

# Regional Housing Council

**Agenda:** Thursday March 18, 2021 (4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.) (via Zoom)

**Jim Cooper: Chair, Carolina Mejia: Vice-Chair**

#	TIME	AGENDA ITEM	LEAD	ACTION
1	4:30 – 4:35	Welcome and Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check-in</li> <li>• Review Agenda/Meeting Purpose</li> </ul>	Jim	
2	4:35 – 4:45	Public Comment	Jim	Information
3	4:45 – 4:50	Approval of February minutes	Jim	Action
4	4:50 – 4:55	Proposed change to meeting day/time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday at 4:30</li> <li>• 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday at 4:00</li> </ul>	Jim	Action
5	4:55 – 5:25	Thurston Regional Planning Council Housing Needs Assessment/Action Plan <a href="https://www.trpc.org/1002/Housing-Action-Plan">https://www.trpc.org/1002/Housing-Action-Plan</a>	TRPC	Information
6	5:25 – 5:30	ILA Update - 1406	Tom	Information
7	5:30 – 5:35	RFP Update	Tom	Information
8	5:35 – 5:45	Safe Parking/Scattered Site Update	Keith	Action
9	5:45 - 5:55	Communication Plan	Meghan	Information
10	5:55 – 6:00	Good of the Order <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality Inn</li> </ul>	Jim	Information
11	6:00	Upcoming Meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next RHC Meeting TBD Location: Zoom meeting</li> </ul>		Information

# REGIONAL HOUSING COUNCIL

Thursday February 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes

## **ATTENDEES:**

Lacey: Carolyn Cox, Kelly Adams, Rick Walk, Scott Spence

Tumwater: Michael Althaus, Joan Cathey, Brad Medrud, John Doan

Olympia: Jim Cooper, Keith Stahley, Cary Retlin

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

South County: JW Foster

Public: No speakers

Meeting began at 4:30 pm.

**Agenda Item 1:** Agenda approved

**Agenda Item 2:** Public Comment, none

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

### **Agenda Item 4: Vote for Chair and Vice-Chair**

Jim acknowledged that the final ILA is signed. This election term will start in February for 12 months, so future elections will be after any new Council and Commission positions are filled.

Jim Cooper nominated for Chair. No other nominations. All approved, Jim Cooper will be Chair for 2021.

Reminder that chair or Vice Chair needs to be a representative from the Fiscal Agent.

Vote to approve Carolina Mejia as Vice Chair, all approve, Vice Chair for 2021 will be Commissioner Mejia.

### **Agenda Item 5: RHC ILA Amendment- add 1406 Language**

Tom gave an update on the ILA, the plan is to amend the ILA to add the 1406 allocation. RHC had planned to have a separate ILA for the 1406 funds, however the legal opinion is to incorporate 1406 into the existing ILA. A revised ILA is included in meeting packet. Legal counsel from each jurisdiction have reviewed the revised language. Scott Spence raised a concern about the County Commissioners having final decision-making authority over 1406 funds. He recommended that the 1406 funds be treated similarly to the Human Services Fund. Ramiro clarified that the County is the fiduciary agent and that the ILA original language addresses that, the Board cannot delegate funding decisions as the fiduciary agent. Following additional discussion, it was recommended to have managers and tech team discuss and bring solution/recommendation back to RHC.

### **Agenda Item 6: RFP**

Tom gave an update on the RFP: the Funding Team met last week to discuss and review the RFP recommendations. Goal for the RHC is to review the recommendations from the Funding Team and get any final decisions and comments.

HSF Fund: 2019 tax revenue, \$272K to award, to support basic needs activities.

Affordable Housing and Homeless Services RFP: includes state CHG and HEN and 2163 dollars. Tom reviewed Funding priorities as recommended by the HAT and RHC Funding Team, for uncommitted funds. Committed funds include set asides for Coordinated Entry, Housing Basic Needs, Cold and Hazardous Weather shelters, and new this year is a 5% allocation to By and For Organizations. Not included in the RFP are funds for the Point in Time Count, Emergency Fund, and a Consultant for Racial Equity Technical Assistance.

Tom asked Commissioner Mejia to share her proposal to add an additional set-aside. Commissioner Mejia requested a set aside for senior assistance for \$100K, to assist low income and houseless seniors. Michael asked for definition of Set-aside, for example if they set aside \$100K but do not get a satisfactory request for the \$100K, do they have to award it? Tom clarified that agencies would apply for these set-asides that are included in the RFP, but language in the RFP states that the County is not obligated to award these funds if no qualifying application is received. Tom clarified that adding the Senior Set aside reduces the total of uncommitted funds available by \$100K.

Tom gave a brief overview of 2163 fund balance, including projections vs actual for 2020, collections are much higher than what they projected, have roughly \$1.5M in additional 2163 funds. Tom asked if RHC wants to allocate all of the available funds this year, or if they want to reserve some of the funds for an RHC identified project. After discussion, RHC members agreed on option 2 to hold onto some funds for an RHC project. Tom clarified that they can choose to award more when they finalize awards in May. He also clarified that the \$3M does include the set-aside, and the intention is these will be 2-year awards.

For Affordable Housing Capital projects, we will have around \$1.4M to award. The Pipeline typically identifies 2 projects, with formal applications submitted in the funding year. There is one open space for a new capital project. Tom gave an overview of the priorities developed by the Affordable Housing Team and Housing Action Team. Also have a Request for Information for Capital 2024 projects.

The Review Team will review application and score them, and make recommendations to the RHC funding group, then bring their recommendations to the full RHC. One change in scoring proposed by the Funding group is to increase the score for supporting vulnerable and historically disadvantaged populations. For the RFI scoring, RHC discussed scoring for number of units created, leverage, strength of development team for 2024 pipeline projects.

HSF and Housing Basic Needs applications will be reviewed and scored by the elected members of the RHC Funding Group. For Homeless services and capital projects, a Review Team made up of staff from jurisdictions and TRPC will review and score applications.

Questions: why do elected officials score two types of applications? Answer: The HHSC wanted to take on that role, it is a carryover from the CIP and HHSC review process. Carolyn added that the HSF are local funds, so as the representatives from the jurisdictions, they felt they should decide how it is spent. Joan adds that they had a few years where they did have outside reviewers but to avoid any conflict of interest with reviewers, they decided that electeds should review these applications. Question about

making HSF and Cold/Hazardous weather 2-year grants so the RFP process happens every other year. Tom added that planning for cold weather is linked to opening of 2828 Martin Way, and it is unknown if that shelter will be open next winter, but they do hope to move this to a 2-year award in the future.

Motion to approve as presented with modification to add the \$100K for senior projects, and option 2 for additional 2163 funds, moved and second, all approved.

#### **Agenda Item 7: Safe Parking Update**

Keith gave an update, the County and City and tech team are looking to start a scattered site program in place of safe parking program. Focusing on site management with more garbage collection, sanitation services, working with LOTT to take the RV waste, enhancing case management.

#### **Agenda Item 8: Communication Planning**

Recently staff have seen social media conversations indicating that the general public does not know what the County and Cities are doing regarding homelessness. Staff is working to develop a plan to communicate to numerous outlets what the County and the Cities are doing. Could they add more information to ILA Press Release? Working on revising that draft and will circulate to the RHC. Information would focus on things that have happened or are happening currently.

#### **Agenda Item 9: Good of the Order**

Schelli gave an update, vaccine supply is limiting the ability to provide vaccine to houseless population, but County hopes that future weeks will have increased vaccine supply. Discussion followed regarding vaccine supply and how residents due for a 2<sup>nd</sup> dose are notified.

Keith gave an update on Community Solutions.

Keylee gave an update on the February Hazardous Weather event: First Christian added extra beds and St Mike's sheltered roughly 22 – 24 people. City of Olympia's Olympia Center opened a warming center. PiPE put out extra cold weather supplies to encampments.

Homeless Housing Hub is hosting the annual Homeless Housing Award, will be honoring every shelter and outreach agency for their work in the last year. St Mike's Parish will be receiving the Anna Schlecht legacy award.

Lacey's Open House on Homelessness is open for anyone to provide comments or feedback.

Future Meeting proposed change day and time, survey has identified the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month from 4 – 5:30 as an alternate meeting day and time.

#### **Agenda Item 10: Upcoming Meetings**

Meeting Adjourned: 6:00 pm

Next Meeting: March 18, 2021, 4:30 pm

## Scattered Site Management Pilot Project– Proposed Approach

**Request:** The Regional Housing Council (RHC) jurisdictions commit to supporting and funding a scattered site safe parking and encampment management project as described in this Pilot Project Description for a period of at least one year, and if determined to be successful, in future years.

**Next Steps:** If the RHC approves moving forward with the scattered site pilot project, next steps include:

- Thurston County initiating procurement process to obtain a site governance and case management contractor.
- Thurston County and City of Olympia, amending its existing hygiene interlocal agreement, as needed to provide funding for the site management.
- City of Olympia taking action to implement the site management tasks.
- The Technical Team continues to expand this document to work out additional details that forms the basis of a memorandum of understanding or similar document that RHC jurisdictions would sign, if they decide to opt in to the project at a future date.

### Purpose and Goals for Scattered Site Pilot Project

1. Assist those living in vehicles or encampments to successfully move into permanent housing solutions using trauma-informed and harm-reduction principles and through utilizing the full spectrum of sheltering and housing options available in Thurston County.
2. Reduce the environmental and community impacts that can occur from people living in situations not fit for human habitation.
3. Track outcomes to determine the effectiveness of the pilot program in addressing items 1 and 2.
4. Implement a model that can be utilized in any member jurisdiction of the RHC.
5. Implement a model that can be scaled up to support additional sites, including the operation of a suitable, long-term safe parking location.

### Key Components of Proposed Program

The scattered site management project approach has two key components to support people living in vehicles and living in encampments. They are:

- **Site Management.** Site management involves tasks related to the property and communication with agencies or persons that have an interest in the property that are not residents of the site. Tasks include, but are not limited to:
  - Procure vendor and oversee regular garbage collection and disposal service at a level to prevent an accumulation of debris.
  - Procure vendor to oversee hygiene services, including portable toilets and hand-washing stations.
  - Vendor and manage off-site storage, as needed.
  - Obtain RV septic services, if possible.
  - Communicate with private landowners, state agencies, local agencies, and community members who have an interest in the property. Undertake conflict resolution, as needed between these entities and residents, as needed.
  - Ensure public and private sidewalks and rights-of-way are clear and passable.
  - Maintain open and clear communication and coordination with Site Governance and Case Management staff.
  - Coordinate with the Site Governance and Case Management contractees to maintain an accurate and current account of residents.
  - Clarify policies and enforcement practices related to people living in vehicles and communicate that to all parties.

- **Site Governance and Case Management.** Site governance and case management is focused on supporting the residents of each site. Site governance supports self-governance to reduce conflict and establish consistent accountability. Case management includes working with individuals one-on-one to address their needs, and to support them in finding permanent housing solutions and other supportive services. Tasks include, but are not limited to:
  - Work with residents to establish and enforce codes of conduct and accountability measure amongst residents. Support residents with conflict resolution efforts between residents.
  - Provide housing search and tenancy support to each household. Utilize Coordinated Entry and Homeless Management Information Services (HMIS) to facilitate and support housing placement.
  - Support housing barrier removal including referral and support to behavioral health or medical services, legal supports (like ID attainment, referrals to legal services), support setting up appointments and reminders and, when needed, provide support at relevant appointments.
  - Support individuals accessing treatment services for drug and alcohol dependency and other behavioral and mental health issues.
  - Assist individuals with moving, transportation, vehicle repairs and other forms of material support that assist individuals in finding alternative living arrangements, as funding allows.
  - Contractor will establish 'by name' list of campers at sites to track progress and to support site management.
  - Maintain open and clear communication and coordinate with Site Management staff.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

County Responsibilities. Using funding resources under the direction of the Regional Housing Council:

- Procure the services of a contractor(s) to carry out the “site governance and case management” component of the model.
- Manage the site governance/case management contract and ensure open communication between the case management contractor and the jurisdictions site management staff.
- Provide funding to city/jurisdiction to support the cost of the site management services. The RHC contribution will contribute up to a maximum amount in three categories:
  - \$20,000 for initial site clean-up to establish a standard of cleanliness that can be maintained;
  - \$50,000 per year for regular service, including garbage removal, hygiene services, off-site storage and septic services; and
  - \$10,000 for one-time emergency or urgent needs that are necessary to protect health and safety.
- Coordinate and communicate with the site management and jurisdiction staff.

Participating City/Jurisdiction responsibilities

- Identify the site(s) for support under this program.
- Procure and manage the necessary site management services.
- Provide the staff resources necessary to support site management activities.
- Coordinate and communicate with the site governance and case management contractor(s) and County staff overseeing the contractor(s).

## **Proposed Pilot Project**

- Identify 3-4 locations to implement the project. Initial locations are:
  - Vehicles along Ensign Rd
  - Encampment off Deschutes Parkway
  - Encampments off Wheeler Rd (Nickerson and Wheeler)

- Thurston County and City of Olympia jointly implement pilot project.
- Length of pilot is 12 months, with a review after 6 months to determine if changes to the program are needed. Report to RHC on any changes to the program and outcome of the review.

### **Funding Commitments**

- Thurston County has pledged approximately \$530,000 of existing resources. Of this amount, up to \$150,000 is to be used to support site management costs.
- City of Olympia commits to staff the site management task and cover site management services beyond the \$150,000 pledge from the County.
- This proposal requests that the RHC commits to providing up to \$500,000 of 2163 funding to fully fund the program for one year.

### **Long-Term Implementation Plan**

Anticipating that the pilot project will be successful and the RHC will want to continue the project beyond the 1-year initial timeframe, the following steps will be taken:

- Develop a Memorandum of Understanding amongst all RHC member jurisdictions to detail the expectations and commitments of the RHC and all jurisdictions, based on whether a scattered site location is within a jurisdiction's boundaries.
- Explore additional sites where people living in vehicles may safely park and be supported by this program, such as safe parking undertaken by faith communities or at a site controlled by a jurisdiction.
- Determine a cost range to implement the model per site, based on the size of the site.
- Conduct a review of the project after 6 and 12 months to determine what is working and areas for improvement.

### **What Does Success Look Like?**

Recognizing that there is not a baseline of reliable data to measure a change in outcomes, the following are indicators of success:

- Residents of sites are entered into the Coordinated Entry system.
- At least some residents successfully move into permanent housing solutions.
- There is a visible reduction of trash and debris and the site has hygiene services available that are being used appropriately.
- Sidewalks and rights-of-way are clear and passable by motorized and non-motorized vehicles and pedestrians.
- There is a reduction of conflict between residents.
- Site numbers of campers are quantified and monitored.
- There are fewer complaints from the public and fewer calls to law enforcement.
- Reduce the frequency of illicit discharge of sewerage into the stormwater system or critical areas.

It is also important to recognize what the pilot project cannot be expected to achieve. These include:

- An overall reduction in the number of people living in vehicles or encampments.
- Finding all or most residents a permanent housing solution within a defined period.
- Quantifying numbers of people in camps (identities).
- Reducing public complaints.
- Reducing calls to law enforcement and emergency services.