

REGIONAL HOUSING COUNCIL

Wednesday March 8th, 2023, Meeting Minutes

ATTENDEES:

Lacey: Carolyn Cox, Ryan Andrews

Tumwater: Michael Althaus, Brad Medrud, Erica Smith-Erickson

Olympia: Dani Madrone, Darian Lightfoot, Jacinda Steltjes

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

Meeting began at 4:00 pm.

Agenda Item 1: Agenda approved, motion and second

Agenda Item 2: Minutes from February 15th meeting, motion and second, approved.

Agenda Item 3: Advisory Board Charter

The Technical Team made edits to the Advisory Board Charter as requested at the last RHC meeting. Tom shared a version with the track changes to review with the group. For the Affordable Housing Board, language was changed ensuring that a resident or representative of Lacey, Tumwater, Yelm and unincorporated Thurston County will each have a seat available to them. If a resident or representative from these jurisdictions does not fill their seat, that seat will remain open until someone does. Language was also added to ensure each of these jurisdictions are being pro-active in filling their jurisdiction's seat. Similar edits were made to the Homeless Services Bard.

Carolyn suggested changing language stating "Two members shall be active members and represent the Thurston Thrives Housing Action Team" to "Two members shall be current participants of the Thurston Thrives Housing Action Team, or subsequent organization."

Ramiro was concerned about the use of the word "shall" due to its aggressive tone. Since this is not a code or law he mentioned "shall" feels too imposing for a charter. Keylee explained the use of the word shall came from the RHC retreat. It was used with the intention to keep the voices of those with lived experience and members of the HAT a focus when filling these boards. Ramiro suggested using "must" vs "shall." Michael mentioned that "must" and "shall" are interchangeable from a legal perspective but agrees that "must" sounds softer.

The group agreed to making these additional changes. Dani put forth a motion to approve the charter as discussed. The group unanimously agreed to approve the charter with new changes.

Agenda Item 4: Fair Housing Presentation

HUD requires that entities receiving funding create plans for how they intend to spend their funds as well as Fair Housing Plans. Fair Housing Plans are meant to ensure projects being funded don't continue, or worsen, segregation, discrimination, housing problems, or other disparities. These plans are done every 5 years alongside jurisdiction's consolidated planning processes. This year the City of Olympia,

Thurston County, and the Housing Authority of Thurston County worked together on this report and Christa Lenssen shared their findings with the group.

Public comment is a part of this process. The Housing Authority will be holding Public Comment on March 23rd, City of Olympia will hold theirs March 28th, and Thurston County will hold theirs April 18th.

Some high-level findings of this report showed people of color, people with disabilities, people who are transgender, and single mothers are all at higher risk of displacement, they are more likely to be renters and are cost-burdened at higher rates. Individuals within Thurston County are most likely to experience and report discrimination based on source of income, disability, race, and family status. Additionally, Thurston County is lacking accessible and affordable housing units for those with disabilities. According to community survey respondents the top two community priorities around housing are more affordable housing or financial assistance for low-income individuals and families as well as increasing access to homeownership.

Upon reviewing these findings 6 goals were created to address the issues individuals in Thurston County are facing around housing. These include:

1. Increase affordable housing and provide assistance for low-income individuals and families
2. Increase access to homeownership
3. Increase housing in a variety of types and sizes to assist various family sizes and needs
4. Reduce barriers to accessing housing
5. Increase fair housing and source of income discrimination education, outreach, and enforcement
6. Improve environmental health in housing units

Agenda Item 5: Tech Team Updates

Tech team provided a proposal for future RHC meetings some of which would be in person. In person meetings would be hybrid so that the public could attend virtually. However, the expectation would be that RHC members do attend in person. Tech Team suggested that as the group is working through the RHC process they continue to meet twice a month virtually. In May they suggested the two-hour meeting be the first meeting of the month, not the second, and that this be in person to approve RHC Funding recommendations. The second meeting in May would be 1 hour, and they would meet virtually. Then in June the RHC would go back to meeting once a month with every other month being in person.

Additionally, they are suggesting moving the November and December meetings to the 2nd Wednesday of both months to avoid Thanksgiving and Christmas conflicts.

The group agreed to review and approve this at the March 22nd meeting

LIHI is working with the City of Lacey to do remediation on Maple Court. They plan to start remediation this month and expect it will take roughly 2-3 months. They hope to start moving individuals from the right of ways in June.

The Franz Anderson project continues to move forward. Olympia hosted a site tour that had good turnout. There is a Q&A being hosted on March 15th. Applications for a developer are due March 27 and

the review and scoring process will take place March 29th- April 10th. Once they have a developer selected, they will update all councils

Agenda Item 6: Good of the Order

Dani requested an update on how the Lived Experience Steering Committee is going for a future meeting.

Tumwater approved the 12-year multifamily housing tax exemption. This includes 20% affordable housing units.

Meeting Adjourned: 5:01pm

Next Meeting: March 22nd, 4:00 pm