

# REGIONAL HOUSING COUNCIL

Wednesday May 10th, 2023 Meeting Minutes

## **ATTENDEES:**

Lacey: Carolyn Cox, Ryan Andrews, Jennifer Adams

Tumwater: Michael Althaus, Joan Cathey, Brad Medrud

Olympia: Dani Madrone, Darian Lightfoot, Jacinda Steltjes

Yelm: Brian Hess, Gary Cooper

Thurston County: Carolina Mejia, David Bayne, Tom Webster, Keylee Marineau, Elisa Sparkman

Affordable Housing Advisory Board: Grace Lee

Meeting began at 4:00 pm.

**Agenda Item 1:** Agenda approved, motion, and second.

**Agenda Item 2:** Minutes from April 26th meeting, motion and second, approved.

**Agenda Item 3:** Affordable Housing Advisory Board Funding Recommendations

Tom updated the group that at the last meeting Kendra Cherry was introduced as the Affordable Housing Advisory Board Chair. However, due to work conflicts she will be unable to fill that roll so Grace, as Vice Chair, will be representing the group for this meeting.

Grace presented the three applications they received for Capital funding and their proposed projects. These included an application from Habitat for Humanity for their Yelm Longmire project where they are building townhouse duplexes, and then two applications from HomesFirst. One was for the acquisition of 721 O'Farrell Street and the other was for a Rental Housing Property Acquisition.

There was a total of \$1,175,220 to award, the board decided to meet each projects funding request which totaled \$1,075,000. This left \$100,220 of 2060 funding which the board recommended carrying over to the summer Local Home Fund RFP.

Tom clarified that the representatives from Habitat and HomesFirst who sit on this board, excused themselves from this discussion and did not take part in the decision-making process.

Tom requested that the RHC move to approve these recommendations. Michael put forth a motion to approve, Dani seconded, approved.

**Agenda Item 4:** Homeless Services Advisory Board Recommendations

Keylee presented the recommendations for who will facilitate the Lived Experience Steering Committee and Basic Needs.

The board chose to recommend Interfaith Works as the facilitator, funding them at \$50,000. For the Basic Needs applications there was \$561,260 in asks and only \$333,323 to award.

The only program not recommended for funding was Oly Camp Kitties to service cats living in encampments. It was determined that this would not be an eligible program. Michael asked what services SideWalk's program would be providing. Keylee explained this would help fund their Ride Home program as well as Rent Assistance. Joan was concerned that the Other Bank is only being funded at half their ask and was curious if there was a reason why. Keylee explained that the board decided programs that scored above 80 would receive their full ask unless it was a larger ask, in which case they would receive 80%. Programs that received scores below 80 would receive 80% of their ask except for Haven House which the board felt strongly awarding their minimum ask. Dani asked if all these projects had and received their minimum ask? Keylee answered no. Dani expressed concern if these projects can be successful if they aren't being funded at their minimum request. She would like a little more detail around these program descriptions and what their minimum asks are before she is comfortable approving or making a recommendation. Carolyn asked if this was the full funding source for these programs. Keylee said it depends on the agency and services they are providing.

Carolyn asked how the group wanted to proceed with these recommendations. Michael stated he wanted to honor their recommendations and is okay with approving and moving this forward. However, if the RHC decides to send these back for further review, he suggests sending them back with specific things to review. Carolina recommended having these sent back for further review and Brian and Dani both agreed. Tom mentioned that since SideWalk's application included Rent Assistance it should not be considered in this funding source and is more appropriate as a Housing Basic Needs application which would free up funds to go towards other programs that would better qualify so that is something the board can further review. Carolyn proposed they approve the recommendation for the LESC and hold off on approving the Basic Needs recommendations until some of the questions from the discussion tonight are answered. She put forth a motion to approve the recommendation for Interfaith Works to facilitate the LESC and be funded at \$50,000, Dani seconded, approved.

Keylee and Tom wanted to be sure that the RHC was okay with board members approving overall funding packages for different funding sources that may include their agencies if they aren't participating in direct funding decision for their agency specifically. The group agreed that is fine.

#### **Agenda Item 5: Homeless Services Funding and Process for Awards**

Keylee explained that because of the volume of applications the Homeless Services Advisory Board split the applications into two review periods, prioritizing programs that start July 1. Those were reviewed on May 1<sup>st</sup> and recommendations are being presented at this meeting. On May 15<sup>th</sup> the board will meet again to discuss programs that begin September 1<sup>st</sup>, and they will bring recommendations to the RHC for those at a later date.

In addition to the volume of requests, there is currently a significant funding deficit to be able to fund these programs. Commerce has stated that they have put funding aside to help backfill some of this deficit but at this time we don't know how much funding they will make available to Thurston County. Postponing review and funding recommendation of these applications will hopefully allow Commerce time to make further funding decisions so there is a better idea of how much will be available.

#### **Agenda Item 6: RHC Stipend Policy and Process**

Darian explained that the City of Olympia has signed all advisory board members on as sub-contractors. They are only able to make payments to these members per meeting they attend. Currently they are not able to pay per application being reviewed. Tom presented alternative options which include contracting with a third party to pay those stipends. Another option would be for the county to take on these payments, and though there is currently no policy for the county to pay stipends these funds could be paid out of the local home fund. Michael wanted to clarify if this is a stipend in addition to meeting stipends or instead of meeting stipends as well as what the rate to review would be? Tom answered this would be stipends for both meetings and applications, but he doesn't currently have a rate for the application stipend. Dani put forth a motion for the county to direct their staff to explore options to pay stipends to Regional Housing Council Advisory Committees members for meetings and grant applications reviews either in house, at the county, or through a third-party provider. Her motion was seconded by Michael, approved.

**Agenda Item 7: Good of the Order**

Gary shared Yelm has their Housing Action Plan in final draft form, and they will be taking it to their planning commission and council for approval.

Darian mentioned the Franz Anderson project continues to move forward and Jacinda has been meeting with the different jurisdictions to update them on what's going on.

Carolyn and Ryan welcomed Jennifer to their team as Lacey's new Housing Coordinator.

Elisa gave an update on what she's working on from a communications standpoint for the RHC. She has been working on an outline for a community wide newsletter around Housing. Which she hopes to present to the group soon. She also encouraged everyone to reach out to her about any specific communication asks they may have.

Jacinda shared that the Affordable Housing Advisory Board will begin looking at funding priorities for the Home fund and 1406 RFP coming up.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 5:32 pm

**Next Meeting:** May 24, 2023, 4:00 pm