

REGIONAL HOUSING COUNCIL

Wednesday December 13th, 2023, Meeting Minutes

ATTENDEES:

Lacey: Carolyn Cox and Ryan Andrews

Tumwater: Michael Althaus, Joan Cathey, and Brad Medrud

Olympia: Dani Madrone, Clark Gilman, Darian Lightfoot, and Jacinda Steltjes

Yelm: Gary Cooper

Thurston County: Carolina Mejia, Tom Webster, Keylee Marineau, Elisa Sparkman, Cody Anderson

Affordable Housing Advisory Board: Taulana Reed

Homeless Services Advisory Board: Tammie Smith and KayVin Hill

Meeting began at 4:00 pm.

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

Agenda Item 2: Minutes from November 8th meeting, motion and second, approved.

Agenda Item 3: Public Comment – No Comment

Agenda Item 4: TRPC Housing Allocation Presentation

Allison Osterberg from the Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) presented on Housing Need Allocations. The TRPC began working on this project in response to a change in state law in 2021 – House Bill 1220. This bill made several changes to the requirements for local jurisdictions including that, “jurisdiction must plan for and accommodate housing affordable to all economic segments of the population.” The focus for this effort is that the jurisdictions will need to demonstrate in their Comprehensive (Comp) Plans that they have the policies and regulations in place that enable enough housing to be constructed to support residents that are at different income levels.

The new requirements are supplementary to the work that has already been done including Comp Plans, County Wide Planning Policies, the Homeless Crisis Response Plan, and Housing Action Plans. These plans have policies that promote housing affordable to people who have a range of income across all jurisdictions. Allison explained that the new legislation differs in the way that jurisdictions need to be more specific with how they quantify the need of housing for different income levels and document in their Comprehensive Plans to demonstrate that their policies will help allow for housing that will meet those needs.

Allison presented two graphics that detailed the type of population this plan is intended to serve. The first compares income category, percent of Area Median Income (AMI) and equivalent household income (based on HUD estimate for a four-person household). The second considers income category, percent of AMI, and typical jobs that may fall in this range for household income. Additional slides highlighted the need of housing allocations in Thurston County, outlined a process for this development, considered the allocation values, presented four samples of county housing projections that compares existing housing and future housing/housing need, and ended with a Plan Update Process.

Dani asked why the TRPC focused on the AMI of a household of 4 when Thurston County has an average household of 2.5. Allison responded that these are the income breakouts that they are required to use. The complete presentation slides can be viewed in the December Agenda Packet.

Agenda Item 5: Manufactured Home Park Update

Jacinda provided an update on the Manufactured Home Park (MHP) preservation project. Earlier this year, legislation was passed that requires MHP owners to provide public notice when they are put up for sale. Once the notification is given, the community members of the park have 70 days to put together a package to submit an offer. Between September and October, the RHC and jurisdictional staff reviewed their Housing Action Plans and identified items that could benefit from being elevated to the RHC. A policy or program to preserve MHP was one of the items. Simultaneously, Victoria, from Northwest Cooperative Development Center (NWCDC), reached out regarding a MHP for sale in hopes of helping the community members purchase the park. A subgroup was created which includes some RHC members and jurisdictional staff that are focusing on Claudia's Estates.

Jacinda recalled a previous conversation within the RHC regarding the risk of the park being unaffordable to the residents and ensuring that they are looking at parks that can be helped to purchase in an equitable way. Equitable considerations include overrepresented racial or ethnic composition within the Homeless Crisis Response Plan, the condition of the housing, average income of residents, access to other available sources, etc. The Thurston Affordable Housing Advisory Board (TAHAB) will consider making a recommendation of a funding amount or percentage to be set aside annually for helping to purchase MHP in their meeting tomorrow. This month, an invitation will be issued to the TAHAB and the Homeless Services Advisory Board (HSAB) to participate a work group to form a policy or program regarding MHP preservation which will then be elevated to the RHC.

Jacinda also provided a brief update on Claudia's Estates. After Victoria met with the RHC in November, the NWCDC put in an offer on behalf of the residents to purchase the park. The seller was provided another offer that was comparable in price but had a shorter timeline. Ultimately, the seller chose the opposing offer.

Agenda Item 6: Tech Team Update

Darian provided an update on the RHC Technical Team. The Franz Anderson Interlocal Agreement (ILA) has now been approved by all jurisdictions. Another ILA was signed last night between the County and the City to support ARPA funding for Quince Street Village. Darian reported that overall, the proposals to Commerce for Right of Way funding was supported. Out of the two purchase proposals, one is moving forward. Although the apartment complex is no longer available for purchase, an offer was placed for purchase for a hotel in Olympia. The offer was accepted and now Interfaith Works is going through the due diligence process. Additionally, Quince Street Village was supported and New Hope, a tiny home village at First Christian Church, was supported and will add 8 beds to the Right of Way Initiative. Lastly, Olympia, Lacey and Tumwater are moving forward with an RFP to find a consultant to look at displacement from a regional perspective to address it within their Comprehensive Plan.

Agenda Item 7: Advisory Board Updates

The Chair of the TAHAB, Talauna Reed, updated that the executive members of the Advisory Boards met for the first time discuss collaboration. They reviewed the board recruitment process and discussed how to streamline them so that both boards are in line with each other. Vice Chair of the HSAB, KayVin Hill, added that they discussed the interview process and how to uniformly recruit new members to the board, specifically what identities they are seeking to fill those positions. Also, they discussed what kind of role they envision the RHC play in the recruitment process. Talauna added that the executive members discussed the idea of forming a committee from each board that is willing to commit to doing the work of recruiting new members. Keylee stated that herself and Alex have been working to create a timeline of the recruitment process. Tammie Smith, the Chair of the HSAB, added that they also created a timeline of what they will focus on during future meetings. Tom updated that Alex Persse has been hired as the Affordable Housing Program Manager and will help to facilitate future TAHAB meetings.

Agenda Item 8: Housing Trust Fund Information

Darian presented on the Housing Trust Fund Applications. Applications were due in September. They received 87 multi-family applications requesting \$437,566,276 to construct 6,046 affordable housing units. Over \$290 million is available to applicants in this funding round, so not every application will be funded. There are 5 multi-family projects that were submitted from Thurston County: Foundation for the Challenged (15 units), Housing Authority (36 Units), Homes First (4 Units), Interfaith Works and TWG (68 Units), and LIHI (70 Units) with a total request of \$25 million.

Homeownership applications were due in October. They received 48 applications seeking \$94.4 Million in total requested funds to create 943 affordable homeownership units. This is an increase of 41% in total funds requested from the 2022 funding round. There were 3 Thurston County Homeownership Projects: Habitat for Humanity Blvd (112 Units), Habitat for Humanity Longmire Phase 2 (14 Units), and Thurston Housing Land Trust (4 Units) with a total request of \$13 million. Jacinda commented that any of the applications that are not funded through this application will likely come through during the HOME Funds RFP.

Agenda Item 9: Communications Update

Elisa gave a communications update. She and the Tech Team will be putting together a 2023 summary of the Rights of Way Initiative to highlight what has occurred during the year and what to anticipate next year. This will be sent out mid-January.

Agenda Item 10: Good of the Order

Olympia: Dani updated that the Olympia City Council voted on a Rental Housing Registry Program. In Olympia, all rental housing units will need to register with the City of Olympia. They will phase in doing housing inspections once every five years. The Council also voted on a restructure and expansion of the Multi-Family Tax Exemption.

Thurston County: No update

Yelm: No Update

Lacey: Carolyn proposed returning to in person meetings. Tom will investigate room availability.

Meeting Adjourned: 5:33pm

Next Meeting: January 24, 2023, 4:00 pm – hybrid (Zoom & Atrium Board Room)