



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Resources and Development Committee receives report from the Navajo Housing Authority

TSE BONITO, N.M. – On Tuesday, the Resources and Development Committee received an updated report from the Navajo Housing Authority regarding recent initiatives and activities.

NHA chief executive officer Aneva Yazzie provided information on the 2017 budget appropriations, Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act reauthorization, deficiencies with the Housing and Development study, 2015 HUD audit findings, 2016 NHA goal, 2016 expenditure report, 2017 Indian Housing Plan, NHA Veterans Housing Assistance Program Policy, Former Bennett Freeze Area funding status, Shiprock Home for Women and Children, Salt Wash Flood victims in Shiprock, and the NHA five-year plan.

RDC member Council Delegate Leonard H. Pete (Chinle) requested additional information regarding Navajo Flexcrete Building Systems, NHA's five-year plan, land purchases, and future housing developments.

"The committee needs a detailed report on the 2015 HUD audit findings because I never saw a report on Flexcrete's activities and revenues. Also, what does the five-year plan include and is there a long-term plan more than five years? We also need a report regarding all land purchases that NHA has made and are they feasible?" asked Delegate Pete.

"I also need more information regarding the Former Bennett Freeze Area and how NHA plans to waive certain federal laws and tribal laws to resolve development issues. Also, what is the status on the housing development near Twin Arrows Casino? What is the status on the Bluestone Project?" asked RDC vice chair Council Delegate Benjamin L. Bennett (Crystal, Fort Defiance, Red Lake, Sawmill).

"We can provide detailed information regarding all the committee's concerns and questions during a work session. A work session will give us the opportunity to address all issues and solutions," stated Yazzie.

Yazzie added that Flexcrete audit finding is related to tenant files, which NHA's Operations branch is addressing. Chapters have submitted resolutions for land purchase sites. The Former Bennett Freeze Area project is chapter and community-based driven and NHA has identified that the lack of home site leases has raised concerns, thus, NHA plans to request certain waivers from the

federal government. Also, NHA plans to collaborate with the Glittering Mountain project to address housing within the Twin Arrows Casino vicinity, stated Yazzie.

RDC member Council Delegate Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tsidi To ii) asked how NHA plans to address the HUD Housing Needs Study released in July.

“I believe that the HUD Housing Needs Study does not reflect or benefit the Nation. How can NHA address this issue?” asked Delegate Phelps.

In a letter dated Aug. 2016 addressed to the HUD Office of Policy Development and Research, NHA provided comments regarding the draft final report on the HUD Housing Needs Study. The letter stated that NHA completed its own Navajo Housing Needs assessment in 2011, which contains surveys from 11,466 households compared to 8,471 households in the HUD study. The HUD study showed inequitable representation and that HUD doesn’t consult with American Indian tribes in the development of policy recommendations, according to Yazzie.

RDC chair Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichíí, Steamboat) also advised NHA to share the important information with Navajo chapters.

“There is a lot of resourceful information given. I encourage NHA to promote transparency by sharing critical information to the chapters. They also need to know what is going on,” stated Delegate Shepherd.

Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse’Daa’Kaan, Upper Fruitland) also recommended NHA to present to all the Navajo Nation Council’s Standing Committees.

The Resources and Development Committee approved the report with a 4-0 vote with a future work session.

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