

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

July 7, 2022

Members Present: Lena Andrews, Oliver Beasley, Theresa Kail Smith, Jamil Bey, Joanna Deming, Jerome Jackson, Knowledge Build-Hudson, Mark Masterson, James Myers, Paul Spradley, Sonya Tilghman, Derrick Tillman, Adrienne Walnoha, Kellie Ware (Chair), and Megan Winters

Staff Present: Jahd Burns, Breanna Benjamin, Rae Ann Driscoll, Donna Freeman, Victoria Jackson, Derek Kendall-Morris, Bailey Knapp, Natalie Lopez, Evan Miller, Brett Morgan, Niklas Persson, Melinda Ward, Jennifer Wilhelm

#### A. Roll Call

Kellie Ware motioned to approve the minutes of the June 2, 2022 board meeting as written and previously distributed. The motion carried.

#### B. Public Comment

#### C. LAP Servicer Provider Presentation

Swain Uber, Abby Rae LaCombe, Adam Dibuo, Aaron Erb to present on expanding and retooling the Legal Assistance Program:

- Abby Rae La Combe, Executive Director of Rent Help, explained the trajectory of evictions in Allegheny county and the city of Pittsburgh and expansion of the program that will get rolled out in the coming months
- Aaron Erb, Executive Director from Just Mediation Pittsburgh, have a total of 647 client connection points. That is the result of a lot of collaborative effort to be able to make sure that if a client who is seeking help with an issue with their landlord or property to come to any of our organizations and not be turned away and get referred to the appropriate spot.
- NO Wrong Door Proposition
- If a client comes to JMP and they need advice because the case is already before a judge. This means they are past the point of mediation and that would not serve the best at this point. JMP then can refer cases along to legal services for the advice. The chart shown during the presentation depicted the numbers of cross partnerships. The columns represent the numbers of clients at each organization, but the rows represent who is making referrals to that organization. Collaboration would ensure that a client never gets turned away due to an organization not providing those services but would always get referred to the appropriate contact person. An example was given between their partnership and NLS giving support to the tenants to be able to mediate the best as possible to help mediate and de escalate being proactive rather than reactive. The

partnership with various organizations relying on each other creates a comprehensive prevention strategy.

D. Abby Rae LaCombe presented an eviction filing rate chart that tracks the rates of eviction notices in Allegheny County since 2016. Abby pointed out the number is rising and it is also artificially low. So at present the HACP, Allegheny County Housing Authority and McKeesport housing authority are not filing evictions at the rate that they did pre pandemic. ACHA and HACP both agreed to hold off until all ERAP funds are expended and Allegheny County Housing Authority is working very hard to collaborate with, again, this collaborative and just mediation Pittsburgh to refer tenants to mediation prior to eviction filing. Historically, the housing authorities and Allegheny County represent 30% of eviction filings.

Swain Uber stated eviction prevention has been something that a lot of policymakers and leader political leaders have been working on, but with the Housing Opportunity Fund and the URA have been leading the way and putting forth this kind of commitment to a collaborative project just there in the people in the city of Pittsburgh that the county has seen and began to model their efforts outside of the city on as well. Swain explained that they have been able to collaborate with Philadelphia learned a lot more about their process and how we could adapt eviction prevention efforts here to Allegheny County. Philadelphia eviction defense organizations have a legal helpline which people are connected to various legal services like rent health, Pittsburgh as an eviction diversion program. Philadelphia has more of unified court system where all eviction proceedings go through a single court, which in Allegheny County and City, Pittsburgh, does not have. In the county alone, we have 46 magisterial district courts in the city we have 12. Swain stated in Philadelphia there are teams of attorneys and that cover shifts during eviction court. They provide direct representation with tenant or landlord. They hope to model Allegheny County eviction problem closer to these types of methods in phase 1 by later this year.

#### E. URA Administrative Updates

- The HOF 2021 Annual Report and Audit are now complete and was sent to all Board members by Jahd Burns which included info graphics that was in the annual report.
- 2023 Annual Allocation Plan Update. Jahd stated that for the annual allocation plan, Total Business Package would be conducting the community engagement survey moving forward to provide more accurate feedback from community engagements to improve programs and outreach.

Jahd Burns gave an overview of updated Community Engagement Survey based on board feedback such as question clarifications, as well as how would people like to provide program feedback, adding a segment to notify that this was to get feedback from the community, and suggestion of meeting times. Paul Spradley asked if there were virtual options that might be maybe simpler? Or is the website you feel like user friendly and then leave feedback there?

- The URA conducted several presentations on HAP/+ and the SLF throughout the city during the month of June.
- Update on Development Meeting for HOF AB members – Evan Miller
- Development Project Updates – Evan Miller  
Five Points Ribbon Cutting

\$240,000 HOF Rental Gap Program loan with Observatory Hill Development Corporation  
~\$2.6M Total Project Costs

Six affordable apartment units above four street-facing commercial spaces on Perrysville Ave.  
Gladstone School Closing

9% LIHTC, adaptive reuse of a vacant school building in Hazelwood  
\$664,286 HOF Rental Gap Program funding utilized.  
~\$24M Total Project Costs  
51 new units, eight market rate, 43 affordable.

#### F. Advisory Board Administrative Items

##### HOF Advisory Board Meeting Hybrid Format Options

Day: Monday or Thursday (Thursday only in afternoon)  
Time: 9am, 11am, 1pm, 3pm  
Frequency: Monthly, Bi-Monthly  
Start Date: September, October

#### G. Program Expenditures and Updates

Jahd Burns discussed programming expenditures.

- Down Payment And Closing Cost Assistance
- Legal Assistance Program
- For Sale Development and Rental Gap Programs
- Housing Stabilization Program
- Homeowners Assistance Program

#### H. Announcements

The next HOF Advisory Board Meeting is Thursday, August 4, 2022, at 9:00 am

#### I. Adjournment