

FAIR HOUSING PUBLIC HEARING

August 1, 2005 – 6:30 p.m.

Present for the hearing were: Mayor Zink, SSD Ralph Holt, Law Director Fred Beery, Auditor Rose Ryan, Police Chief Nick Thompson and council members Dick Donley, Peggy McClellan, Kevin Chambers, David Shoemaker, John Dodds, R Paul Pence and Charles Walker.

Mr. Scot D Taylor and Mr. Patrick L Harris of the Ohio Valley Minority Business Association, Inc. came to the members of the Hillsboro City Council to present information on “Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity”.

Mr. Taylor spoke to those present representing the Portsmouth Inner City Development Corporation which is located in Portsmouth, Ohio. He said that their Fair Housing Department is an organization established for the purposes of assisting rural counties, cities, villages and townships located within the state of Ohio. He said the program was made available through funding by a Community Development Block Grant to the Highland County Commissioners or the City of Hillsboro from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

He said the goals of the program are to assure full housing opportunities for all home seekers in southern Ohio; to alleviate discriminatory housing practices within the area; to strengthen and maintain fair housing opportunities in the areas where the service is available; to encourage and assist in vigorous enforcement of fair housing laws and to achieve a full public awareness of an individual’s fair housing rights.

He explained that the law was originally enacted in 1968 and amended in 1988. He explained the Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing because of race or color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status or handicap. Owner-occupied housing is exempt if it has no more than four units; single-family housing sold or rented without use of a broker and housing operated by organizations and private clubs that limit occupancy to members. He explained that this includes specific classes of individuals where housing is specifically designated for them. He said one group would be individuals fifty-five years of age or older. He said you could build an apartment complex and designate it for those individuals as long as 80% of those units are occupied by that group of individuals.

Prohibited by the fair housing act are: discrimination in the sale and rental of housing or in mortgage lending. There is additional protection if you have a disability. He said that if you think your rights have been violated you can tell HUD and he had handouts telling where to write or call depending on the area of the country. He explained what happens when a claim is filed and the role of the U.S. Department of Justice. There was also information regarding the Ohio law for Landlord/Tenant rights.

Mr. Beery asked if they had had any experience with sexually oriented offenders or sexual predators attempting to get housing. Mr. Taylor said they had been fortunate not to have to deal with any those. He said that in the last couple of months there was a ruling that you can restrict those individuals from renting your property if you can identify that they have been convicted of

any type of sexually oriented offense. He said you could have an issue if you rent to them first and then they “pop up” on the website. He said if someone had been convicted of child molestation and you’re living in an apartment complex with children and somebody was to find out after the fact; he thought that would be good enough grounds to ask that person to leave those premises. He said with sexual offenses you start to get into a gray area because of something that is just starting to become a little more prevalent than it has been in the past.

With no further questions or comments; the hearing was closed at 6:55 p.m.

Beverly Brown, Clerk of Council