

**Southwest Colorado Council of Governments
September Board Meeting
Thursday, 16 September 2021, 3:00 p.m.
Video Conference**

In Attendance:

Mike Lavey - City of Cortez
Olivier Bosmans – City of Durango
Willy Tookey - San Juan County
Gloria Kaasch-Buerger - Town of Silverton
David Black – Town of Bayfield
Andrea Phillips - Town of Pagosa Springs
Marsha Porter-Norton – La Plata County
Alvin Schaaf – Archuleta County
Katie Sickles - Town of Bayfield

Staff in Attendance:

Miriam Gillow-Wiles – SWCCOG
Bryce Bierman – SWCCOG
Jessica Laitsch – SWCCOG

Guests in Attendance:

Kelly Polites - Town of Bayfield
Stella Cox - Town of Ignacio
Clyde Church - La Plata County
Kevin Hall - City of Durango
Kim Baxter - City of Durango
Elizabeth Falcon - Housing Solutions for the Southwest
Ashley Powell - La Plata County
Joan Fauteaux – Durango Area Association of Realtors
Elizabeth Salkind – Housing Solutions for the Southwest
Lori Zazzaro - Town of Bayfield
Meade Harbison – Southern Ute Growth Fund
Shannon Najmabadi - Colorado Sun
Tommy Crosby - City of Durango
Mark Williams - City of Durango Planning Department
Brigid Korce - Housing Solutions for the Southwest
Laura Lewis Marchino – Region 9
Michael French – La Plata County Economic Development Alliance
Mike Kosdrosky – Workforce Housing Solutions
Savannah Lytle - City of Durango Planning Department
Scott Shine - City of Durango Planning Department
Dan Armentano - City of Durango
Andrew Atchley – Department of Local Affairs
Mike Segrest – La Plata County
Rachel Medina – City of Cortez
Helen Katich - Senator Hickenlooper’s Office
Shari Pierce – Town of Pagosa Springs
Heidi Aggeler – Root Policy Research

Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 3:02 pm (Quorum Present)

Public Comment

None.

Consent Agenda

- a. August 2021 Board Minutes
- b. July 2021 Financials

Olivier Bosmans motioned to approve the consent agenda as presented. Marsha Porter-Norton seconded, unanimously approved.

Presentation

- a. Regional Housing Study Presentation

Heidi Aggeler presented the Regional Housing Study, including information related to demographic information for the region and suggestions and other contributions from stakeholders.

Oliver asked what data was used for the report. Heidi confirmed the 2019 American Community Survey was one of the main sources used to capture the data, and that more current data was included within the report to supplement the data.

Marsha asked if Root is also breaking down the number of units built by county. Heidi mentioned the report does include the data that can be viewed by county or regionally.

David asked Heidi if they went back to past studies to compare the methodology for collecting data. Heidi said they did review past studies in cooperation with Housing Solutions for the Southwest and SWCCOG. David also asked what trends she sees regarding short-term rentals effect on the housing stock. Heidi said the trend direction is more important than the exact numbers; she believes demand for short-term rentals will increase over the next few years.

Marsha asked Heidi if there is a successful place in Colorado where more than one county have come together as a region to work for housing, and if there was use of a regional tax. Boulder valley is the best example of cooperation across jurisdictional lines, but Heidi is not aware of a multi-county success in Colorado regarding a regional tax. There has been success in the counties surrounding Portland. Marsha said the long-term conversation should be around determining the COG's role.

Olivier asked Heidi if she could include data in the appendix. Heidi said she can do that as a standalone appendix. Olivier asked if there is a percentage in the price point where deed restriction does not make sense. Heidi replied that the exact price point is not clear, but part of the economic feasibility measurement considers those factors. Olivier said there are some indications that deed restrictions have not been successful in Durango. Olivier asked if there is any data regarding how deed restricted houses perform over-time. Heidi said Summit County and Denver have done quite a bit of research regarding deed restrictions. Clyde asked if anyone has tried an escalation deed restriction where the owner gains equity, although slowly over time. Heidi said some programs are using that strategy.

Marsha mentioned that deed restrictions are one tool of many available to the COG regarding the development of affordable housing. Marsha asked if this is something the COG would take on or if there are other groups in the region who would be a better fit. David mentioned the five counties have different needs and finding the right land that is accessible to utilities is the most important task now.

Andrea mentioned Pagosa Springs has been spending a lot of time on developing town owned sites. They have an RFP out now for the second time and are seeking development partners.

Andrea mentioned if infrastructure runs to the properties, it makes the opportunities more feasible. Andrea asked if the Root study should be applied on a regional basis or by jurisdiction, specifically she is worried the efforts may be diluted if we take a regional approach as it will discourage the towns from applying for projects on their own. Heidi said that site planning would probably be most appropriate at the town or city level, rather than regional. Elizabeth said the diversity of the municipalities isn't necessarily a barrier to a regional approach, and that barriers for development are often very similar across different towns of different sizes.

Rachel said a major barrier in Cortez is plotted sub-divisions with no utilities. The city can't afford to run infrastructure to the subdivisions, and this is where regional funding may be useful. David recommended creating metropolitan districts for these subdivisions to complete the development. Rachel felt this may put more of the cost burden on the city, but David mentioned the cost would be put back onto the individual lots available and their owners. Miriam mentioned the HB21-1271 grant could be used to address the need of utility access.

Marsha recommended taking this information back to the member jurisdiction Boards and have further conversations as to the SWCCOG's role regarding housing.

Olivier mentioned that the member jurisdictions shouldn't delay any plans for development while waiting on a regional effort. He said, every community can run at their own pace, but the SWCCOG jurisdictions should also organize together to create a larger project for a developer.

Marsha Porter-Norton motioned to take time outside of the COG meetings to deliberate regarding the Root Housing Study to come back to the October 14th meeting with recommendations, Andrea Phillips seconded, unanimously approved.

Miriam offered support if Board members need help presenting the Root study to their respective Boards.

Discussion Items

None.

Decision Items

a. Letters of Support – Ratification and Approval

Miriam presented the five letters of support to the Board.

David Black motioned to approve the HSSW Enterprise Zone letter of support, Marsha Porter-Norton seconded, unanimously approved.

Olivier Bosmans motioned to ratify the four letters of support for Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Greyhound Lines, Housing Solutions for the Southwest, and Montezuma Public Transportation, Alvin Schaff seconded, unanimously ratified.

b. SWCCOG DOLA TA Grant Application

Tabled until 2022 as the deadline had changed. Miriam mentioned the COG could use more staff help to keep up with all the available grants.

c. Workforce Development Grant Application

Initial approval was given by the Executive Committee for the Upskilling, Reskilling, and Next-Skilling program. The program will be geared toward higher income skilled trades with a focus on certifications, and creation of an apprenticeship program in cooperation with PCC and local school districts.

Willy Tookey motioned to ratify the application for the Workforce Development Grant. Marsha Porter-Norton seconded, unanimously approved.

d. Regional Housing Planning Grant Application

Miriam mentioned this planning grant could help identify parcels of land. The intention is not to usurp the jurisdictional zoning or land use but identify how each jurisdiction can offer variances in support of the development of affordable housing. Grant money from Housing Solutions grant is eligible for matching funds, so the SWCCOG would need about \$10,000 in total cash funds to match. Marsha mentioned a modular home builder may be the path forward to work together on a regional level. Andrea asked about the status for the housing sub-committee for the SWCCOG. Miriam said the group has not been formed yet but would be useful to pursue. Elizabeth mentioned streamlining for affordable housing to help overcome the pre-development costs to the developers. Olivier expressed his excitement for this regional effort.

Olivier Bosmans motioned to approve the application for the Regional Housing Planning Grant. Gloria Kaasch-Buerger seconded, unanimously approved.

Reports

No reports this month.

Community Updates

None.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:03 pm