



**MINUTES OF THE
FAIR HOUSING TASK FORCE COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22, 2005 – 3:00 p.m.**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Bill Bennett	Larry Garcia
Gerardo Camacho	Laura Kissack
Mary Cardenas	Walt Phillips
Elizabeth Dalton	Maria Picard–Ami
Zulema Lazarin	

STAFF PRESENT

Gloria Garcia, Secretary
Patricia White, Fair Housing Officer

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Lucila Flores Camarena
Norma Cervantes (excused)
Annette Gutierrez
David Marquez

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE

Susan Leech	Loretta Grado
Elke Cumming	Bill Truax
Dave Gillooly	Sussette Leal

1. Roll Call and Confirmation of a Quorum.

Roll call was taken and a quorum was confirmed.

2. Introduction and Welcome of new members on the Task Force.

Patricia White introduced the new members to the Committee, who were also welcomed by the Chairman, Larry Garcia, and the Task Force. The new members are: Gerardo “Tito” Camacho, Zulema Lazarin, Maria Picard-Ami and Norma Cervantes.

3. Review and Approval of Minutes from the last Fair Housing Task Force Meeting held December 7, 2004.

It was moved by Walt Phillips and seconded by Laura Kissack to accept the minutes as written and the motion carried.

4. Review of the new database on the City’s website that provides information on Boards and Commissions.

Patricia White briefly reviewed the handout and described the different features on the website, including how to search for information on various Boards, as well as how to submit an interest form to serve on the City’s Boards and Commissions.

5. Review, Discussion and Action to select the Impediments to Fair Housing Choice that will be researched and reviewed by the Fair Housing Task Force and that will be presented in a report to City Council during Fiscal Year 2005-2006.

The Chairman, Larry Garcia, read each Impediment and the Committee gave their recommendations on each one.

Impediments 1 thru 3 – there were no changes.

Impediment 4 – add an “s” to “choice” – no other changes.

Impediment 5 – There was additional discussion on this Impediment. Ms. Loretta Grado, with Border Fair Housing & Economic Justice Center, explained that they monitor complaints in reference to Impediment 5 and explained the penalties for those who violate this law. Mary Cardenas stated that she feels this is an issue of misconceptions among landlords, rather than a discrimination problem. She stated that education is the key to correcting this concern.

Impediment 6 – It was noted that the current Agenda included a presentation on the process for updating the Apartment Accessibility Verification Survey. There were no changes to the Impediment.

Impediment 7 – One of the questions raised was “how long is the average resolution time for a Fair Housing complaint? Ms. Loretta Grado explained that the process varies and depends a lot on the willingness of the clients to participate.

Impediment 8 – No changes.

Impediment 9 -- After some discussion, it was agreed that the Task Force would combine the two Impediments -- #9 and #12 and revise the stated Impediment at the next meeting.

Impediment 10 – It was agreed by the committee that Impediment 10 should be changed to read... *“Advocates for persons with disabilities recommend”.... Also, a correction to Item C, “that it acknowledges”....*

Impediment 11 – No changes. (Suggestion to add education as an example.)

Impediment 12 – Combine with Impediment 9.

6. Discussion and Action on the process that will be used to review and research the Impediments to Fair Housing Choice.

Patricia White suggested that this item be postponed until the next meeting, due to time constraints. It was moved by Walt Phillips and seconded by Gerardo Camacho to table this item until the next meeting and the motion passed.

7. Presentation and discussion on the procedure that will be used to update the Apartment Accessibility Verification Survey, in reference to Impediment Six.

Bill Bennett introduced Susan Leech, who was the guest speaker. Ms. Leech works in the Occupational Therapy Department at UTEP and handles accessibility and home application issues. Ms. Leech will be working with Bill Bennett to conduct an Apartment Accessibility Verification Survey to see if any improvements have been made since the last survey, which was completed in 1996. Community involvement will include the Border Fair Housing, VOLAR, and Habitat for Humanity agencies. The study will be done in two phases.

Phase One will consist of mailing a written survey and interviewing those who have accessible units. The Survey will include the City of El Paso and there will be varying degrees of accessibility. The accessible units will also be measured to verify their accessibility. The Survey will be validated by ten national experts in the field. Ms. Leech explained that the information received will be treated as confidential; therefore, no listing of accessible units will be provided.

Phase Two will be a field study to interview persons claiming accessible housing units. The results and statistics (without listing the units) will be published in hopes of creating a coalition and expanding into funding for home modifications.

Ms. Leech requested the Task Force's approval before proceeding. It was moved by Gerardo Camacho and seconded by Zulema Lazarin to approve the project and the motion passed unanimously.

8. Discussion and approval of the Next Meeting Date.

There was discussion concerning the selection of a standard monthly meeting date and one suggestion was the third Wednesday at 3:30 p.m. In view of the suggestion, it was agreed to schedule the next meeting for Wednesday, July 20, 2005 at 3:30 p.m.

A motion was made by Maria Picard-Ami and second by Zulema Lazarin to adjourn the meeting at 4:50 p.m. and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia White, Secretary

Larry Garcia, Chairman

c: All Attendees