

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Housing Opportunity Fund Advisory Board for the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh. City of Pittsburgh YouTube channel.

April 1, 2021

Members Present: Lena Andrews, Oliver Beasley, Jamil Bey, Knowledge Build Hudson, Theresa Kail-Smith, Mark Masterson, James Myers, Sonya Tilghman, Derrick Tillman (Vice Chair), Diamonte Walker, Adrienne Walnoha, Kellie Ware-Seabron (Chair), Megan Winters

Staff: Breanna Benjamin, Jeremy Carter, David Geiger, Vethina Hage, Doren Hilmer, Victoria Jackson, Derek Kendall Morris, Evan Miller, Brett Morgan, Sara Shore, Jessica Smith Perry

Others: Anisah Ahmad, Meghan Aitken, Jess Callaghan, Meghan Confer-Hammond, Lindsey Evans, Alexander Fisher, Quinn Morant, William Lamar, Joan Stone, Swain Uber, Anne Wright

A. Roll Call

Kellie Ware-Seabron called the meeting to order. A quorum was present.

B. Review and Acceptance of Minutes from the March 4, 2021 Meeting

Mark Masterson motioned to approve the minutes of the March 4, 2021 board meeting as written and previously distributed. Derrick Tillman seconded. The motion carried.

C. Public Comment

Megan Confer-Hammond, Executive Director of the Fair Housing Partnership of Greater Pittsburgh, shared that fair housing organizations at a national level are working with Congress on housing funding tied to race consciousness and equity. She is pleased to see the Legal Assistance Program on the agenda and hopes the board will also discuss the difficulties residents have accessing rent relief through the Housing Stabilization Program (HSP). Throughout the month of April, she will also send out links pertaining to fair housing events to celebrate the 53rd anniversary of the Fair Housing Act of 1968.

D. Legal Assistance Program Contracts

Jeremy Carter presented an overview of the responses received for Legal Assistance Program RFP. The proposed contracts are considered for funding:

- Hill District Consensus Group - \$45,000
- Community Justice Project - \$138,000
- Neighborhood Legal Services - \$420,000
- Just Mediation Pittsburgh - \$80,700
- Morant Law/ Ebony Law - \$306,300

For coordinated entry, the Community Justice Project will subcontract with RentHelpPGH and the Pittsburgh Hispanic Development Corporation. Just Mediation Pittsburgh will serve as the sole provider for mediation services. Neighborhood Legal Services (NLS), Morant Law, and Community Justice Project

will provide limited legal consultation and full legal representation. NLS and Ebony Law will provide tangled title services, and NLS will be the sole provider of foreclosure prevention services. The Hill District Consensus Group will provide outreach services. An additional \$10,000 has been allocated to provide language services across all legal assistance programs.

Mark Masterson asked for the projected total of families served by this program.

J. Carter responded the projected total is 1324 households.

Derrick Tillman acknowledged the \$200,000 request from the Demonstration Program. He asked for the current line item for Demonstration funds.

Jessica Smith Perry responded that the initial 2021 allocation was \$400,000. Councilman Corey O'Connor's contribution of an additional \$400,000 increased to a total of \$800,000 for the Demonstration line item.

M. Masterson stated that the funds from Councilman O'Connor were used for Flats on Forward.

J. Smith Perry replied that the funds for Flats on Forward were moved from HSP to the Rental Gap Program (RGP) as shown by the \$750,000 RGP line item under Additional HOF 2021 Funding.

RECOMMENDATION 13 (2021)

Mark Masterson motioned to use \$200,000 of Demonstration Program funds as part of the Legal Assistance Program. Theresa Kail-Smith seconded. The motion carried.

RECOMMENDATION 14 (2021)

Sonya Tilghman motioned to approve the following contracts for the Legal Assistance Program:

- Hill District Consensus Group - \$45, 000
- Community Justice Project -\$138, 000
- Neighborhood Legal Services - \$420,000
- Just Mediation Pittsburgh - \$80,700
- Morant Law/ Ebony Law - \$306,300

Theresa Kail-Smith seconded the motion. The motion carried.

E. Larimer Phase III Development

Sara Shore presented on Larimer Phase III Development. She recommended a HOF Rental Gap Program loan in the amount of \$650,000 for the new construction of the Larimer Phase III mixed-use development. The commitment will expire on October 1, 2021.

Lindsey Evans, a representative of McCormack Baron Salazar, introduced herself and offered to answer the board's questions regarding Larimer Phase III. She stated that this project exceeds HOF and Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) requirements for accessible units as well as PHFA

requirements for sensory units. Additionally, 50% of the of the extremely low-income units are accessible units.

Adrienne Walnoha asked who is managing the tenant selection process and if there are any criteria that could potentially exclude tenants from the property.

L. Evans explained that because this project is in a CHOICE neighborhood, displaced residents have priority to return to the housing. The project includes project-based voucher units that are an option for returning residents. Resident selection also includes criteria for income eligibility. McCormack Baron Management will manage the property and will work with the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP) Housing Choice Voucher Program to identify tenants to get the project fully leased.

J. Smith Perry provided additional context and history for the Larimer CHOICE Neighborhood Initiative (CNI) projects.

Jamil Bey asked how many relocated residents returned to Larimer.

Knowledge Build Hudson stated that only a handful of residents opted to not return to Larimer. He credited residents returns to the engagement provided by Urban Strategies and HACP.

L. Evans will follow up with the case manager at Urban Strategies with the data from the People Program which is provided to HUD on a monthly basis. McCormack Baron Salazar worked with Urban Strategies on all phases of the Larimer project.

J. Bey stated that he asked this question to understand how the HOF can replicate the success of the CNI in Larimer/East Liberty. He observed that there is value in understanding why residents did not return and what supportive services helped those residents acclimate to another neighborhood.

J. Smith Perry noted that the Allegheny County Department of Human Services has also been involved with the residents and could serve as a resource for information.

L. Evans explained that the Allegheny County Department of Human Services is the transition manager for the grant to manage the ongoing operations.

M. Masterson asked about the repayment process.

J. Smith Perry replied that repayments will be treated as HOF repayment income.

M. Masterson asked if the 2% origination fee is a URA policy.

J. Smith Perry replied that the 2% origination fee applies to rental housing development.

RECOMMENDATION 15 (2021)

Mark Masterson motioned to recommend a HOF Rental Gap Program loan in the amount of \$650,000 for the new construction of the Larimer Phase III mixed-use development. The commitment will expire

on October 1, 2021. Diamonte Walker seconded. Lena Andrews, Knowledge Build Hudson, Sonya Tilghman, and Derrick Tillman abstained. The motion carried.

F. Advisory Board Administrative Items

Lena Andrews reported on the first meeting of the Fair Housing Committee. The committee discussed defining the goals and metrics of applying a fair housing lens to the board's decision-making process.

K. Ware Seabron added that the committee discussed fair housing as a legal framework and as a tool to address equity. The committee considered focus areas to guide their decision-making, including protected classes, economics, access to resources, targeting, and the overall impact on communities. The committee also discussed adding a brief report from the Fair Housing Partnership into the board meetings.

Derrick Tillman noted that the committee discussed how the fair housing lens will need to apply not to only programs but also on an institutional and systemic level.

K. Ware Seabron addressed next steps for the committee. The committee will meet monthly, select the chair, and generate a list of potential ex officio members.

K. Ware Seabron opened the floor to discussion about the creation of additional committees. The committees listed for discussion are the RFP Committee, Marketing and Outreach Committee, Sustainability Committee, and Wealth Building Initiatives Committee.

A. Walnoha expressed concern about the board's bandwidth to participate in additional committees. She believes that the board should focus on establishing process, protocols, and strategies.

D. Tillman commented that the recommendations from the Fair Housing Committee will determine which committees are necessary. He stated that the Marketing and Outreach Committee could be established now.

K. Ware Seabron expressed concern about the Fair Housing Committee bearing all of the responsibility. She commented that the board may need to establish a committee on operations for the advisory board.

D. Tillman stated that the Fair Housing Committee should establish metrics, and those metrics will define how the other committees operate.

M. Masterson agreed that fair housing should be a metric the board uses to judge outcomes. He suggested that a small group of board members work with URA staff to review existing RFP processes and evaluations, especially given the expectation that the RFP process will be competitive for 2021 funds.

K. Ware Seabron agreed with the urgency to establish processes for review RFPs.

M. Masterson commented that the board should have input in the RFP process and the fair housing metrics can be integrated into it later. The two committees needed now are RFP and Fair Housing.

A. Walnoha noted that the RFP scoring criteria should reflect what the advisory board prioritizes and wants to accomplish at a macro level, not just with individual projects.

D. Tillman stated that the term RFP may be confusing since the committee will move to scoring and suggested renaming the process.

K.B. Hudson stated he was under the impression the board moved away from the RFP process due to projects with LIHTC awards and City investment be presented to the board earlier. He asked how the advisory board scores will be weighed against the URA staff scores.

K. Ware Seabron clarified that the discussion of the scoring pertained to reviewing the existing rubric and including questions as they relate to the goals set by the board. She referenced the ways in which fair housing would be included in the metrics under the different focus areas such as sustainability.

D. Tillman provided examples of fair housing practices in sustainability such as energy efficient builds and passive houses to reduce utility costs and living expenses. He also encouraged the board to consider sustainability as also referring to ways to support residents.

L. Andrews stated that, in her experience completing a RGP application, the existing applications have scoring methods related to sustainability. The RGP application used the p4 metrics and she found them to be very comprehensive.

RECOMMENDATION 16 (2021)

Sonya Tilghman motioned to hold a special session to discuss the application process for Housing Opportunity Fund programs. Lena Andrews seconded. The motion carried.

J. Carter presented a walk-on voting item to request an amendment to the HSP guidelines. In December of last year, the advisory board voted to increase the maximum assistance to six (6) months using CDBG funds for homeowners only. He requested the guidelines be amended to a maximum of six (6) months using CDBG funds to assist renters.

RECOMMENDATION 17 (2021)

Adrienne Walnoha motioned to adjust the Housing Stabilization Program (HSP) guidelines to allow for a 6-month rental period to be covered. Megan Winters seconded. Lena Andrews and Sonya Tilghman abstained. The motion carried.

G. Programmatic Expenditure and Impact

J. Smith Perry presented the commitments and closings to date of both consumer and development programs through 2020, including AMI demographics. She observed that the HSP expenditure includes

the COVID CDBG funding, which also includes mortgage assistance funding. She encouraged the board members to make their constituents aware that HSP offers mortgage assistance from the COVID CDBG funds.

L. Andrews asked if photos of the completed RGP projects be presented to the board.

J. Smith Perry agreed and stated the URA could try to schedule developers to speak at the board meetings over the next couple of months. Additionally, there will be a presentation in May or June from HR & A Advisors who are currently updating the City's needs assessment.

M. Masterson suggested the addition of another column between "Closed/Committed" and "Not Yet Committed" to highlight the expected commitments to the LIHTC project.

H. Announcements

General Housing Announcements

J. Smith Perry updated the board on the recent developments of OwnPGH. She stated that this will not require a vote from the HOF Advisory Board. She asked any board members interested in participating in the OwnPGH working sessions in April to email her.

M. Masterson observed the potential of this program to create affordable housing by rehabbing abandoned houses.

K. Ware Seabron agreed with M. Masterson and commented on the potential of OwnPGH to give residents the opportunity to rehab and create affordable housing within their own communities.

HOF Announcements

Vethina Hage presented the timeline and events of the upcoming annual report due June 30, 2021.

I. Adjournment

The next HOF Advisory Board meeting will occur on May 6, 2021 at 9:00am.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.