

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Housing Opportunity Fund Advisory Board of the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh, City Council Chambers, City of Pittsburgh, 414 Grant Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219.

March 7, 2019 – 9:00 A.M., E.S.T.

Members Present: Messrs. J. Bey (via phone), R. Butler (via phone), K. Chintalapalli, J. Jackson, M. Masterson, S. Su, D. Tillman (via phone), Mmes. L. Andrews, J. Deming, T. Kail-Smith, V. McDonald Roberts, S. Tilghman, A. Walnoha, D. Walker

Members Absent: M. Lane, L. Spring, C. Torres

Staff Present: Messer. E. Miller, Mmes. V. Hage, J. Reese, J. Smith Perry, G. Taylor, S. Taylor

A. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

B. Roll Call

Ms. Smith Perry called the meeting to order and declared a quorum present.

C. Review and Acceptance of Minutes from the February 7, 2019 Meeting

The minutes of the Regular Board Meeting on February 7, 2019 were approved as written and previously distributed.

D. Recommend the Approval of Contracts / Agreements with the following non-profit Program Administrators to help administer the Housing Stabilization Program (HSP):

- a. **Macedonia Family and Community Enrichment Center (Macedonia Face) in the amount of \$105,000**
- b. **Mercy Life Center Corporation in the amount of \$200,000**
- c. **Neighborhood Legal Services in the amount of \$140,000**
- d. **Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh in the amount of \$200,000**
- e. **Young Womens Christian Association (YWCA) of Pittsburgh in the amount of \$105,000**

Staff Report

The main objective of the Housing Stabilization Program (HSP) is to provide one time or short term (no more than 4 months) funding to individuals and families who are struggling with housing expenses including rent and/or utilities. It is designed to assist participants to stabilize their current housing, or facilitate access to appropriate housing, and prevent homelessness. The program will also allow for legal eviction prevention services including legal consultation and representation for eviction defense and/or related supportive services. Tenants who utilize the program must have annual household incomes less than 50% of the Area Median Income.

On January 18, 2019, the URA released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Program Administrators to help the Authority administer the program. The Program Administrators will work with households to determine their eligibility for the program, coordinate construction inspections with the URA, make payments to the landlords and/or lien holders, and perform at least three follow-up visits to the households to ensure continuing housing stability. Program Administrators will coordinate the work with the URA's HOF Department and the Engineering and Construction Department.

The URA will enter into contracts with the Program Administrators and reimburse them for costs incurred on a per household basis. Once Program Administrators are awarded a contract, households/applicants will be referred to the program through the URA, the United Way's 211 hotline, the Allegheny County Department of Human Services' Hotline (the Link), word-of-mouth, and/or through the Program Administrators themselves.

The total amount in the Housing Stabilization Program line item for the 2018 allocation plan is \$750,000. The URA received six responses to the RFP totaling \$1,514,495. A review committee including URA staff, three HOF Advisory Board members, and two additional members of the social service industry met to review the applications. Most requests were reduced, and one response was eliminated. The applications and recommended contract amounts will be discussed at the Advisory Board meeting. The Advisory Board's funding recommendations will be presented to the URA Board of Directors on March 7, 2019.

Ms. Smith Perry stated the Housing Stabilization Program provides emergency rental assistance to renters. Five respondents are being reviewed today. They are as follows: Macedonia Family and Community Enrichment Center (FACE) is in the Hill District. They requested \$275,000, but the recommendation amount is \$105,000. They run programs with the Dept. of Human Services through the Children Youth and Family program. They have not administered any of the Dept. of Human Services direct homeless prevention programs. The program they administer is for children, youth and family services where they work with households prior to them entering a crisis stage. They work primarily in the Hill District but have outreach throughout the entire city and do not turn clients down if they are not in the Hill District. Mercy Life Center Corporation is "Pittsburgh Mercy". Their legal name is Mercy Life Center Corporation and they are a city-wide organization that has several facilities that they operate and homeless shelters, but they also operate emergency programs through the Dept. of Human Services. They requested \$400,000, but the recommendation amount is \$200,000. Neighborhood Legal Services responded to the portion of the RFP that is specific to the eviction legal services and working with tenants once they receive an eviction notice. The plan is for the four other administrators to work with tenants prior to receiving eviction notices. If tenants do have an eviction notice and need the legal assistance, Neighborhood Legal Services was the only respondent for that portion of the RFP and requested \$139,999. The recommendation amount is \$140,000. The Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh is an established social service provider in the City that has operated rental assistance programs through the Dept. of Human Service. They requested \$400,000, but the recommendation amount is \$200,000. The Young Women's Christian association YWCA of Pittsburgh also applied, they have also worked with the Dept. of Human Services on several housing programs over the years. They requested \$250,000, but the recommendation amount is \$105,000.

Representatives present from the providers include: Dr. Trisha Gadson, Executive Director of Macedonia, FACE; Marjorie Lennox, Director of the Resource Center for the YWCA; Barbara Kern, Gabrielle Antonicelli, and Tom M. Poynk of Neighborhood Legal Services.

Ms. Deming asked how outreach is going to be performed to make sure that the entire city is covered.

Ms. Smith Perry stated there will be several front doors to these programs so that as many people as possible can be reached. There have been meetings with the United Way, and they are going to list the service providers in the 211-call center. Additionally, the Allegheny County Link will also refer people to the program. The URA will also be part of the front door, and if people call or check the URA website, they will be directed to the service provider.

RECOMMENDATION 6 (2019)

Diamonte Walker made the motion for Item D. Recommend the Approval of Contracts / Agreements with the following non-profit Program Administrators to help administer the Housing Stabilization Program (HSP): Macedonia Family and Community Enrichment Center, Mercy Life Center Corporation, Neighborhood Legal Services, Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh and Young Womens Christian Association (YWCA) of Pittsburgh. Jerome Jackson seconded. Those in favor: L. Andrews, J. Bey, R. Butler, K. Chintalapalli, J. Deming, J. Jackson, M. Masterson, V. McDonald Roberts, Sonya Tilghman, A. Walnoha, and D. Walker. The motion carried. S. Su abstained/left the table for the discussion in accordance with the Conflict of Interest policy. D. Tillman abstained for Macedonia FACE and is in favor of the other providers.

E. Recommend the Approval of a Contract / Agreement with the following non-profit Program Administrator to help administer the Homeowner Assistance Program (HAP):

- a. Neighborhood Legal Services in the amount of \$130,000 to perform tangled title and foreclosure prevention services.**

Staff Report

The main objective of the HOF Homeowner Assistance Program (HAP) is to provide financial and technical assistance to eligible Borrowers for rehabilitating and improving residential owner-occupied properties citywide. Neighborhood Legal Services (NLS) will be utilized by homeowners for their expertise in the field of tangled title resolution and foreclosure prevention. The homeowners must have annual household incomes less than 50% of the Area Median Income.

On December 13, 2018, the URA released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Program Administrators to help the Authority administer the program. In February 2019, the URA Board approved six program administrators that will be assisting residents with physical improvements to their homes. The URA re-released the RFP on a rolling basis. NLS is the first organization to join the program that is focused on the tangled title and foreclosure prevention component of HAP.

The Advisory Board's funding recommendation will be presented to the URA Board of Directors on March 14, 2019.

Ms. Smith Perry stated that \$130,000 is being requested for Neighborhood Legal Services to help people go through the probate process and asked representatives from NLS to explain the service they will provide.

Tom Poyk, attorney NLS, described the program. The first procedure is to identify the relationship between the client and the property, and to identify all possible heirs that could have a legal claim. When it is established that the client has a legal claim to the property without exception of anyone else, a petition will go before the court to put their name on the deed. It is important to realize that this action of legal ownership by putting their name on the deed helps to maintain the family's equity because now the house is in the family and can be passed down to another family member or sold for the benefit of the family.

Gabrielle Antonicelli, Legal Development and Program Assistant, NLS, stated most of the cases will have an average cost of \$1,200 in associate fees which cover the recording fees, requesting a certified copy of the order through the Orphans Court clerks, the advertising fee in both a general circulation and legal journal, and for title insurance to transfer so that there will be a marketable title.

Mr. Jackson asked if NLS is working with clients to make sure that they have a will so that the property doesn't fall back into another tangled title situation.

Ms. Antonicelli stated in certain cases, the NLS work may also include estate planning. In addition, Allegheny County has free wills available through the Pittsburgh Pro Bono Partnership. It is estimated that 45 clients will be assisted through the HOF NLS contract.

Mr. Tillman stated that there is usually an estate tax when a family member is deceased, and the property is transferred to an heir. If that situation arises and the heir needs to pay an estate tax, that would mean that those clients can't be helped.

Ms. Antonicelli stated that inheritance and estate taxes are the only costs currently that clients cover. The Estate tax doesn't normally come up because the client is not going through the probate process. The 3546 petition is taken to the Orphans Court which is under title 20 of the PA code statue 3546 and that bypasses the estate tax. Living heirs don't pay the transfer tax for recording the property. Most clients would not be subject to that unless their relationship dictates otherwise. Inheritance tax and Estate tax are not covered by the program. When there is an Inheritance tax, a monthly payment plan can be implemented based on the client's income limits.

RECOMMENDATION 7 (2019)

Joanna Deming made the motion for Item E. Recommend the Approval of a Contract / Agreement with the following non-profit Program Administrator to help administer the Homeowner Assistance Program (HAP): Neighborhood Legal Services. Valerie McDonald Roberts seconded. Those in favor: J. Bey, R. Butler, K. Chintalapalli, J. Deming, J. Jackson, Theresa Kail-Smith, M. Masterson, V. McDonald Roberts, S. Su, Sonya Tilghman, D. Tillman, A. Walnoha, and D. Walker. The motion carried. L. Andrews abstained/left the table for the discussion in accordance with the Conflict of Interest policy.

F. Staff Presentation Regarding the Housing Opportunity Fund 2019 Annual Allocation Meetings

Staff Report

Vethina Hage, HOF Community Outreach Specialist, and Jamie Reese, Affordable Housing Policy and Data Analyst, provided summary information from the 2019 Annual Allocation Meetings.

Ms. Hage stated per the HOF legislation, HOF must provide an opportunity for public feedback and comment prior to the approval of the annual allocation plan. HOF hosted a series of five community meetings throughout the City. The meetings were marketed through the URA Facebook page, and the Mayor's Facebook page, ads and articles via newspaper, television and radio as well as community meetings, NextDoor, and City Council. Countless inquiries came from individuals who heard about the programs through friends and family members, other community groups or co-workers. Currently, the Down Payment and Closing Cost Assistance program is the only public program that is accepting applications, but in the coming weeks, the Homeowner Assistance Program and Housing Stabilization Program will be available.

The total number of attendees who came to the meetings was approximately 115. A survey was conducted at the meetings and is also online. The online survey responses to date are up to 100, and the survey will remain open until March 15.

Ms. Reese stated the first goal of the survey was to gain public opinion on the issues that were identified in the 2018 allocation plan. The way that was done was to ask the participants to rate those issues on a scale from one to five. The second point is to insure representations on those opinions across key populations. The online survey doubled the responses and included a mixture of renters and homeowners.

The survey will help determine how different residents see different things. Questions were asked regarding eviction, foreclosure, landlord selling the property & landlord increasing the rent. The survey also identifies the needs of the community, where residents spend their time and where they would like to live. The survey looks at the connection between the places that people spend a lot of time and affordable housing.

In the meetings, residents had the opportunity for open-ended conversation with Advisory Board members. Observations that were made from the conversations include: supportive services are an issue; many people are just above the income threshold; people are concerned about gentrification; rehabilitation should be prioritized over new construction; and funding should be increased for tangled title and estate planning.

Mr. Masterson added that responses from several meetings concerned vacant, blighted buildings in the neighborhoods.

Ms. Walnoha stated that people who are at the lowest level of the income spectrum, have incredible competition and lack of resources. This group is under-represented in any community conversation. Would it make sense to do a targeted outreach effort related to people who are at 30% and below? That is an important group to talk to, and they are missing.

G. 2018 Annual Audit

Staff Report

Engagement of Maher Duessel in the amount of \$2,500 for the 2018 Annual Audit. The audit must be commissioned by March 31, 2019 and completed by June 30, 2019.

Ms. Smith Perry stated Maher Duessel prepares the URA's annual audits, and they will be at the URA doing this in the next couple of months. They have proposed a fee of \$2,500 to add on the component for the HOF. The audit will be able to be completed in the next couple of months prior to the June 30 deadline. Next year there will be an RFP or an RFQ sent out for bids for auditors.

RECOMMENDATION 8 (2019)

Sonya Tilghman made the motion to accept the engagement of Maher Duessel in the amount of \$2,500 for the 2018 Annual Audit. Jerome Jackson seconded. Theresa Kail-Smith voted against. The motion carried.

H. 2018 Annual Report

Staff Report

Advisory Board discussed the 2018 Annual Report which must be completed by June 30, 2019.

Ms. Smith Perry stated the HOF is instructed to have an annual report. 2018 was more about the process of identifying and establishing programming than closing loans and expending money. For that reason, it is anticipated that the annual report will be small and detail the process that has happened. The recommendation is to work with Wall-to-Wall who are preparing the URA Annual Report. There is an existing contract which can be amended. Additionally, there will be an RFQ or an RFP issued for 2019. There is a conference call tomorrow with Wall-to-Wall to discuss.

Mr. Masterson stated that item should wait for a month until there is an actual cost and what the work will entail.

This item was tabled and will be brought back to the Board at the next meeting.

I. Request for Qualifications (RFQs)

Staff Report

In March and April 2019, HOF Staff will release two Requests for Qualifications (RFQs):

- (1) An RFQ for community outreach / advocacy / planning activities - Submittals will be accepted on a rolling basis. Acceptable responses will be added to a slate of consultants to be used for future community outreach / advocacy / planning activities.
- (2) An RFQ for printing services - Submittals will be accepted on a rolling basis. Acceptable responses will be added to a slate of consultants to be used for printing and/or advertising needs.

Ms. Smith Perry stated over the next two months, staff plans to issue two RFQs. One for community outreach/planning activities and the other one for printing/marketing/advertising services. Anyone who would want to provide these services for the HOF moving forward would respond to the RFQ, and the

Advisory Board would form a committee to review the responses and then create a slate that would go to the Advisory Board and the URA board.

Additionally, to address the concern that more homeowners than renters attended the public meetings, the suggestion was made to hold an event in the URA / City's new building on the Blvd. of the Allies near the end of April in celebration of Fair Housing month. The bottom first floor of the building will be open for a networking event and also to present the 2019 allocation plan which should be in draft form for feedback prior to it going to the May Advisory Board and the URA Board in final form.

Ms. Kail-Smith asked why there needs to be an RFQ for the printing services, and whether there is a reason why it cannot be done in-house? Also, the City and the universities have printing services available.

Mr. Chintalapalli explained that the URA does not have a print shop and would welcome other suggestions for printing services.

Ms. Deming asked for further information regarding the slate of consultants. Should it be a strategic conversation about what type of outreach is needed and who can provide those services?

Ms. Smith Perry stated it is beneficial having a slate of consultants because they have different functions and distinct strengths. The RFQs will be circulated to the Advisory Board prior to their release with a two-year timeframe for services.

RECOMMENDATION 9 (2019)

Mark Masterson made the motion for (I-1) for an RFQ to be issued for community outreach / advocacy / planning activities with Pittsburgh United and/or their consultants in an amount not to exceed \$5,000 with the stipulation that an hourly rate is provided and what the fee entails as well as the services that will be performed.

Further that (I-2) an RFQ be issued for printing/marketing/advertising services. Joanna Deming seconded. Motion carried.

J. Nominations for a Chair of the HOF Advisory Board

Staff Report

The Advisory Board will nominate and vote for a Chair of the HOF Advisory Board.

Ms. Smith Perry stated there was a motion made last month to elect a Chair and it was also listed as a suggestion on the HR&A report to the Advisory Board to have a chair appointed from the Advisory Board itself to work with staff prior to meetings so that everyone is in agreement with the agenda items. In addition to sitting in the Chair position during the meetings, what other duties and responsibilities should the Chair assume? There are four board members whose terms expire on April 30. Additionally, one person is on leave from their position and has not been an active member. Hopefully by the next meeting, there will be a direction determined for the four people whose terms are expiring. There have been some months where there has been difficulty reaching a quorum. Several people have asked that rules be put in place regarding attendance. Also, board members have requested more clarification on the conflict of interest policy, and what that means for projects that someone is either directly or indirectly involved in.

Mr. Tillman nominated Joanna Deming for the position of Chair. However, board members would like to form a governance committee to convene and discuss rules and responsibilities of the Chair and bring those back to the Advisory Board in a month for acceptance before nominations and a vote takes place. Board members who volunteered to be on the governance committee are: Kyle Chintalapalli, Mark Masterson, Adrienne Walnoha, & Diamonte Walker.

RECOMMENDATION 10 (2019)

Diamonte Walker made the motion to accept the proposal to form a governance committee to outline the rules and responsibilities of the chair. Sonya Tilghman seconded. The motion carried.

K. Review of Expenses and Commitments to Date

Staff Report

The Advisory Board received an expense report showing the commitments and expenses to date.

Funds that are committed to date are: Rental Gap Program - \$1,820,000; Homeowner Assistance Program - \$1,730,000; Down Payment and Closing Cost Assistant Program - \$20,000; Housing Stabilization Program - \$750,000; For-Sale Development Program – \$0 and Administrative Budget has expended \$264,825.

L. Other Business

Scheduling Advisory Board working group for 2019 Annual Allocation Plan.

Ms. Smith Perry stated that the Housing Authority has approached the HOF regarding working with their programs. Also, the Department of Human Services has asked to have a meeting with the HOF Advisory Board.

A HOF Meeting with the Housing Authority and the Department of Human Services will be held on Friday, March 15 from 3:00-5:00 p.m.

There will be a doodle poll sent to establish two working sessions for the 2019 Annual Allocation Plan.

M. Public Comment

The floor was open to Public Comments.

Celeste Scott, a community liaison representative for Pittsburgh United and Pittsburghers for Urban Transit, stated that she would be interested to see how many LGBQIA people attended the public meetings.

Crystal Jennings, CJ Consulting and a contractor through Pittsburgh United, talked about strategies to provide outreach to homeless people.

Carol Hardeman, Hill District Consensus Group, asked if the income levels for the Homeowners Assistance Program could be increased.

N. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.