

May 4, 2023 Meeting of the Housing Opportunity Fund Advisory Board for the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh

A. Roll Call

Lena Andrews, Karen Garrett, Jerome Jackson PhD, Deb Gross, Mark Masterson, Deidra Washington, Paul Spradley PhD, Aster Teclay, Adrienne Walnoha (Chair), Kellie Ware, Esq., Jamil Bey PhD

Not Present: Morgan Overton, Tammy Thompson, Marcus Reed, Alan Sisco, Derek Tillman

URA Staff Present: Susheela Nemani- Stanger, Evan Miller, Derek Kendall-Morris, Jahd Burns, Kristen Leuschen, Kyle Novak, Victoria Jackson, Rae Ann Driscoll, David DiBernardo, Niklas Persson, Donna Freeman, Breanna Benjamin, Quianna Wasler, Ben Peyton, David Geiger, Alicia Majors

B. Review and Acceptance of Minutes from April 6, 2023 Meeting: Approved.

Mark Masterson motioned to approve. Aster Teclay seconded the motion. All in favor, no opposed, Jamil Bey abstained.

C. URA Staffing Update:

Quianna Wasler serving as Chief Housing Officer, URA

Morgan Overton will no longer serve on the HOF Advisory Board

D. Public Comment:

No Public Comment.

E. Homeowner Assistance Program (HAP) Changes and Updates: Presented by Derek Kendall-Morris, URA

- Authorization to eliminate the "HAP +" sub program and serve all homeowners under 80% AMI utilizing the same financing terms.
 - HAP+ has a more complex financing structure, receiving one grant for \$5K then two loans, one being a deferred loan and the other as an amortizing loan in which applicants would make payments.
 - The financing structure is overly complex and burdensome causing some applicants to drop out of the program so looking to streamline into one homeowner assistance program that includes the same funding terms for all participants.
- \$5,000 grant and up to \$30,000 in the form of a deferred second mortgage equal to \$35,000 total assistance per household

Questions/Comments:

Deb Gross

If a homeowner has an existing mortgage, and need home repair, will they receive the 5K cash that is a grant and how was it too complicated if homeowner was handling it?

-The homeowner does not receive the money upfront, the URA facilitates the home repairs on the homeowner's behalf and the funding goes to the contractor or agency conducting repairs. The funding doesn't go to the homeowner, they would take two loans that get attached to their home. About 90 individuals participated in the HAP+ compared to the upper 300 for regular HAP at 50 percent AMI and below. It would serve between 70 to 80 households.

Mark Masterton

What are the goals by income? Are we trying to have the window open for a shorter period? Do we

-The whole home repair is not open yet; we are looking at that although it will serve the whole county and the funding, they have for whole home repairs will serve about 200 households over the county and will not have a substantial impact on our program and in terms of city residents. We aren't looking to have the applications open for a shorter period rather than making sure applicants that are accepted do make it through the entire program.

Deb Gross

Are we anticipating another 200 applications in the next month or at what time frame?

-It typically is open in spring/summer depending on when we receive the money from the city. We take applications until we reach the number of applications that we have funding to support, then it gets shut down. The return rate is high for repairs that have still not been made, they cannot afford the repairs otherwise.

Motion to approve by Kellie Ware seconded by Jamil Bey. No abstentions, all in favor, no opposition.

F. For-Sale Development Program (FSDP) Amendments: Presented by Evan Miller, URA. Looking to make changes to make the program more responsive to the development climate in Pittsburgh. There is currently an ARPA funded for sale development program targeted towards land trusts budgeted by city council that the URA will be launching in the upcoming months. With it being a newer program there were enhancements made, so we are looking to make similar adjustments to ensure all entities have a similar ability to do their work and carry it out successfully.

- Authorization to make amendments on clear guidance of conservatorship.
- Allow limited Equity Cooperatives to participate.
- Rent-to-own option to be made available.

- Authorization of defining period of eligible costs as being no earlier than 12-months prior to application.
- Increasing the available per-unit subsidy from \$70k to \$100K for rehab.
- Increasing the available per-unit subsidy from \$100K to \$130K for new construction.

Questions/Comments:

Adrienne Walnoha

This will give more transparency on the programs and allows for better outreach.

Jamil Bey PhD

Where would the funds come from? Trading up doing fewer units or are there more funds available?

-Yes, we are trading off the ability to do as many units as possible, but there are some deals that sit there because there is an additional gap, they are having trouble filling so this will push projects to move along and get completed. Some other sources from the URA can be put toward the program too.

Deb Gross

Are we not anticipating the money will go to conservatorship for sale development?

-No, not anticipating it but that has been our experience in the last several years that at times we are approached by community groups that have file conservatorship, looking for funding and because the guidelines we are largely silent on it, there was a gray area.

Is money restricted to community group applications and CDCs'?

-Not internally, there is the availability for-profit developer to work with the program but only if they have a proven partnership with a neighborhood community group and some type of memorialized agreement. At the time, there may be a mixed income development where some component of affordability is desired by the community and the developer would partner with a neighborhood community group to help apply at the Housing Opportunity Fund.

Is the guidance on conservatorship that funding will only be considered if it is the community group partner and not the for-profit partner who has filed for conservatorship?

-It is not currently specified in the guidelines, but the distinction can be made that only non-profits applying for conservatorship are eligible for funding through this program.

Mark Masterson

Why are you defining the period of eligible cost no earlier than twelve months? Will it be making a higher hurdle? It may take 18 months just to clear the title.

-We have seen some scenarios when a property has been owned by a community group for years and they decide to sell and apply to this program with the construction cost that took place and is difficult from an oversight standpoint, but open to suggestions to building up the timeline. People are taking three to six months to get a building permit conceivably are building out the deal before they have even acquired the property. They would be engaging with the Housing Opportunity Fund for providing an

application and would seek funding before that starts. This program is to provide funding for construction grant financing for these projects with predevelopment funding available as well.

Adrienne Walnoha

What is being requested is more significant language and a deeper understanding of some of the parameters including conservatorship and who is taking that conservatorship and these limits that have been set related to cost that come in prior 12 months and the application along with questions about the subsidy increases.

Motion to table by Jamil Bey and seconded by Jerome Jackson. Amended to motion to hold by Jamil Bey and seconded by Jerome Jackson.

Jamil Bey rescinded the motion to table.

Aster motion to move into next month. Karen Garrett seconded the motion. All in favor, no abstentions.

G. URA Administrative Updates: Presented by Megan Confer-Hammond

- Report out of Fair Housing Summit: Any model of power and development and funding is vulnerable to concepts of discrimination whether intentional or not, without explicit guard rails that those bodies or entities are engaged in a fair housing training understanding that their health, applications, and various models exists of housing decision makers.
 - Survivors of protection against domestic violence can be covered by the federal protected classes such as sex, race, disability, or national origin based on a different impact theory. The city of Pittsburgh has survivors as an explicit protected class.
 - May need an emergency transfer or to be released from their lease and can be penalized for calling the police and other emergency services, so the Department of Housing and Urban Development has a format of four filing follow-up complaints directly in an administrative format, so you don't have to access an attorney.
 - As for language barriers in housing, a model lease will be used to as a simple straightforward lease that includes fundamentals that will be translated into several languages that will assist private city landlords with being proactive with language compliance.
 - HUD is seeking public comment on potential changes to Section 504, which prohibits discrimination based on disability in programs and activities that are receiving federal assistance from HUD.

Questions/Comments:

Aster Teclay

Is it common practice for this body to provide public comment as the body itself? Is that something we can possibly do since we do have committees?

-We have not to date and there isn't anything in our legislative to preclude us from being able to weigh in on many topics locally, regionally, and nationally that impact the work we are trying to do.

Adrienne Walnoha

Is there an opposition to looking at Section 504 in the next discussion in June?

-Hearing none, we will connect with URA staff and see how we can craft conversation about the 504 section.

H. Advisory Board Administrative Updates:

- HOF AB meeting location update- continually working towards a resolution for a public engaged meeting location either in person or virtually.
- Committee Kickoff this month- looking for membership to step forward and select a subcommittee.
- HOF AB Community Feedback Survey for the 2024 Annual Allocation Plan launched May 1st.
 - Community Events for Survey- launched May 1, 2023, and did an email campaign to all individuals that have reached out to housing and have expressed interest.
- Administrative Items
 - Hazelwood Initiative- May 9th @ 6pm at Community Kitchen Pittsburgh
 - Will be presenting during their regular community meeting.
 - Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation- May 23 @ 6pm at their office location
 - Will be presenting at their "Statue of the Neighborhood" meeting.
 - Pittsburgh Hispanic Development Corporation- June 11, times TBD at PHDC
 - Attending their Consulate event as the last table stop for people going through the line.
 - East Hills Consensus Group- June 15 @ 6pm, location TBD
 - Will be presenting during their regular community meeting.
 - Perry Hilltop/Fineview Citizens Council- June 27 @ 6pm at The Pittsburgh Project
 - Will be presenting during their regular community meeting.
 - Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership- June 29 @ 10am at Market Square Farmers Market
 - Will be tabling at the Market Square Farmers Market

I. **Programmatic Expenditures and Updates:** Presented by Jahd Burns, URA
Presented data on the Small Landlord Fund, the Down Payment and Closing Cost Assistance Program, the Housing Stabilization Program, the Legal Assistance Program, the Homeowners Assistance Program, the Rental Gap Program, and the For-Sale Development Program.

J. **Announcements:**

The next HOF Advisory Board Meeting will take place Thursday, June 1, 2023, at 2:00 PM. It will be held virtually and aired live on the City of Pittsburgh's YouTube Channel.

K. **Adjournment:**

Motion to adjourn made by Mark Masterson.