

REGIONAL HOUSING COUNCIL

Wednesday August 24th, 2022 Meeting Minutes

ATTENDEES:

Lacey: Carolyn Cox, Scott Spence, Rick Walk, John Koch

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

Olympia: Rich Hoy, Darian Lightfoot

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

South County: None

Public: None

Meeting began at 4:00 pm.

Agenda Item 1: Agenda approved, motion and second

Agenda Item 2: Public Comment - none

Agenda Item 3: Minutes from August 10th meeting, motion and second, approved

Agenda Item 4: Right of Way Update

Keylee gave an update, the County has executed contracts with OlyMAP and Safeplace, providers are working together to strategize about shelter/housing options for clients. Current efforts are focused on Pacific and Martin Way interchanges. They will next focus on downtown/Henderson interchanges. Darian added that they are focused on Franz Anderson and getting the procurement expedited. Jacinda added that LIHI is working to close the hotel purchase earlier than the January date.

Tom indicated that the main conversation for tonight is regarding the hotel acquisition. The County has been notified that the state plans to contract directly with LIHI for the hotel acquisition. This was not the intent of the proposal that was submitted and they have communicated that this is not the desire of the County. They have requested a meeting with Commerce to discuss their concerns including losing leverage, how the property will be used, and what clients will be housed. County Manager Chavez added that in the long term his concern is the County housing capacity. He requested that the RHC write a letter to the State regarding the RHC concerns about the change in the agreement.

Discussion followed regarding waiting until the County and Commerce discuss and get questions answered, being able to answer questions and concerns from the community, and an equal partnership with the State is mutually beneficial. Discussion also included local control being crucial, acknowledgement that staff worked very hard on the proposal, and it is a regional effort. County Manager Chavez added that they need to emphasize that it is an important asset to the community.

Agenda Item 5: RHC Governance Structure

Tom gave context, the technical team has been working on this since the retreat, they have worked with the HAT workgroup, and the County and City administrators and managers. They are proposing an

interim structure that can be stood up immediately, as they work on the long term structure. Tom gave an overview of the goals and guiding principles of the governance structure. Tom added that they have broad consensus but not universal agreement on every element of the proposal. One proposal is that representatives from the HAT would be included as a non-voting members of the RHC, this is likely a point for discussion. They added a more formal structure to the RHC administration. The Office of Housing and Homeless Prevention would continue to be the staff support, with the addition of 2 staff: for affordable housing and communication. They are proposing to create 2 advisory boards, one for affordable housing and one for homeless services, and Tom included an overview of funds each board would oversee and roles of the boards. Also included is development of a Lived Experience steering committee which would coordinate with both boards. The Tech team would work to make sure the recommendations from the boards are in compliance with policies, procedures. Tom gave an overview of how the RHC funding process would operate, and how policy development would happen within the RHC, and roles and responsibilities.

Councilmember Althaus asked about the Advisory boards, would there be any electeds serving on those? Tom indicated that this is to be discussed, but current thought is to not have electeds on the boards, modeled after the Olympia Home Fund board. Discussion followed regarding pros of having electeds on these boards. Councilmember Althaus asked about policy development, does RHC mission and goals set the initial policy ideas, how does policy development initiate? Policy development could start with the RHC direction, or from Board suggestion, or from the HAT, there would likely be multiple paths. Discussion follows regarding possible need for strategic planning to guide policy development.

Chair Cox asked about timing of the funding cycle and adoption of new governance, how might this impact the next funding cycle? Staff would need general direction to move forward to develop advisory boards in September and return in October with more details for operating policies and procedures for the boards, then solicit board membership in October, with goal of boards set for first meeting in late November. This would allow time to develop funding priorities in time for next funding cycle. Darian gave an overview of the Olympia Home fund. Discussion follows regarding the overall governance plan, RHC membership being limited to elected officials, contribution of subject matter experts, and roles of each, including clear separation of decision-making members vs. guiding and discussion members. Discussion includes composition of the Boards and if electeds should be included on the Boards, non-elected and non-voting participants of the RHC offer input and information during RHC meetings as needed.

Chair Cox asked if there is concurrence that regardless of the composition of the RHC and Boards, only electeds will have voting membership. All concur.

Agenda Item 6: Technical Team updates

Keylee gave an update on Built for Zero, they are meeting with their cohort mentor next week. The HEN program is now contracted with Livestories to issue payments, Pipe is handling case management, and County staff are providing assistance and communication with Livestories and PiPE. They have issued the RFP for a new provider for HEN and Rapid Rehousing, as well as new rent assistance funding. The RFP closes August 31. Tom added that for the rent assistance, the TRAP/ERAP rent assistance program is ending, the new RFP will start a new rent assistance program that will be smaller but long term rent assistance that did not exist prior to Covid. Question, is there concern that people will fall through the cracks with TRAP ending? Yes staff is hearing that there is still significant need for rent assistance in the

community that the new rent assistance may not be able to provide, especially with rents increasing. This is happening with HEN clients as well, many HEN clients have received rent increases, there are roughly 900 eligible HEN clients in the County and they are serving about 250 people.

Agenda Item 7: Good of the Order

Darian gave an update for City of Olympia, the groundbreaking for Family Support Center's new housing was on August 11th. The goal is to lease up the 62 units by the end of next year. Olympia's tenant protection ordinances passed, first ordinance limits the amount of pet deposit, second ordinance limits move in costs, third ordinance is regarding rent increases and increased notification to tenants. The County, City of Olympia, and Housing Authority are working on an assessment of fair housing.

Councilmember Althaus indicated that Tumwater will have tenant protections topics on their agenda in October.

Adjourned: 5:20pm

Next Meeting: September 14th, 4:00 pm