

COUNCIL ON HOUSING
Public Session via Conference Call
January 12, 2022

Motions

- November 10, 2021 Minutes
- Resolution #626 – Solomon’s Court, Phase I, Additional Financing
- Resolution #627 – Delaware State Housing Authority, Supplemental Funding Homeownership Production

Dianne Casey, Chair, called to order the public session of the Council on Housing meeting at 2:02 pm, Wednesday, January 12, 2022. In addition to Ms. Casey, the following Council members were present:

Doug Motley	Lillian Harrison	Connie Harrington
Amy Walls	Francis Julian	Vincent White

The following council members were absent and excused from the meeting:

Donna Mitchell	Norma Zumsteg
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Connie Harrington was present in person at the offices of Delaware State Housing Authority, 18 The Green, Dover which served as the anchor location for the meeting. All other members of Council appeared via video.

Also attending:

Eugene Young, DSHA
Susan Eliason, DSHA
Marlena Gibson, DSHA
Stephanie Griffin, DSHA
Debra Miller, DSHA

Guests:

Pastor Margaret Moon-Taylor, Be Ready Community Development Corporation
Sheryl Krocek
Larry DiSabatino, DiSabatino Construction Company
Azeez Weeks, Cinnare Solutions
Christian Willauer, Consultant to Be Ready
Javier Horstmann, Office of The Governor
Russ Huxtable, Milford Housing Development Corporation

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Julian moved and Ms. Walls seconded that the Minutes of the November 10, 2021 meeting be approved as submitted. The motion was passed with Mr. Motley abstaining, as he did not attend the November meeting.

DSHA REPORT – Mr. Young

- JFC budget hearing is scheduled for February 7, 2022. More information to follow regarding a date, time, and location or webinar.
- Many legislators are very interested in a variety of housing issues and DSHA intends to be as proactive as possible. Adding more policy staff to assist with this goal. Particular topics likely to see activity:
 - Source of Income Discrimination (SB90)
 - Landlord Mitigation Fund (SB167)
 - Homeless Persons Bill of Rights (HB235)
 - Right to Counsel (SB101)
 - Neighborhood Assistance Act increase (TBD)
 - Transfer tax
 - Crime-free housing ordinances
- Rental assistance via DEHAP continues to be a primary focus. Spending \$2-\$3 million in funding weekly and have disbursed over \$42 million in rental and utility assistance under DEHAP 3.0 (March 2021-present; federal ERA funding). Currently have about 60 people moving applications. Using some of the funds that have come through this process for additional support services.
- Federal ERA funding also allows for “Housing Stability Services” which can include legal services, and CLASI and partners (working together as the Eviction Defense Project) have been putting together an expansive plan to increase legal services capacity. DSHA has committed funding to some pieces of this already and continue to work with the EDP to refine subsequent pieces. Notably, one piece that is operational now is a new Eviction Resource Navigator program utilizing Public Allies as resource navigators in close collaboration with JP Court. DSHA working closely with Chief Magistrate Judge Alan Davis to make sure there are people in the courts to make sure that tenants have at least been able to apply for rental assistance. DSHA programs are designed to ensure that someone does not fall through the cracks because they do not have the funds to pay.
- In November, DSHA released a NOFA for \$5 million to support Housing Stability Services to help facilitate access to DEHAP and to support households who are unstably housed or experiencing homelessness. This will allow for dramatic expansion of our current community partner network and provide both for staff services.
- DSHA received initially around roughly \$200 million as the small state minimum of emergency rental assistance. In the first round of assessment, DE was required to return about \$11.5 million to the Treasury. DSHA submitted a Program Improvement Plan that was accepted by the Treasury and DSHA has accepted an offer of technical assistance from HUD.
- DSHA working to reduce period from DEHAP application to payment to less than 30 days. Currently period is approximately 50 days.

- In late November we had received an influx of applications with a high volume of suspicious and potentially fraudulent applications. We have been in contact with US Treasury (UST) Office of Inspector General (OIG) and a Special Agent from HUD OIG, and Delaware Department of Justice about these issues. The program is developing expanded procedures to address fraud.
- DSHA has been participating in efforts to assist residents, especially renters, affected by Hurricane Ida. About 25-30 households remain in need of stable housing. DHSS is providing case management services. Activities underway related to DSHA:
 - Issued notice to all LIHTC and subsidized sites of the ability to move households affected by the federally declared disaster to the top of their waiting list and to temporarily postpone meeting LIHTC income requirements.
 - Several residents who meet other eligibility requirements for new Emergency Housing Vouchers (not related to the disaster – vouchers for people experiencing homelessness created by ARPA) have been referred for these vouchers.
 - Facilitating access to DEHAP – many residents, particularly those from Claymont Street apartments who have had case management assistance, have applied for DEHAP and several have moved into new units with DEHAP assistance.
- Recovery Housing Program – DSHA has received more than \$2 million from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) under its Recovery Housing Program, which is a part of HUD’s Support for Patients and Communities ACT of 2018 that authorized certain CDBG grantees to provide stable, temporary housing to individuals in recovery from substance use disorder.
 - DSHA is administering these funds in partnership with the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) and recently published a Notice of Funding Availability soliciting applications for acquisition/rehabilitation or new construction funding for eligible housing developments.
 - Applicants were eligible for housing located anywhere in the State with preference given for sites located in Sussex County. DSHA received two applications, both in Sussex County, and a review committee met to evaluate the applications for consistency with program requirements.
- Work is underway to establish and implement mortgage assistance for Delaware homeowners funded by the Homeowner Assistance Fund (ERA2). Some significant work remains, but some key pieces are already in place. Targeting late Spring for implementation.
- DSHA has been engaged in discussion with the Governor’s office about additional funding for housing needs from the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) established by the American Rescue Act (ARPA).
- We have been working with Claire DeMatteis, special assistant to the Governor, leading this planning, and anticipate being able to share more information in the near future. Broadly, DSHA expects there to be commitments for community development and neighborhood revitalization, supporting homeownership, increasing production of affordable rental housing, and preservation of affordable rental housing.
- New DSHA Senior Staff – Laurie Jacobs recently started as DSHA’s new Director of Public Relations and Kenneth Briscoe is joining DSHA on a part-time basis to assist with more proactive communications and outreach regarding rental and (soon) mortgage assistance programs. Currently working to bring on a Director of Mortgage Assistance

Program and finalizing additional candidates on the policy side.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

OPERATIONS: Ms. Harrington

Reminded everyone to complete annual Conflict of Interest disclosure form which was included with the packet.

COMMUNICATIONS: Ms. Casey

Ms. Casey noted that the COH Annual Report 2021 was approved at the last meeting and is now available and posted for the public to view on the DSHA website.

POLICY: Mr. White

- Committee met last week and received a good overview of some of the legislation and for those in attendance they were able to discuss amongst themselves the possible implications there-of.
- Did a deep dive in taking a look at some policies created due to Covid and how we might come up with some suggestions for the rest of the Council regarding what those policy revisions might be as it leads to the impact of housing on Covid and impact on Delawareans.
- Also discussed the suggestion that an equity assessment be done on a more formal basis for all new projects, especially LIHTC and HDF. Council left with some homework to do on that. The equity assessment discussed before was taking a look at any project being funded with state dollars that DSHA is contributing to in anyway, and making certain the community has a broad understanding of impact on that project directly on that community and that would include participation of minority vendors, traffic, noise and light pollution issues. Some developers already have a portion of this information in their plan. The committee feels that extracting this information into a more summarized version would be helpful to not only everyone but especially to members of the community who often say they may not fully understand how a homeownership or rental project will have an effect on their community. This will hopefully come back to the Council in 60 days or so to discuss further.

LOAN REVIEW: Mr. Julian

The committee met January 4 and reviewed two HDF requests. After due discussion, Loan Review made the following recommendations to Council:

- Solomon's Court, Phase I – **Resolution #626** that the additional HTF financing be recommended for approval by the Director. Mr. Julian moved and Ms. Casey seconded the resolution be approved. The motion passed with five in favor and two abstentions due to conflict of interest.
- DSHA Supplemental Funding Homeownership Production – **Resolution #627** that the HDF financing to DSHA be approved. Mr. Julian moved and Mr. Motley seconded the resolution be approved. The motion passes with five in favor and two abstentions due to conflict of interest.

OLD / NEW BUSINESS:

- None

ADMINISTRATIVE:

- None

SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING

- The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 9, 2022 at 2:00 pm. The anchor location and the video connection will be the offices of the Delaware State Housing Authority, 10th floor, Carvel State Building, Wilmington.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 2:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Miller

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Note: Copies of materials referenced as “attached” in these Minutes are available upon request.