

COUNCIL ON HOUSING  
Public Session via Conference Call  
March 9, 2022

**Motions**

- January 12, 2022 Minutes
- Resolution #628 - 2022-2023 PPHEC Funding HDF Resolution

Dianne Casey, Chair, called to order the public session of the Council on Housing meeting at 2:01 pm, Wednesday, March 9, 2022. In addition to Ms. Casey, the following Council members were present:

Doug Motley	Francis Julian	Connie Harrington	Norma Zumsteg
Amy Walls	Vincent White	Donna Mitchell	Lillian Harrison

Dianne Casey and Francis Julian were present in person at the offices of Delaware State Housing Authority, 10<sup>th</sup> floor, Carvel State Building, Wilmington 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  
Javier Horstmann, DSHA  
Stephanie Griffin, DSHA  
Dawn Momot, DSHA  
Debra Miller, DSHA

**Guests:**

Barbara Cool  
Bradford Melvin

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Julian moved and Ms. Walls seconded that the Minutes of the January 12, 2022 meeting be approved and submitted. The motion was passed.

**DSHA REPORT** – Mr. Young

- Mr. Young presented the FY2023 DSHA budget request at the JFC Public Hearing which was held on February 7, 2022. During the 90-minute hearing, Mr. Young

discussed the importance of the Housing Development Fund, Affordable Rental Housing Program, and the State Rental Assistance Program and it was requested that the state fund each at the same level as previous years. Community members provided favorable public comments on the proposed budget. They also expressed concern with the state's lack of affordable housing and they requested that the JFC increase DSHA's budget.

- DSHA is staying in touch with key legislators as the General Assembly returns this week from a brief JFC break.
- Rental assistance via DEHAP continues to be a primary focus. DEHAP has disbursed about \$57 million in rental and utility assistance since March 2021 and assisted over 7,000 households.
- Community Navigator Program has launched with about 15 organizations providing support to DEHAP applicants.
- Strategic planning has begun for DSHA's use of ERA1 vs ERA2 funds. ERA1 had a very high small state allocation of \$200M but a short timeline. Delaware has returned \$73.5 million to U.S. Treasury. DSHA has moved into spending ERA2 which will begin to have reallocation assessments in the next couple of months. DSHA is particularly concerned about the potential reallocation of ERA2 as its deadline is not until September 2025. ERA2 is the funding source DSHA has been planning to use to sustain DEHAP during that time. There has been coordinated feedback to UST on this from OGOV and the federal delegation.
- DSHA has been participating in efforts to assist residents, especially renters, affected by Hurricane Ida.
  - 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 the 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) have been referred for these vouchers. Delaware has about 120 vouchers between WHA, New Castle County, and households that still face challenges in finding a unit.
  - Many residents, particularly those from Claymont St. who have had case management assistance, have applied for DEHAP and several have moved into new units with DEHAP assistance.
- DSHA is working with Good Ole Boy Foundation and DHSS to ensure that any families displaced and in need by the Laurel fire are able to find temporary shelter at motels. DSHA has also been using their partnership with La Esperanza to ensure all the residents have DEHAP. As a result, many of the families have been able to find more stable housing.
- Delaware was allocated \$50 million in federal Homeowner Assistance Fund (HAF) resources under the American Rescue Plan Act. Implementation of this has been delayed due to the need to focus on DEHAP, capacity, and leadership changes. We are working towards a May 1 soft launch of a pilot and May 31 full launch.
- 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 Plan Act (ARPA). The Governor is committed to providing funding for housing. Broadly the expectation is for there to be commitments

for community development and neighborhood revitalization, supporting homeownership, increasing production of affordable rental housing, and preservation of affordable rental housing.

- DSHA recently added two senior positions in our Policy & Planning section to help build back capacity lost as we focused on DEHAP and meet increasing demands. Javier Horstmann, is our new Chief Policy Advisor, and Caitlin DelCollo, our new Chief Strategy Advisor. Javi comes to DSHA from the Governor's Office and Caitlin from the Senate majority staff.
- Some changes to DSHA's leadership structure have been implemented. Two Deputy Director positions have been added. Cynthia Karnai, DSHA's Chief Operating Officer, and Susan Eliason, DSHA's Director of Housing Development will be moving into the Deputy Director roles. DSHA is excited about this structure change and believes it will help DSHA meet the challenges ahead.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **OPERATIONS:** Ms. Harrington

- No Report.
- Ms. Casey mentioned that there is now a new revised version of the By-Laws up on the website.

### **COMMUNICATIONS:** Ms. Casey

- Ms. Casey stated that she testified at the JFC Public Hearing on February 7 as one of the proponents to the DSHA budget.
- Bond Bill hearings are scheduled for the end of March. Ms. Casey intends to attend.
- Ms. Casey, Mr. Motley and Mr. White met with the Governor on February 24.

### **POLICY:** Mr. White

- Met March 2.
- The committee is hoping to have input into DSHA's next Housing Needs Assessment. The last assessment was completed in 2014. The committee discussed if the assessment should be the reporting of facts or should recommendations be included? Marlena cited a few examples of assessments that included recommendations. After further discussion, it was decided that they should include recommendations.
- The committee also discussed the unprecedented amount of federal funding that is being directed to affordable housing needs statewide. The committee discussed ways that both the Housing Needs Assessment and the Fair Housing Tool could be used to help structure planned programming to better meet the needs of the community.

### **LOAN REVIEW:** Mr. Julian

The committee met March 1 and reviewed one HDF grant request. After due discussion, Loan Review made the following recommendations to Council:

- Pre-Purchase Homeownership Education and Counseling Programs (PPHEC) FY22 **Resolution #628** that the HDF grant be recommended for approval. Mr. Julian moved

and Mr. White seconded the resolution to be approved. The motion passed with 6 in favor and three abstentions due to conflict of interest.

**OLD / NEW BUSINESS:**

- None

**ADMINISTRATIVE:**

- None

**SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING**

- The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 13th at 2:00 pm. The anchor location and the video connection will be the offices of the Delaware State Housing Authority, 18 The Green, Dover.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 2:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Debra Miller*

Debra Miller

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