

# REGIONAL HOUSING COUNCIL

Wednesday, February 28, 2024, Meeting Minutes

## **ATTENDEES:**

Lacey: Carolyn Cox, Jennifer Adams, Nick Dunning, and Ryan Andrews

Tumwater: Joan Cathey and Brad Medrud

Olympia: Rich Hoey, Dani Madrone, Darian Lightfoot, Robert Vanderpool, and Christa Lenssen

Yelm: Gary Cooper and Trevor Palmer

Thurston County: Carolina Mejia, Emily Clouse, Tom Webster, Keylee Marineau, Elisa Sparkman, Alex Persse, and Leah Tangeman

Affordable Housing Advisory Board: Grace Lee

Homeless Services Advisory Board: Tammie Smith and KayVin Hill

Meeting began at 4:00 p.m.

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

**Agenda Item 2:** Minutes from January 24 meeting, motion and second, approved.

**Agenda Item 3:** Public Comment – No Comment

## **Agenda Item 4: Affordable Housing Advisory Board – Recommendation of New Members**

The Vice Chair of the Thurston Affordable Housing Advisory Board (TAHAB), Grace Lee, presented the TAHAB's recommendation of new members. In November, the executive leadership of the Homeless Services Advisory Board (HSAB) and TAHAB met to discuss the advisory board recruitment process. A subcommittee was created to review the applications. The applications for each board were made available on January 17, 2024 and closed on January 31, 2024. The subcommittee prioritized applicants to have lived experience with homelessness or housing instability, are over-represented in the homeless services system, have a real estate background, are knowledgeable about affordable homeownership, or are knowledgeable about affordable housing lending. Twelve applicants applied and of those, six applicants were chosen by the subcommittee to interview on February 13 and 14. Three applicants are being recommended for placement on TAHAB. The recommended applicants are Karen Hall, Jamie Milletary, and Tonya Hennen. Karen is a resident of Tumwater and currently works as Director of Housing for the South Puget Sound Habitat for Humanity. Jamie is an Olympia resident who is the owner and operator of Piece by Peace Logistics, a moving company which has assisted many low-income households moving from housing situations which are no longer affordable or sustainable. Tonya Hennen resides in unincorporated Thurston County and is a real estate broker and housing advocate.

Dani moved to approve the slated candidates, Carolyn seconded, unanimously approved.

## **Agenda Item 5: Homeless Services Advisory Board –Recommendation of New Members**

Keylee presented on the HSAB recommendation of new members. The HSAB received six applications for membership on the board. Of those, the subcommittee chose to interview three applicants for HSAB on February 13 and 14. Two applicants are being recommended for placement on the board, Teri

Cochran-Frederick and Casper Cramblette. Teri is an Unincorporated Thurston County resident, has lived experience, and provides subject matter expertise as a Peer. Casper has lived experience and currently works in Lacey at the Low-Income Housing Alliance at Maple Court and provides subject matter expertise in shelter operations, peer advocacy, and behavioral health services.

Emily moved to approve the proposed solutions for the new appointments, Joan seconded, unanimously approved.

#### **Agenda Item 6: Fair Housing Plan Action Items**

Christa Lenssen, Housing Program Specialist for the City of Olympia, presented on the Fair Housing Plan Action Items. The Fair Housing Act protects people from discrimination in housing based on protected classes, which include race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, and families with children status. Counties, cities, and public housing authorities that receive federal funding through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) are required to create plans for how they will spend funds. In 2023, Thurston County and City of Olympia partnered to create a Consolidated Plan to direct how they would spend CDBG funding. Jurisdictions are also required to undertake fair housing planning to ensure the projects and efforts they are funding do not (intentionally or unintentionally) continue or worsen segregation, discrimination, housing problems, or disparities. Staff from City of Olympia completed an Assessment of Fair Housing for Thurston County, as a part of the Consolidated Plan process. The Assessment of Fair Housing follows the cycle for the consolidated plan from 2023 through 2027. Christa stated that HUD proposed a new role that will be much more stringent in terms of what jurisdictions are required to demonstrate.

The RHC Technical Team (Tech Team) met on February 8 and reviewed the goals that were created through the Assessment of Fair Housing. The Tech Team's proposed next steps are to inventory each jurisdiction's incentives for affordable housing developers and identify gaps or opportunities for alignment (June 2024), review best practices and sample code language to address mold in housing units (Sept/Oct 2024), and inventory each jurisdiction's tenant protections – identify gaps or opportunities for alignment (Jan/Feb 2024). The board accepted the proposal to move forward with the goals presented.

#### **Agenda Item 7: RHC Policy Discussion**

The board discussed how they can collectively work on policy across jurisdictions. Tom suggested discussing what the first step in this work will be; for example, sharing information regarding each jurisdiction's incentives for the Tech Team to combine and share. He then asked what the role of the RHC is in moving policy discussion forward so that there is greater alignment between jurisdictions. Dani asked what the role of the advisory boards are in policy development. She also mentioned that there is already work the RHC has been doing surrounding policy recommendation such as the Manufactured Home Park Subcommittee and the three goals from the Fair Housing Assessment. Joan commented that in a meeting with Brad Medrud and Michael Althausen, they discussed that it would be beneficial for the RHC to have specific policies that are consistent, so when situations arise, the RHC has policies in place to inform decision making. Brad added that they are looking for easily explained framework that can be referenced when the community approaches the RHC on how they are approaching certain issues. Dani suggested that the framework could look like the Tech Team gathering information surrounding a policy issue, bringing that information to the RHC and advisory boards/committees for discussion, and then digging into the specifics of the information to determine what the unified voice of the RHC is on the

policy, which will then be championed within each jurisdiction and published to the RHC website. Ryan stated that he expects the framework to include collaboration and implementation of a document or plan which may be a heavy lift for the Tech Team and could benefit from a consultant. He added that there is also a need for a plan for operation for the RHC long term. Tom stated that the overarching plan is the 5 Year Homeless Response Plan coming up next year, but there may be potential for a companion piece that includes an affordable housing strategy. The discussion concluded with the suggestion to create a written framework for how the RHC approaches policy recommendation and development. Dani suggested using the three goals from the Fair Housing Assessment to help inform and test the creation of the RHC policy framework.

#### **Agenda Item 8: Communications Update**

Elisa did not have a communications update for this month.

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

Olympia: On March 19 the City of Olympia will be holding a public hearing around tenant protections.

Thurston County: Keylee updated that the Department of Commerce will be bringing initial discussion around the draft local guidance and draft state strategic plan to the Associated County Human Services Homelessness and Affordable Housing Workgroup in April.

Tumwater: No update.

Yelm: No update.

Lacey: Ryan gave a Desmond Drive update. The RHC sent out two letters to the Department of Enterprise Services (DES) and Departments of Commerce and Transportation. They responded allowing two lists to be created: the By Name List that was established by Lacey CRU MOTT Team, and a second list established by OlyMAP that is a combined list for individuals to move to Maple Court. As of today, there are 12 people on the list all with spaces available at Maple Court. Upon attempting to move people into Maple Court, there was a temporary restraining order put in by the attorney that represents a portion of those clients. Prior to that, the parties were given additional two weeks to establish framework for moving individuals into Maple Court. The court granted an additional two weeks on Monday, which moves the date to March 11. If the individuals remain at the site after March 11, they take the risk that they could be trespassed.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 5:24 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** March 27, 2024, 4:00 p.m. – hybrid (Zoom & Lacey City Hall Rm 1037)