



The Senate of the State of Texas

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May 26, 2005

Ms. Elizabeth M. Anderson
Mr. Shadrick Bogany
Mr. Kent C. Conine
Mr. Vidal Gonzalez
Mr. Patrick R. Gordan
Mr. Norbeto Salinas
Ms. Edwina Carrington, Executive Director
Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs
507 Sabine, Suite 400
Austin, Texas 78711

VIA HAND DELIVERY

Dear Governing Board Members and Ms. Carrington:

The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs Board (TDHCA) is tasked with one of the most difficult roles in state government - your body helps shape the communities of tomorrow. Unfortunately, you are often maligned for objectively and conscientiously fulfilling your obligation by the very communities to which you are so committed. As a representative of one of those communities, I want to apologize for the accusations of wrongdoing to which you have been subjected.

Both the Board and Executive Director Carrington have consistently been fair and careful in determining affordable housing developments. Moreover, you have held yourselves to the highest ethical standards when making decisions that will affect communities. I would like to especially extend an apology to Mr. Pat Gordan, a citizen of my community who has followed the letter of the law and the highest ethical standards in recusing himself from any consideration of issues relating to the Cedar Oaks development; and, as a result, was the target of unfounded allegations and innuendo that border on slander at a recent El Paso City Council meeting.

Since 1997, as El Paso's State Senator, I have been a vocal advocate for El Paso and the entire Texas Border Region. I have watched for years as Border community leaders, El Paso's included, have demanded their fair share of state resources and then spent considerable energy fighting over who gets the biggest slice. This infighting causes immeasurable harm to the communities by acting as a barrier to growth

and development.

In today's TDHCA Board meeting, you will witness this political wrangling first hand. What you will see is a fight to control tax credits in El Paso, not a good faith complaint about your agency or decisions made by the TDHCA Board. You will hear arguments about neighborhood concerns; you will hear allegations of wrongdoing by the Board; and you will hear threats of a lawsuit. You will hear this rhetoric because it has all been used before in previous efforts by one group to monopolize all the low-income tax credits in the El Paso housing market. Enclosed is a letter I wrote in October 2004 to a constituent about similar unfounded attacks on another affordable housing development in El Paso.

I write today to provide a balanced voice to counter the political pandering couched in "representing the constituency". TDHCA is charged with the difficult task of distributing limited housing credits to a State with overwhelming need for more affordable housing. The guidelines and process for determining how best to distribute those funds has been vetted over the years and comprehensively and fairly evaluate every project to determine the best development proposal. I feel certain that TDHCA's process, which has been open and fair in the past, allows for all interested parties to express their views on a proposed development.

Whether in El Campo or El Paso, the people deserve to participate in the process, voice their concerns and make sure government works for them. Certainly, the people of my district deserved notice as provided by law and an opportunity to voice their concerns. But the need for affordable housing is a macro issue that must be addressed by considering the needs and voices of the entire community, not just the most vocal members. Providing quality affordable housing is a concern that we must all share so that more Texans share in the American Dream.

Thank you for your continued efforts to help communities provide quality affordable housing options for their citizens. I look forward to working with you help El Pasoans reach that American Dream.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Eliot Shapleigh". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Eliot" and last name "Shapleigh" clearly legible.

Eliot Shapleigh

ES/ks

Enclosure: 2004 letter regarding TDHCA Housing Credit determination process