

## HOUSING PRIORITY PUBLIC HEARING

# Late Backup

February 25, 2010 (Item #80)

My name is Stuart Hersh, and like most people in Austin I rent. I support the CHDO Roundtable proposal on keeping the 60/40 ratio for General Obligation bonds so that Austin promotes both affordable rental and homeownership opportunities. But this is only a part of the conversation about housing affordability goals and priorities in Austin.

I am providing you another copy of my 6/18/09 testimony highlighting the dramatic drop in S.M.A.R.T. Housing production, a 78% decrease over a two year period. This projection appears to be coming true.

I am also providing you a copy of last year's budget document highlighting the fact that the S.M.A.R.T. Housing ordinance would remain in place however resources to guide developers through the process would be limited or eliminated. In a place that aspires to be the best managed city in the country, this promise is being kept.

The Council would never tolerate a 78% decline in police, fire, or emergency management response. Why is this performance acceptable when we are talking about providing Austin residents housing that is safe, mixed-income, accessible, reasonably-priced, transit-oriented and meets Green Building standards?

Some blame the decline in productivity on the market, and this is partially true. But when Austin positions itself to produce the about the same amount of S.M.A.R.T. Housing over the next five years that it produced in 2007-2008 when 3,473 S.M.A.R.T. Housing units were completed, how can we not conclude that we are returning to the stupid housing policies of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century that helped create our housing affordability crisis?

As we approach the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Council adoption of S.M.A.R.T. Housing, please do not treat this complaint about lack of S.M.A.R.T. Housing production the way that the Security and Exchange commission treated complaints about Bernie Madoff's ponzi schemes. Please consider the suggestions that some of us have on how Austin can be more productive and responsive to the needs of working families who often must choose between housing that is safe and housing that they can afford.

This week we celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Miracle On Ice when the United States hockey team defeated the supposedly invincible Soviet hockey team. Working together we can overcome the obstacles to housing affordability. Please make this a priority again for Austin.

3. The proposed menu of budget cuts indicates that 13,567 completed housing units met S.M.A.R.T. Housing standards in the last 7 years, and 6,545 (48%) of these homeownership and rental units were affordable.
4. This means that S.M.A.R.T. Housing non-profit and for-profit partners have built about 2,000 housing units per year that met Green Building standards and city
5. The proposed menu of budget cuts indicates that 13,567 completed housing units met S.M.A.R.T. Housing standards in the last 7 years, and 6,545 (48%) of these homeownership and rental units were affordable.