

RESOLUTION NO. 95-52

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA, DECLARING A POSITIVE STANCE TO ENSURE THAT NO DISCRIMINATION EXIST WITH REGARDS TO ENSURING EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR PERSONS OF ALL RACES, CLASSES, SEX, ETHNIC GROUPS, RELIGIONS, AGE, MARITAL AND FAMILY STATUS IN ANY AND ALL POTENTIALLY SIMILAR DISCRIMINATION GROUPS IN THEIR QUEST FOR FAIR HOUSING WITHIN ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA.

WHEREAS, St. Johns County has continued to make efforts to provide equal opportunity and non-discrimination within its housing community; and

WHEREAS, St. Johns County has done many things in accordance with its Comprehensive Plan to not discriminate against any individual with respect to fair housing within the community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of St. Johns County, Florida, that it declares that the County knows of no unfair discrimination within St. Johns County, Florida. Attached herewith is Exhibit A (the St. Johns County Fair Housing Evaluation). This evaluation is proposed as a true and correct picture of the fair housing market within St. Johns County, Florida, and is adopted as a fair housing evaluation.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of County Commissioners of St. Johns County, Florida, this 14 day of March, 1995.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: Barbara Ward
Chairman

ATTEST: CARL "BUD" MARKEL, CLERK

By: Jean Paetli
Deputy Clerk

ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA

FAIR HOUSING EVALUATION:

I. Background:

The County has taken a positive stance to ensure that no discrimination exists with regard to equal opportunity for persons of all races, classes, sex, ethnic groups, religion, age, marital and familial status, and any and all similar potential discriminatory groups in their quest for Fair Housing in the community. A Fair Housing Ordinance (FHO) has been adopted and is in effect in furtherance of this affirmative action. Other positive actions regularly take place and the Board of County Commissioners of St. Johns County, Florida possesses an acute awareness of the need to ensure this attitude is fostered throughout all levels of the community. This review furthers that commitment.

II. Overview of Local Conditions:

The jurisdiction makes provisions for all types of housing, subject to State density limits where public water and sewer are unavailable, and does not require costly materials or construction methods, excessive lot sizes, expensive landscaping, complicated permitting procedures, or other similar restrictive measures. Regulations in place preserve individual choice and attempt to enhance a family atmosphere and ensure or enhance health and safety for the entire population while protecting the environment and preserving the natural beauty of the area.

III. Local Housing Market Analysis:

The analysis reveals some concentrations of minority groups and some concentrations of persons of similar background, belief or other factors which lead to clustering, not in a discriminate fashion, but rather, in a free choice mode of selection. Some of these concentrations may be the result of:

- a. Availability and utilization of heir property which is either voluntary as a result of economic need to obtain housing and/or housing sites without land costs and/or mortgages. This facet does tend to create clusters of close knit family groups of the same background which positively contributes to maintenance of family bonds.
- b. Concentrations of lower cost housing availability in mobile home parks, modular home communities and other similar groupings constructed by developers or agencies targeted toward providing affordable housing to individuals whose income require them to purchase or rent housing in these low income areas. The

economic need associated with this clustering tendency is a matter of reality and beyond the County's ability to impact.

- c. Lack of understanding or lack of information regarding;
 - i. Availability of rental property or of land or homes for sale without regard for minority status or;
 - ii. Procedures involved in selecting and financing a home, i.e., lack of knowledge.
- d. Perception that fair housing opportunities are unavailable due to discrimination, prejudice or other similar factors. This individual perception is typically based on past experience or may have been obtained elsewhere, or may result from deeply ingrained attitudes acquired over time, without awareness or impact of affirmative action events occurring over the last several years.
- e. Previous discrimination in housing, either in lending, zoning, other regulations, education, real estate sales and so forth, which may have influenced family location, which subsequently after positive actions to alleviate, eliminate or abate those factors, has not changed geographic location, even though opportunity now exists, because of economics or personal choice.
- f. Establishment and/or maintenance, either previously or recently, of multi-generation family units, often from necessity such as health or economics, so that elderly, handicapped, ill, young, pregnant, unemployed, unmarried, et al, family members are not displaced from their homes and to ensure that loving, economical family care and security is available. This factor, while typically motivated by bonds and bloodlines, may also be the result of the local unavailability, or the local uneconomic availability, of the special needs required by these and other persons which require special or group housing.

IV. Review of Regulations:

County documents were reviewed to determine inclusion, inference or existence of barriers or impediments to achievement of fair housing goals in the community. The review concluded that these locally adopted documents meet minimum State imposed requirements, but do not go significantly farther. Further, it was determined that the following status exists:

- a. Policies, procedures and regulations. No barriers or impediments found.
- b. Land development regulations, zoning and building codes and related regulations. No barriers or impediments found.
- c. Comprehensive Plan. No barriers or impediments found.
- d. Ordinances. No barriers or impediments found, with the exception of the omission of "age" as non-discriminatory factor in several local documents.
- e. Personnel policies and procedures. No barriers or impediments found.
- f. Assignments to committees, boards, advisory committees and other local recognized organized bodies. No standing barriers or impediments found, however, composition of some bodies indicates a disparity of minority participation or membership.

V. Statement of Local Policy Goals:

The County respects the rights of individuals to select the location and type of their home, and does not wish to interfere with personal choice or the free enterprise system of housing. They do desire to:

- a. Assist the local housing industry to create more choices of affordable housing and to ensure their availability to all local residents; and
- b. Assist all local residents in understanding their housing opportunities, rights and responsibilities; and
- c. Assist handicapped and elderly persons in overcoming barriers to accessibility in their homes; and
- d. Assist providers of housing for persons with special needs in making needed housing available; and
- e. Assist the local real estate brokers and agents in furthering their understanding of the principles and requirements of the fair housing ordinance and local goals to ensure a truly "fair" rent or purchase opportunity for all persons; and
- f. Assist local bankers, mortgage institutions and other lenders in furthering their understanding of the principles and requirements of the fair housing

ordinance and local goals to ensure a truly "fair" loan or mortgage opportunity for all persons; and

- g. Participate in any and all available programs which may work to improve availability, affordability and quality of housing for all; and
- h. Conduct educational or promotional drives, blitzes or programs to further understanding of fair housing opportunities and requirements; and
- i. Provide, to the extent possible by fiscal and/or personnel constraints, a counseling program which will educate all residents on fair housing goals, mortgages, special programs, their rights and other similar subjects which will improve each individual's depth of knowledge and aid in the homeownership decision process.

VI. Barriers or Impediments:

- a. Lack of minority representation of participation on some local committees, advisory groups and councils.
- b. Inadequate education process to make potential homeowners, and other, aware of fair housing opportunities and requirements.
- c. Lack of local area jobs sufficient to provide opportunity for betterment for persons interested in upward mobility from a housing standpoint.
- d. Lack of infrastructure to attract new business which would provide needed jobs.
- e. Little turnover in local housing market primarily due to economic circumstances.
- f. Economic impediments which prohibit many homeowners from improving the quality of their current or proposed residence.
- g. Inadequate communication network to make all persons aware of fair housing requirements and opportunities.
- h. Lack of, or inadequate, homeownership counseling availability.

VII. Remedial Actions Taken or Planned to Ameliorate Barriers or Impediments or Positively Enhance Fair Housing:

- a. A Fair Housing Ordinance has been adopted to prohibit discrimination in housing.

- b. Local government support of fair housing opportunities and opposition to discrimination has been advertised.
- c. Educational and promotional activities in support of fair housing have been conducted.
- d. Local regulations have been reviewed and sanitized to eliminate housing bias or discriminatory requirements.
- e. The education process is being expanded to ensure awareness of fair housing availability. Public service announcements, handouts or flyers, posters and other similar forms of information dissemination are being utilized.
- f. Local communications network is being expanded to include all media mediums.
- g. A counseling program has been originated to improve knowledge base of persons covered by fair housing policies through the SHIP program.
- h. CDBG housing application is being submitted to upgrade and improve the housing stock of low to moderate income families.

VIII. Review Procedures:

This evaluation will be reviewed at least annually with any newly identified barriers, impediments or other factors which negatively impact fair housing added to Section VI. Plans to deal with those issues will also be identified and Section VII updated at the same time. Official action taken by the elected body to resolve or act on any issue will be identified in the minutes of the Board of County Commissioners meeting in which such action occurred.