

REGIONAL HOUSING COUNCIL

Wednesday June 23rd, 2021 Meeting Minutes

ATTENDEES:

Lacey: Carolyn Cox, Rick Walk, John Koch

Tumwater: Michael Althaus, John Doan, Brad Medrud

Olympia: Jim Cooper, Dani Madrone, Keith Stahley, Cary Retlin

Thurston County: Carolina Mejia, Ramiro Chavez, Tom Webster, Keylee Marineau, Jacinda Steltjes, Schelli Slaughter

South County: None

Public: None

Meeting began at 4:00 pm.

Cooling Center Announcement: Thurston County and City of Olympia with partnering service providers will provide a cooling center at 108 State Ave NW from noon until 6pm Saturday – Monday.

Agenda Item 1: Agenda approved

Agenda Item 2: Public Comment.

Peter Cook is a team member from the Faith Alliance for Tiny Houses. They are promoting tiny homes as a short term solution for the houseless community. The larger goal is to help community end homelessness, happy to see jurisdictions is working with Community Solutions.

Lisa Gilotti gave an update on Shower Power, providing shower services to the homeless community 10am – 4pm Tuesday on west side of Olympia and Saturday at Capital Christian.

Agenda Item 3: Minutes from May: Motion and second, all approved.

Agenda Item 4: Community Solutions update

Keylee gave an update: since the last RHC meeting the Community Solutions staff came to the HHH meeting and presented their program. They received some questions from the housing providers including how they will communicate, how will the relationship between providers and Community Solutions work. Area providers have given their support. The next steps with Community Solutions include a meeting in July, agreement to be signed, and onboarding in early fall.

Discussion and questions followed. The parameters and specifics of the agreement are yet to be determined. Ramiro asked for a summary of the resources needed for this project. Community Solutions would need one entity to contract with and will need County staff time to work with Community Solutions on the data portion of the work. Discussion followed regarding the need for the RHC to have a regional resource discussion prior to the County signing the agreement, to determine what resources are needed and being contributed to this project. The next Community Solutions meeting is July 12th, but prior to finalizing and signing any agreement RHC needs to review the agreement.

Agenda Item 5: Thurston Thrives and the Housing Action Team

Jim gave some background: the RHC has been connecting with the HAT both at HAT meetings and talking with HAT members to get insight on a more formal RHC/HAT connection.

Keylee gave background on the Thurston Thrives (TT) and HAT conversation over past few months. TT has come to the HAT on a few recent meetings, and Doug Mah presented current TT goals and priorities. TT is a community initiative to improve the health and well-being of the residents of Thurston County. Additionally, in response to the death of George Floyd, TT has modified their priorities to address racial equity gaps in Thurston County. TT identified some measure of success for closing the health equity gap: infant mortality rates, premature births, depression in 8th grade, overall fair or poor health. The HAT has funded mandates that they must meet, including the Homeless Crisis Response Plan (HCRP) which includes objectives required by Commerce. Commerce also added addressing racial equity in 2019. The HAT had questions for TT about how TT arrived at their measures and if the HAT is also expected to measure these health equity goals.

The HAT has taken beginning steps to address racial equity at their meetings, including a land acknowledgement and discussion of white supremacy norms and antidotes at every meeting. The HAT is also looking at strategies of the 5 year plan regarding racial equity, they did not have those strategies vetted by BIPOC when the HCRP was finalized. Discussion follows about inviting the Squaxin Island Tribe Chair to come and speak to the HAT, and perhaps the Nisqually Tribe. Consideration of adding a Land Acknowledgement for the beginning of the RHC meeting.

RHC executive team suggests an RHC retreat that involves the HAT executive team, to discuss and establish how they can work together going forward, and define their relationship. Does the RHC want to formally reach out to the HAT and ask their Executive Team to work with the RHC executive team on a joint retreat. Carolina recommends that the RHC have a purpose already lined up for the HAT, have an outline, would be an easier path so ideas don't get misconstrued. Carolyn adds that she serves on the TT, and adds that the goals were chosen in part because they are measurable. Carolyn recommends conveying the RHC's confidence in the HAT's work and ask to partner with them with the HAT in an advisory role.

Keith asks about the role of TT in this conversation? Is it more appropriate to approach the TT executive committee first? Ramiro adds that it would be very important to come to a retreat with ideas on their role, and then establish clear roles, responsibilities, and expectations. Discussion follows on what the RHC sees as roles of the RHC and the HAT. The HCRP is the guide for future projects and needs, and the HAT is the executor of the activities, may just need a formal communication agreement to disseminate information between RHC and HAT. The HAT is like the planning commission and RHC is sort of like a Council.

RHC executive team will work on this idea and circulate any request letter before reaching out to HAT.

Agenda Item 6: Technical Team working group updates

The Permanent Supportive Housing workgroup has been formed and met last week. They are working to develop a strategy. In terms of funding, the County has learned that they will receive \$3M HOME American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding with some new rules and a broader scope. Funds will need to be spent by 2030. State set aside of funds for rapid capital acquisition is upcoming, and expect a NOFA

in August to apply for these funds. Discussion follows on capital acquisition: Emphasis on being ready to take advantage of the rapid acquisition funds, discussion of the expense of purchase will include additional costs such as renovation, ongoing building expenses, and services long-term. Discussion about how to staff this type of housing and services, how to effectively and safely operate a hotel as a shelter. Having ownership of a property allows and facilitates development, even if all of the resources and planning are not finalized.

Agenda Item 7: Good of the Order

Dani added information on planning a transfer development rights (TDR) meeting this summer, an important housing issue, to increase density and preserve non-development areas.

Lacey Community Based homelessness task force had their first in-person meeting. Hoping to have draft plan in September. Will ask RHC for feedback on their plan.

Rent assistance program update, CAC and CYS have, since April, served 643 households, with 673 households still in process. They have paid out over \$4M in rent and \$160K in utility assistance. CAC has grown their team to 8 people who take applications, and working to expand the number of partner agencies.

Olympia passed its Housing Action Plan.

Agenda Item 8: Upcoming Meetings

Meeting Adjourned: 5:30 pm

Next Meeting: July 28th, 2021, 4:00 pm