where they will actually train the residents over the next two years to prepare them for those jobs. **Mr. Cintron** stated that they are committing to 30%, but they have established a goal of 40%. This was a part of their response to the RFP. The jobs would be set aside for Section 3 residents and businesses. **Mr. Larry Greenberg** stated that PBC Housing Authority takes this very seriously. Housing Authority's Executive Dir., Board Director and Board of Commissioners take local participation very seriously and are committed to engaging local participation in projects. The discussion has focused on the impact on the development, creating jobs, and changing the environment as well. **Mr. Greenberg** referred to Mr. Walker, who was in the audience, and stated that they have done a trial run with Mr. Walker's company in South Bay, a local business. They have done 16 units on a Housing project in South Bay and Mr. Greenberg mentioned that there was phenomenal local participation and turnout on that project.

Mr. Walker responded and confirmed Mr. Greenberg's comments by stating that there was very good local participation on the referenced project. He went on to state that his company 2SBW is one of two Section 3 businesses in Palm Beach County. He stated that both the PBC Housing Authority & Pahokee Housing Authority (Mrs. Julia Hale) have been very supportive of his local business. He stated that the project that 2SBW recently did for PBC Housing Authority was about \$1.3 million. He added that about \$1.1 million of those dollars stayed in the Glades community. He also mentioned that that has not been done in this area. The only proceeds from that project that left the area was for the roofer. The rest was provided to residents and businesses (subs & individuals) from the Glades. How can we ensure that the language and verbiage is included in the procurement documents for projects in the Glades? He went on to talk about those that have made mistakes in the area that oftentimes prevent them from clearing the employment process, but because he usually knows the individuals from the Glades, he can offer them opportunities that other outside businesses will not offer to local prior criminal offenders. This is an area that has special needs. Just drive through the area and you will get a sense of what I'm talking about. Always take care of home first! An influx or injection of projects and related revenue will help curb the high unemployment rate and associated ills in this area, but we need a commitment from those doing the projects in the area to utilize local individuals and businesses to help facilitate the improvement of the overall economy and state of existence of those that live and work in the Glades area. **Mr. Cintron** responded by mentioning and explaining a tool that they recently put together; the Section 3 registry. You can go online as a Section 3 business and register, so that you can be eligible as a Section 3 business to participate in the pool of eligible individuals and businesses. What companies do is they bring their own crew in to do the work and say that they don't know local people and/or can't find local workers for the jobs. They conclude that it is in their best interest to go with the people they know and are a part of their existing pool of workers. The registry allows businesses to register and identify where they are located and the work that they do. This precludes companies from claiming that they can't find those workers and skills in a given area. Once the Section 3 language is placed in the procurement document as a bonus factor, it will get attention. If the contractor does not commit to using Section 3 contractors or workers, they generally don't win the bid. The loss of the bonus points will be too much to overcome. The local organization must put enough weight on the use of Section 3 businesses. Therefore, it becomes very important that you go onto the registry

and register as a Section 3 business. We can provide the link to our fair housing division, which keeps the registry. As I mentioned earlier, this department and tool is another way of leveling the playing field. **Mayor Babb** requested that Mr. Cintron also provide the language that is needed for inclusion into the procurement documents. **Mr. Cintron** also suggested that the cities contact other cities and Housing Authorities that have done this in the past. They will also have examples of this language. **Mrs. Julia Hale** stated that PHA is required to make sure that all of their contractors are Section 3 registered contractors. She includes the language in all of their procurement documents. They have to set the goals and comply with federal regulations. It is something that we do to try to encourage local participation of our contractors. Contractors often commit to Section 3 workers, but you have to also monitor them.

Mr. Cintron further mentioned that the Section 3 language is best efforts language. You have to go beyond the best efforts and make sure that the language and responses “commit” to certain minimums and/or standards or requirements (A contractual obligations). Section 3 has been around for 50 years, but it only had best effort language, which oftentimes yield little to no results. You must include Section 3 required milestones or the effectiveness of the local preference objective will be minimal, at best. This should be a part of our conversation everywhere we go to ensure awareness of the program and local participation in projects.

Mr. Jason Larrimore asked whether self-sufficiency programs help mitigate or concentrate urban sprawl? Palm Glades being an example. What does HUD have to assist with this issue or problem? **Dr. Oluku** stated that HUD is making every effort to avoid concentration of certain housing units. HUD has done as much as it could to avoid or curtail the concentration of poverty in public housing. **Mr. Cintron** added that urban sprawl is a result of code enforcement and market availability or opportunity. He stated that HUD doesn’t control local code enforcement laws and capitalism controls market availability. What we do have is our Fair Housing dept. It just had the Supreme Court to uphold a decision to “affirmatively further” our housing goals. It provides that we ensure that local governments that use our funds, affirmatively further fair housing goals. Part of that provides that we provide tenant choices & de-concentration of poverty. We will be holding those that use our dollars accountable, as part of their strategic planning, make a conscious effort to talk about how they will “affirmatively further”. That is a requirement of local government. **Mr. Larrimore** followed up by asking are there any opportunities for supporting organizations with that to ensure this occurs. **Mr. Cintron** responded that it is up to your local municipalities to make sure that this occurs. He went on to say that HUD has the rubrics in place to hold their grantees accountable, but folks need to hold governments accountable as well. We both have role in this process. **Mr. Cintron** repeated our motto: Educate, Engage & Connect.

Mr. Tate encouraged everyone to limit their questions to allow everyone an opportunity to participate in the discussion. **Ms. Steube** asking as a private citizen what we can do about the abandoned homes and buildings within our cities? **Mr. Camel** responded by saying that the City is going through the process of getting some homes demolished and refurbished. CDBG funding is being restructured. How will the funds be restructured? Not completely sure, at the moment. We have to be sure not to displace residents as we demolish structures. **Dr. Oluku** mentioned the Jacksonville conference and workshops. There was a discussion about setting aside funds that will be available for other issues besides housing (i.e., set-aside vouchers & subsidies).

Ms. Steube follow-up with a comment about the state or condition of people living in some areas in the Glades. **Mr. Cintron** commented that CDBG money is the most flexible of all of the federal money that the federal government gives the local governments. That’s a blessing and a curse. It’s limited and it can be spent on a thousand things. It’s up to local government to prioritize their needs and apply those limited resources to those unlimited needs or wants. Homelessness has become a national priority. It is a priority of President Obama to eliminate homelessness. Try to eliminate bed less homelessness by the year 2015. We want to eliminate chronic homelessness in general by 2017 and all homelessness by 2020. Continuum of care; working on homelessness. A lot of mentally ill people are homeless. Housing first strategy. Want to get people in housing first. Use federal

money to put people in houses. Use local money for transitional housing. People are homeless because they don't have a house. Don't make them pass test to get in a house. Availability should be the test. Supportive housing is necessary, but we want that to be a short period. We don't have enough money to deal with this alone. This has to be a publicly private initiative to be successful. These are people. Again, they are homeless because they don't have a home.

Mr. Ralph Walker asked if there was anyone from Community Services present? He commented that at the last GTAC meeting, the Director for Community Services commented that they had funds available from HUD and that they could actually place folks in housing, but no one wanted to come to Belle Glade so they remained homeless. If they don't want to come to Belle Glade, can those funds be shifted to the Glades? The Glades has homeless people. Let's place them in homes. If they have a problem spending the money on the coast, we will spend it in the Glades.

Mr. Tate stated that he would have the Director of Community Services, Mr. Channell Wilkins, to follow-up and respond to this question. That's not a question for HUD.

Mrs. Vernell Williams-DeRosier stated that she works for PBC School District McKinney-Vinto Homeless program in the Glades. One of the issues that she encounters is when she tries to direct the homeless to the system: 1. Qualifications & 2. Felony. **Mr. Cintron** referred the question to Dr. Oluku. **Dr. Oluku** stated that one of the recent discussions that they had with local Housing Authorities is to encourage them to be more flexible in their screening requirements and process (i.e., arrests & criminal background checks). There are; however, two federal prohibitions that we cannot avoid or overlook criminals with backgrounds that include: 1. Sex Offenders & 2. Methamphetamines. The system is moving into the right the direction. **Mr. Moore** commented that Mr. Van Johnson from PBC Housing Authority will be joining us next month and we can continue this discussion when he comes to speak.

Mrs. Hale commented that HUD has been encouraging the Housing Authorities to become more flexible when viewing and evaluating people with criminal background checks. She also mentioned that she was working with PBC Housing Authority and five other area Housing Authorities to develop a re-entry policies/program for those individuals coming out of prison. **Mr. Cintron** reminded the group that we also have a responsibility to not bring negative influences into the development for the protection of the existing tenants. One strike and you're out has been the policy and that is changing. **Ms. Vernell** stated that if the person has had one eviction, they were no longer eligible for consideration for housing. **Mrs. Hale** stated that this is changing as well. They look more closely at the person's situation today. **Ms. Vernell** stated that she believes Western Palm Beach County is the more forgiving and tolerant of all of Palm Beach County. They try to work with the person(s) in question. Even filing of an eviction and no actual eviction has prevented people from getting into housing.

Dr. Oluku stated that HUD works with Housing Authorities on setting their rules, but the local Housing Authority has the final say or decision on their local policies and procedures. HUD cannot force a policy upon a local entity. **Mr. Greenberg** mentioned that his agency wants to also ensure the safety and enjoyment of all of their residents and while due consideration should be given to the felon or applicants, we must also ensure the safety and wellbeing of the existing tenants. **Ms. Vernell** commented that the new flexibility and approach will help keep children stable and in school.

Mr. Camel asked about sober houses/homes and whether they are becoming a problem? He asked for some insight about their direction on this issue. **Mr. Cintron** commented that the discussion is certainly being had and he expects some concrete guidance on this issue very soon. Folks in sober homes are disabled and are therefore designated as a protected class. The Dept. of Justice has gone after several cities for discriminating

against sober homes (i.e., a protected class). This item is certainly on the radar and the hope is that guidance will be provided by the end of August, 2016. **Mr. Camel** stated that he did not feel that it is presently in the best interest of the City of South Bay to allow them at this point. **Mr. Cintron** stated that because they are a protected class, you have to be very careful how you deal with them.

Mrs. Hale stated that the Choice Neighborhood grants should be looked more closely at applying for because they are grants that both the Cities and Housing Authorities can partner and work together on. The larger cities oftentimes get those grants. We need to look at those dollars as well. **Mr. Citron** stated that there are two types: planning grants and implementation grants. **Mr. Greenberg** stated that Mr. Johnson is putting together an application for the CN&I grant (\$30 million). This is for the implementation portion of the project. He will be reaching out to local organizations for support and to work with PBC Housing Authority on the project.

Mr. Larrimore asked how can our efforts be expedited to move forward with housing projects in the Glades? **Mr. Cintron** responded that HUD does have some power to urge and encourage Housing Authorities and others that utilize HUD funds to move forward with projects that positively impact communities. **Mr. Larrimore** asked What support is necessary to ensure follow through on the necessary policy changes? **Mr. Cintron** stated that this has to be done at all levels, including locally. Let's educate, engage & connect. **Mr. Tate** added that we have the right people in the room to make the right decisions. The conversations should continue and progress. **Mr. Cintron** applauded the two Mayors and two City Managers for being present and sitting through the entire meeting. **Mr. Camel** also stated that all levels of government are present. He also mentioned home rule and the authority of each City to operate as they deem appropriate for their municipality. **Mr. Cintron** agreed that these are local decision.

Mr. Moore asked about transitioning public housing into public housing. **Mrs. Hale** responded by saying that the majority of the residents in Pahokee that are in her units are not interested in owning the home. She also mentioned that all of this takes time and it is possible. **Mr. Greenberg** mentioned that they have a very strong resident services department. He went on to say that they have a very successful family self-sufficiency program. The participants set their own goals that may include homeownership, college graduation, business ownership, etc... Several of these programs exist.

Ms. Steube also added that the Urban League also have several support programs that address these areas of need as well. **Dr. Oluku** stated that the transition from public housing to private ownership has a lot to do with income level(s). There are several factors that impact whether a person can transition into home ownership. **Mr. Cintron** spoke briefly about his upbringing and the fact that he is a product of public housing and how it provided him with an opportunity for a better more safe and stable environment.

Mayor Babb repeated his desire/request to get the language that needs to go into the contracts to encourage local preference. **Mr. Ralph Walker** emphasized the need to include the Section 3 register language to encourage local participation in projects that come to the Glades. **Mr. Cintron** affirmed that he will work with local leaders to make sure that they get the language that is needed to include in the contracts.

Ms. Clara Hessing shared a personal story about how her daughter managed to take advantage of the opportunity that Section 8 provided and now she owns a 4 bed room home of her own. She stated that the program works. **Mr. camel** mentioned the days of earmarks, but that is no longer the case. Things have changed.

Special Presentations:

Participant Updates/Comments

Mr. Tate thanked everyone for coming out today. Mr. Cintron also thanked everyone for coming out and joining in on the discussion.

3. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 11:48 a.m.

The next meeting will be held on July 28, 2016, at the City of Belle Glade's Civic Center. Mr. Todd Bonlarron, Asst. County Administrator & Mr. Van Johnson, Exec. Dir. for PBC Housing Authority will be the guest presenters/speakers.

DAM 

Date: July 19, 2016

Approved by: Houston L. Tate, Director 

8/4/2016
Date