

**MINUTES**  
**Carson City Planning Commission Special Workshop**  
**Wednesday, August 30, 2023 ● 4:00 PM**  
**Community Center Bonanza Room**  
**851 East William Street, Carson City, Nevada**

**Commission Members**

**Chairperson Chair – Teri Preston**  
**Commissioner – Charles Borders, Jr.**  
**Commissioner – Nathaniel Killgore**  
**Commissioner – Richard Perry**

**Vice Chair – Sena Loyd**  
**Commissioner – Ellen DeChristopher**  
**Commissioner – Vern Krahn**

**Staff**

Hope Sullivan, Community Development Director  
Todd Reese, Sr. Deputy District Attorney  
Heather Ferris, Planning Manager  
Tamar Warren, Senior Deputy Clerk

**NOTE:** A recording of these proceedings, the board’s agenda materials, and any written comments or documentation provided to the Public Meeting Clerk during the meeting are public record. These materials are on file in the Clerk-Recorder’s Office and are available for review during regular business hours.

The approved minutes of all meetings are available on [www.Carson.org/minutes](http://www.Carson.org/minutes).

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Chair Loyd called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**

Roll was called, and a quorum was present.

<b>Attendee Name</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Arrived</b>
Chairperson Teri Preston	Present	4:10 p.m.
Vice Chair Sena Loyd	Present	
Commissioner Charles Borders, Jr.	Present	
Commissioner Ellen DeChristopher	Present	
Commissioner Nathaniel Killgore	Present	
Commissioner Vern Krahn	Present	
Commissioner Richard Perry	Present	

**3. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Vice Chair Loyd entertained public comments. Maxine Nietz noted her disappointment that members of the public were not represented on the panel. Deni French noted his agreement with Ms. Nietz’s comment.

#### 4. WORKSHOP ITEMS

##### **4.A FOR DISCUSSION ONLY: DISCUSSION WITH DEVELOPERS OF MARKET RATE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO DISCUSS PRICE AND OTHER FACTORS CONSIDERED IN BUILDING MARKET RATE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN CARSON CITY.**

Vice Chair Loyd introduced the item. Ms. Sullivan provided background information on the City's FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan which represents the priorities of the Board of Supervisors. She highlighted one of the objectives, "Foster Community Collaboration," noting that a tactic associated with the objective "Evaluate ways to partner with affordable housing developers to increase affordable housing units" was assigned to the Community Development Department, to be completed in FY 2024 and measured by "the number of affordable units constructed or rehabilitated." She noted that she had invited subject matter expert guests who would provide insight and education on the subject of affordable housing and highlight ways to help achieve the objective listed above. Ms. Sullivan introduced the participating guests:

- Mark Turner, Silver Oak Development/Member, Nevada Builders Alliance Board of Directors
- Bill Brewer, Executive Director of Nevada Rural Housing Authority
- Matthew Fleming, Executive Director of Northern Nevada Community Housing
- Scott Carey, State Lands Planner

Ms. Sullivan highlighted several challenges that the City was facing, including the inability of employers to fill vacant positions. She noted that a quick web search several hours ago had resulted in finding 435 open positions that could benefit from affordable housing, which she defined as "workforce housing." Ms. Sullivan expressed concern that employers in Carson City were losing employees who lived in Reno and eventually sought and received employment there. Each guest provided an overview of how they can engage with the City. Some of the issues highlighted were the shortage of skilled workers, the developer dilemma of cost versus profit margin, and the added costs of code compliance. Another issue was the need to provide housing at up to 120 percent of Area Median Income (AMI) to avoid people being overqualified for workforce housing. It was noted that in Carson City, 60 percent AMI equated to ~\$51,300, for a household of four people; however, at 120 percent AMI it would double the buying power, but home prices were too high now. Other considerations such as the ability to receive tax exemptions for housing projects and the ability to have net zero power were discussed. Richard's Crossing was cited as a good example of community involvement and community housing.

Mr. Turner clarified that affordable housing guidelines and equations are set by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Chair Preston was informed that all of Carson City was considered rural. Mr. Brewer provided the difference between FHA and regular loans, noting that the FHA loan recipient could receive a down payment plus closing costs. Discussion ensued regarding the possibility of using State lands for affordable housing. Chair Preston recommended retrofitting the recently vacated State buildings (as a result of consolidation) to create affordable condominiums. Ms. Sullivan inquired about working with market price developers; however, it was noted that out-of-state buyers were willing to pay for the higher-priced townhomes. Additionally, issues such as high labor costs, the unavailability of skilled workers, and the resistance of the public to high-density homes were cited as hurdles. It was noted that subsidy dollars could be utilized to purchase market-priced units. Discussion ensued regarding having a template to facilitate housing for first respondents, teachers, or other similar professions.

Commissioner Perry noted the need for single-family starter homes in addition to rentals. He believed that many renters were looking to own their homes, but he was informed that land was not readily available and the cost to build them was too high to make it affordable. Special affordable housing guidelines were requested from the City to accommodate workforce housing. Commissioner Perry requested a map of all available vacant properties and their zoning, that could be repurposed for affordable housing. Ms. Sullivan suggested looking into underutilized properties instead of vacant land. Chair Preston mentioned the lack of availability in manufactured housing and recommended revisiting the zoning laws to accommodate that. Discussion ensued regarding “Tiny Homes” and the possibility of lowering the infrastructure costs for the smaller homes.

Vice Chair Loyd inquired about adopting certain codes to accommodate affordable housing; however, she was informed that most codes are used nationwide and could create liability issues. Ms. Sullivan noted that an upcoming meeting with the Board of Supervisors was planned to discuss Development Standards and encouraged input from the guests. Commissioner Borders suggested finding ways to utilize infill developments as well. A suggestion to work with developers to include a percentage of affordable housing in their developments was also discussed, especially if the units could be more affordable by making them smaller and not having state-of-the-art options such as appliances. Discussion ensued regarding water usage and Commissioner Perry highlighted the fact that the City was using less water now due to the higher-density residences, even with the increase in population. It was agreed that one-acre lots used the highest amount of water per household. Ms. Sullivan recommended addressing code requirements during the Development Standards joint meeting with the Board of Supervisors.

## 5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Preston entertained public comments. Ms. Nietz pointed out that a large development was approved on the outskirts of town, contrary to the belief that high-density dwellings were being built closer to the center of the City. She believed that paying for tenants’ utilities would make them wasteful and preferred Commissioner Perry’s suggestion of building starter homes. Ms. Nietz believed that taxpayers were “tapped out.” Mr. French called the workshop “great” and wished to see more of it. He also noted that many cities, and even countries, were grappling with the same issues including rent control. Jim Peckham, Executive Director of Friends In Services Helping (FISH), was in favor of utilizing federal lands that were in Carson City. He also recommended retrofitting the Ormsby House using local, federal, and State funds. Additionally, Mr. Peckham suggested not requiring garages to build homes with smaller footprints.

Debra Songer stated that she was living in a motel at this time and had to move in with someone while she had her items in storage. She suggested paying attention to the elderly who are on a budget because she hated to see old people living in their cars. Zach Wood introduced himself as a former planner and suggested having peer-to-peer conversations about the issue with other counties because he believed that this was a “regional issue.” He also recommended listening to people’s expectations regarding their housing. Heather Koche believed that affordable housing was being discussed after Title 17.10 was “abused by the developers.” She also explained that a lot of people aren’t able to afford their utilities and objected to having rate increases, adding that “it’s easier for people to not work...they make money off the government.” Ms. Koche also called crime “out of control” in Carson City. Betsy Strasburg was pleased to hear from the guest panelists who were from diverse backgrounds; however, she felt that the public must

be involved in the discussions as well, especially when discussing infill projects that involve neighbors. Ms. Strasburg noted that the issue was regional and advised working with counterparts in other counties.

**9. FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Preston adjourned the meeting at 6:37 p.m.

The Minutes of the August 30, 2023, Carson City Planning Commission Workshop are so approved this 25<sup>th</sup> day of October 2023.