

**September 7, 2023 Meeting of the Housing Opportunity Fund Advisory Board for the Urban  
Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh**

**A. Roll Call**

Present: Jamil Bey, Tammy Thompson, Karen Garrett, Mark Masterson, Paul Spradley, Alan Sisco, Adrienne Walnoha, Kellie Ware, Deidra Washington, Derrick Tillman, Deb Gross

Not Present: Lena Andrews, Marcus Reed

URA Staff Present: Jahd Burns, Natalie Lopez, Kyle Novak, Evan Miller, Kristen Leuschen, Alicia Majors, Breanna Benjamin, Victoria Jackson, Rae Ann Driscoll, David Dibernardo, Quianna Wasler

Guest Presenters: Kyle Webster, Swain Uber, Aaron Erb, Ivonne Smith, Jessica Sheldon, Brittany McDonald, Maggie Dudley, Yinka Aganga-Williams, Caley Donovan, Andy Pugh, Guillermo Velazquez

**B. Review and Acceptance of Minutes from August 3, 2023 Meeting - Approved**

Motioned: Paul Spradley

Seconded: Alan Sisco

**C. Public Comment**

None

**D. Housing Stabilization Program Update**

Kyle Webster, *ACTION Housing*

- Allegheny County Housing Stabilization Collaborative (AHSC)
- Five funding sources across Allegheny County providing housing stabilization and eviction intervention (all through DHS)
- FEPP – Funded by the American Rescue Plan
- HSP – Funded by the URA (only source unique to the City and one of the most flexible funds)
- HAP/ FRAP – Funded by PA block grant
- Hello Baby – Private funding
- Housing Stabilization Center
- Total number of applications: 111 Amount of Funding: \$409,208.00
- The ERAP infrastructure has been leveraged to streamline rental assistance in Allegheny County
- AHSC still has four other funding sources that can help many of the people in our pipeline across the County
- HSP has been one of our most flexible funding sources and is the only source unique to the City of Pittsburgh
- AHSC under ACTION will continue until 2025 – so HSP should replenish in July 2024

**E. Legal Assistance Provider Presentation**

Swain Uber, *Community Justice Project*

Aaron Erb, *Just Mediation Pittsburgh*

- Rent Help PGH, Neighborhood Legal Services, Ebony Law, PHDC, Just Mediation PGH
- Preventing evictions saves money:
- Reduces further usage of eviction prevention and other social services by keeping people out of the system at the front end;
- One academic study found the return-on-investment for pandemic rental assistance to be between 208-466%;
- **Latinos face many challenges** when it comes to renting or buying a house, being scammed by social media, abusive landlord behavior, or misunderstanding of communication and lessees, which could result in an eviction;
- Build relationships with landlords and judges to increase favorable outcomes (i.e. continuances, pay and stay) and divert from eviction to mediation;
- Identifying and advocating for resolution for systems-wide issues such as maintaining habitable units, completing interim recertifications, and connecting with Section 8 counselors.

**F. Rental Gap Program Authorization – Standard on Fifth - Approved**

Authorization to enter into a Rental Gap Program loan agreement with the borrower, Standard BC, LLC, or a related in entity in an amount of \$1,000,000 for the new construction of The Standard on Fifth

- 51-unit apartment building
- 40 units affordable to renters between 20% and 60% AMI, 17 units reserved for Project Based Voucher (PBV) tenants
- ADA compliant and visually impaired complaint units
- Construction is anticipated to begin December 2023 and end January 2025.
- Property manager can bring in a case worker to help tenant if they are falling behind eviction is a last resort.
- Housing stability is a top goal

Committed funding sources:

- 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credit
- Pennsylvania Housing Tax Credit PHFA
- Permanent Financing

Derrick Tillman and Karen Garrett acknowledge that they need to abstain from the vote.

Motioned: Tammy Thompson Seconded: Kellie Ware

Abstained: Derrick Tillman, Karen Garrett

**G. Pittsburgh Resettlement Agencies Presentation**

Dr. Yinka Williams, *Acculturation for Justice, Access and Peace Outreach (AJAPO)*

Guillermo Velazquez, *Pittsburgh Hispanic Development Corporation (PHDC)*

Andy Pugh, *Hello Neighbor*

Ivonne Smith-Tapia, *JFCS Refugee & Immigrant Services*

Caley Donovan, *Bethany Christian Services*

- Discussed the work that resettlement agencies do in the Pittsburgh region and provided statistics on immigrant/refugees in the area.
- Outlined the benefits economically of investing in immigrant and refugee populations.
- Proposed New Americans Rental Assistance Fund to help prevent homelessness and to motivate landlords/property management companies to rent to immigrants.

#### **H. URA Administrative Updates**

2024 HOF Annual Allocation Report

John Bonello, *URA*

Jahd Burns, *URA*

2023 HOF Annual Allocation Plan Report

- 2024 HOF annual Allocation Plan Community Feedback Survey report/memo will be sent to everyone, and forms will be sent out for recommendations for annual allocation for next year
- Survey was open from 5.2.23-7.31.23
- 603 responses- 579 English language and 24 Spanish Language Responses
- Next meeting will have presentation of highlights.
- Would like board members come up their budget recommendations so then they can come up with a draft of allocation for the board then in Nov for City Counsel

#### **I. Advisory Board Administrative Updates**

No committee report outs due to lack of time.

#### **J. Adjournment**

Motioned: Jamil Bey

Seconded: Adrienne Walnoha