

From: Jacquelyn Tarpy
Sent: Tuesday, April 20, 2010 2:44 PM
To: Betty Massey
Subject: A few thoughts!

Dear Betty,

I sincerely appreciate you allowing Jul and I to participate in the review and discussion of the Housing Market Study. As you know, I have been anxiously awaiting the results of this study, hoping that it would provide us with an accurate count, location, size and estimated value of the vacant/abandon housing units we have on the island. Based on the information that Polo has shown us so far, it appears that the study will give us a clearer picture of what we have at this time. However, I was concerned when Polo indicated that they would also be will be "drawing conclusions and offering recommendations", shouldn't that be the responsibility of the Galveston residents?

As we have repeatedly heard from City Hall, this is a "chance of a lifetime" for Galveston to improve the City and for the residents to have a say in the plans for Galveston's future. This data should be used as a foundation to open up a debate, where the residents actually have an opportunity to hear a variety of solutions. If the study includes conclusions and recommendations it could stifle any open discussion and it could also give the City's elected officials an opportunity to once again shut out the residents and claim that they are just following what the "experts" advised.

This is the perfect time to actually re-engage the citizens of the community and let them know that their voices are being heard and that their concerns are being addressed.

Thanks for letting me "express" myself. I appreciate all you do for this community and know we all share the hope that we can make this the "Jewel of the Gulf" that it should.

Sincerely, Jacquelyn

From: Jacquelyn Tarpy
Sent: Sunday, May 30, 2010 7:17 AM
To: Betty Massey; munoza@cdm.com
Subject: Concerns about Final Housing Report

May 30, 2010

Dear Betty and Polo,

Reports from "Consultants & Experts" hired by the City, using taxpayers dollars, have become a "big joke" in this City. I was so hopeful that this study would be different, since we so desperately need the "HARD COLD FACTS", before we can begin to truly recover. However, after reading through the Final Draft, my heart is weary and my head hurts.

Everyone who lives in and visits this City, knows that we have a problem with vacant housing, yet the way this topic is presented in the Final Draft - Executive Summary: *"Thirty-two percent of the City's housing stock is vacant, while only 14% of the County's units are. The City's vacant units consist mainly of seasonal, recreational, or occasional use homes and units categorized as "other vacant" by the census-which includes abandon homes."* It makes it appear as if the vacant units are not really a problem.

However if you look at the Census Definition of "Other Vacant" you can see that this is one of our major problems:

"Other vacant: Included in this category are year-round units which were vacant for reasons other than those mentioned above: For example, held for occupancy of a caretaker, janitor; held for settlement of an estate, or held for personal reasons of the owner."

And if you then look at the actual data from the study, which states that we have 10, 744 - (32% of total housing stock) vacant housing units.

This breaks down to:
For Rent 2,560 - 8%

For Sale 984 - 3%

Rented or Sold, not occupied 213 - 1%

Seasonal, recreational, or occasional use 3,767 - 11%

Other Vacant 3,220 - 10%

Therefore 21% of the total housing stock on the Island is vacant (non-seasonal, recreational), which creates a series of negative ramifications to our City's urban core neighborhoods. To compound the problem, many of the rental units are owned by absentee landlords, who frequently neglect the properties. It also makes it clear, that we should not even consider building new developments until we address the high number of vacant housing units we now have.

Since most people reading this report will only look at the Executive Summary and Recommendation section, the break down of this data should be a part of the summary.

Another area that appears to be misleading to those who will only read the Executive Summary and Recommendations is: Final Draft Executive Summary section - Employee Housing Market Survey, Page 4, of those who work on and live off the island,

"Approximately half (46%) of the respondents would consider living in Galveston."

and in the Final Draft Recommendation Section, page 44, *"The housing market survey conducted as part of this study found that a significant portion of respondents who work on but don't live on the island would consider living in Galveston. More specifically, 46% said they would consider living in Galveston and 38% said they would consider the urban core between 6th and 61st Street"*.

This figure is pulled from the following survey question - Draft 03.29.10:

General Location

When presented with a list of communities and asked if they would consider living in them if they found the right price home,

*with the qualities and amenities they desired, the top three that would be considered among different subgroups were:
Work on-island, live off island
82% League City
67% Friendswood
66% Clear Lake/Webster
Only 46% said Galveston Island*

If the *46% would consider living in Galveston* data is going to be referred to in both the Executive Summary and Recommendation Sections, the actual question and data should also be included.

Obviously Galveston was not a preferred site and it would not be wise to base any future building plans on this data.

I am very concerned that if this report is presented to the City Council in its present form, and people go beyond the Executive Summary, Recommendations, to review the actual data and previous drafts, that the Final Report will be discredited. The residents of Galveston have a lot riding on this report and we are in desperate need of REAL FACTS and REAL DATA, so we can come up with REAL SOLUTIONS.

Please seriously review and consider the analysis that Jul Kamen, (sent to you in a separate email) and I have provided. We may have differing philosophical beliefs and different visions for Galveston, but we should all want a true and honest evaluation on the state of our housing market, since it will play a crucial role in Galveston again becoming a place where people want to move to and not flee.

Appreciate your time.

Sincerely,
Jacquelyn Tarpy