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AFFIRMATIVELY FURTHERING FAIR
HOUSING TASK FORCE

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In the matter of:
QUARTERLY MEETING, SEPTEMBER 6, 2016

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Transcript of a task force meeting held at
Piatt Place, 301 Fifth Avenue, Suite 390,
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15222, commencing
at 3:05 o'clock p.m., on Tuesday, September 6,
2016.

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APPEARANCES:

Members of the Task Force:

- Carlos Torres
- Helen Gerhardt
- Sarah Kinter
- Rachel Salem
- Sean DeYoung
- Charles Keenan
- Melinda Johnson
- Ernest Whitted
- Paul O'Hanlon, Esquire
- Robert Damewood, Esquire
- Rachael Surmick
- Derrick Testa
- Gale Schwartz
- David Dean
- Mary Gibson, Esquire
- Lyle Wood
- Valerie McDonald Roberts
- John Tague (via telephone)
- Molly Nichols (via telephone)

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(Discussion off the record.)

MS. GERHARDT: We can begin with basically just introductions. We can -- do you want to start, Carlos?

MR. TORRES: Sure.

MS. GERHARDT: If you could just say a little bit about yourself, your role, and what your organization brings to the table regarding fair housing.

MR. TORRES: Okay. My name is Carlos Torres, and I am the executive director of the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations. We are the civil rights enforcement agency for the city, and we take complaints of housing discrimination and investigate those. And the commission, which is my short version of that whole title, is the sponsor of this body.

MR. DeYOUNG: My name is Sean DeYoung. I'm the chief executive officer of the Pittsburgh AIDS Task Force, and we have four HUD programs for people living with HIV and AIDS in our region.

1 MR. KEENAN: Good afternoon, I'm
2 Chuck Keenan. I work in the Allegheny County
3 Department of Human Services. I think we
4 serve quite a bit of the vulnerable
5 populations in Allegheny County, so we are
6 likely to see discrimination from our client
7 base.

8 MS. GERHARDT: I'm Helen Gerhardt.
9 I'm a commissioner on the Pittsburgh
10 Commission on Human Relations on the housing
11 committee.

12 MS. JOHNSON: Good afternoon. My name
13 is Melinda Johnson. I work for the
14 Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency as a
15 housing and management representative. What
16 our company brings to the table is always
17 affordable and fair housing and much, much
18 more.

19 MR. WHITTED: Good afternoon. My name
20 is Ernest Whitted. I'm with the Pittsburgh
21 Housing Development Association, and
22 presently we're conducting -- we have been
23 conducting for the last five years in
24 conjunction with Dollar Bank our first-time
25 home buyer seminars to increase low income

1 families with the ability to increase their
2 credit score in order to acquire housing, and
3 this is through Dollar Bank, where they will
4 then put -- put the -- the client through a
5 program which will increase their credit
6 score, and probably at the end of the process
7 a loan can be granted.

8 MS. GERHARDT: Who joined us on the
9 phone?

10 MR. QUISENBERRY: Hi, this is
11 Kevin Quisenberry.

12 MS. GERHARDT: Hello, Kevin.

13 MR. QUISENBERRY: Hi there.

14 MS. GERHARDT: Kevin, we'll come
15 around to you after everyone's introductions,
16 so welcome.

17 MR. QUISENBERRY: Thank you.

18 MS. GERHARDT: Do you want to
19 introduce yourself?

20 MS. MASCIOTRA: My name is
21 Breen Masciotra, transit oriented
22 development, project manager, for the Port
23 Authority of Allegheny County.

24 MR. O'HANLON: I'm Paul O'Hanlon. I'm
25 a housing lawyer in the area for the last

1 37 years, or something ridiculous like that,
2 and I'm proudly here representing the
3 City-County Task Force on Disabilities.

4 MR. DAMEWOOD: Bob Damewood, I'm a
5 staff attorney with Regional Housing and
6 Legal Services. We're a statewide non-profit
7 community development law firm. We represent
8 community-based organizations and housing
9 development and community development
10 transactions.

11 I have only been a housing -- a legal
12 aid housing lawyer for 26 years, so Paul's
13 got me beat.

14 MR. HARVEY: Hi, I'm Peter Harvey.
15 I'm with the Allegheny County Department of
16 Human Services.

17 MR. TESTA: Derrick Testa, I'm an
18 investigator with the Pennsylvania Human
19 Relations Commission.

20 MS. SURMICK: Rachael Surmick, with
21 Neighbor Works Western Pennsylvania. We're a
22 HUD housing counseling agency, so we do all
23 those things.

24 MR. DEAN: I'm David Dean, and I'm the
25 director with the Realtors' Association of

1 Metropolitan Pittsburgh, representing close
2 to 5,000 real estate professionals in
3 Allegheny County.

4 MS. SCHWARTZ: I'm Gale Schwartz with
5 the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania. The
6 Housing Alliance is a statewide housing
7 coalition that works to provide policies,
8 practices, and resources -- a common voice
9 for policies, practices, and resources to
10 ensure that safe, decent, affordable,
11 accessible homes are within reach of all
12 Pennsylvanians, especially those with low
13 incomes.

14 MS. GIBSON: Mary Gibson, I'm the vice
15 chair of the Allegheny County Human Relations
16 Commission.

17 MS. SALEM: Rachel Salem, I'm
18 secretary to the director of the Pittsburgh
19 Commission on Human Relations, and I take
20 minutes and send meeting invites and am a hub
21 for anyone who needs any information, contact
22 information for the task force, or for any of
23 the committees.

24 MS. KINTER: Sarah Kinter with the
25 Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations.

1 MS. GERHARDT: To those of you who are
2 on the phone -- John, would you --
3 John Tague, would you begin with the
4 introduction?

5 MR. TAGUE: Do you want --

6 MS. GERHARDT: I'm just going in the
7 order that I heard people on the phone.

8 MR. TAGUE: Okay. I'm John Tague,
9 Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations, and
10 formerly the chair of the housing committee,
11 and I have a small consulting practice,
12 J.B. Disability Consulting Services, and
13 there's a few areas that I'm interested in --
14 area of expertise in transit oriented
15 development and the impact on affordable
16 housing.

17 MS. GERHARDT: So Kevin Quisenberry?

18 MR. QUISENBERRY: Yes. So this is
19 Kevin Quisenberry. I got caught up in a
20 meeting, so I'm going to participate by phone
21 until I get here. I work at the Community
22 Justice Project as an attorney. We also are
23 part of the Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network.
24 We're a legal aid program, similar to
25 Neighborhood Legal Services, which most

1 people here in Pittsburgh know. We just do
2 different kinds of cases than they do.

3 MS. GERHARDT: And who else do we have
4 on the phone? I'm sorry, I'm not
5 remembering.

6 MS. NICHOLS: This is Molly Nichols.

7 MS. GERHARDT: Hey, Molly. Sorry.

8 MS. NICHOLS: I'm with Pittsburghers
9 for Public Transit, and we're concerned about
10 people who live in affordable housing and
11 don't have adequate access to public transit,
12 or people who want to be able to live near
13 good transit service that can't afford to do
14 so.

15 MS. GERHARDT: And I'm also on the
16 board of Pittsburghers for Public Transit.

17 So thank you all for being here. We
18 wanted to briefly review the membership
19 forms. We're trying to -- for a while, we
20 were counting membership as people who came
21 to meetings, and there was a fairly fluid
22 group, and it was hard to decide what's a
23 quorum, how do we vote on things, so the
24 commission developed a form and sent that out
25 to most of you.

1 Has everyone here received that form?
2 Has anyone not received that form, I should
3 say it that way. So I'm noting that
4 Breen Masciotra and Melinda Johnson did not
5 receive forms, so we'll make sure that we get
6 those sent to you.

7 MR. DEAN: And David Dean.

8 MS. GERHARDT: And David Dean.

9 I think --

10 MR. DAMEWOOD: I don't think --

11 MS. GERHARDT: I think -- okay, so
12 this group is organizations, institutions,
13 agencies that have affirmatively furthering
14 fair housing as a main part of their mission
15 in some way, or whose constituents are
16 directly affected by -- or, one of those
17 groups that experiences barriers to fair
18 housing, the protected classes, so we did
19 have a conversation at one point in which we
20 decided that it would be -- we would love to
21 have you at the table, be part of
22 discussions, but I don't -- unless
23 affirmatively furthering fair housing is part
24 of your mission, I don't know that you would
25 be a voting member. Does that make sense?

1 We would love to have you, like, at
2 discussions, part of -- helping to -- all of
3 us understand the situation that low income
4 tenants and protected classes face in their
5 barriers to fair housing.

6 MR. DEAN: Is that directed at me?

7 MR. O'HANLON: So far.

8 MS. GERHARDT: Yes.

9 So just in terms of membership, we --
10 the basic criteria for membership in this
11 group is that a main part of your mission in
12 some way is to affirmatively further fair
13 housing.

14 MR. DEAN: Well, then, maybe I haven't
15 made myself completely clear on this
16 committee. I'm also director of the National
17 Association of Realtors, where I sit as the
18 director of the diversity committee. I'm
19 also the director -- I'm also the director of
20 the Global Business Council and Diversity
21 Council of the Realtors' Association of
22 Metropolitan Pittsburgh. I'm also the
23 founder of the Year of Fair Housing, which
24 was in 2011. And I would challenge anyone on
25 this table to have a more stronger commitment

1 to fair housing than myself.

2 MS. SCHWARTZ: I would say that the
3 realtors need to be a voting member.

4 MS. GERHARDT: The groups that you've
5 named sound like they do have a very
6 important part of this discussion. We talked
7 in the past about a consideration of
8 criteria. There were -- there was no vote on
9 that -- what those final criteria would be,
10 so the -- the membership form, if it could be
11 sent, and then we consider --

12 MR. TORRES: She already distributed
13 it. We brought hard copies.

14 MS. GERHARDT: Okay.

15 MR. TORRES: Yes.

16 MS. GERHARDT: All right. Are there
17 other thoughts or concerns on this?

18 MR. KEENAN: Yeah, I mean, I would
19 agree with Gale. I mean, the realtors are
20 kind of an important partner for us to have
21 to make sure that the message gets out, and
22 they're educated, and they're serving people
23 appropriately, I think.

24 MS. SCHWARTZ: I agree. I mean, fair
25 housing isn't just a tenant issue. I mean,

1 there is a real challenge to African-American
2 home ownership within the Greater Pittsburgh
3 area, and there's no better ally in that than
4 the realtors.

5 MS. SURMICK: I agree with both Chuck
6 and Gale on that point, as well.

7 MR. TORRES: So if I may, really
8 quickly, one of the goals with creating the
9 membership form was for us as a commission to
10 have a complete list of who's either at the
11 table or who should be at the table, because
12 initially we had no idea who we should be
13 talking to, who we should be sending e-mails
14 to, none of that stuff, so this is going to
15 help us to know, okay, these are the folks
16 that we need to be talking to about, so
17 anyone at the table who is missing, I would
18 be more than happy to e-mail you an
19 electronic version of the form so you can get
20 it to those folks so they can be made aware
21 that this group exists, and that they're
22 welcome, and they want their input, their
23 feedback, and all that other good stuff, so,
24 by all means, I know today looks like it's a
25 small group around the table, but the

1 original group was over 40 people; correct?

2 MS. GERHARDT: Yes.

3 MR. TORRES: So clearly there are some
4 folks who are not with us today, but we
5 encourage everyone who is willing and able,
6 and has a passion for housing, and want to
7 see fair and affordable housing in -- not
8 only in the city, but throughout the region,
9 to join this body as they see fit, so that's
10 the goal of that -- of that form, and it's
11 fairly simple. We just ask who you are
12 associated with, and if you're not available,
13 is there a second person who can take your
14 place if you are, you know, on vacation or
15 out of town, in a conference, something of
16 that nature, so that's -- that's the extent
17 of it, and that was the main goal of having
18 that -- that form.

19 MS. GERHARDT: Hey, Kevin. Can we
20 squeeze Kevin in?

21 MS. MASCIOTRA: I got an e-mail from
22 someone on the phone that they can't hear us,
23 so try to speak up more.

24 MR. TORRES: Okay.

25 MS. GERHARDT: Okay. So we're going

1 to do a quick review of the steering
2 committee minutes. So the main missions of
3 the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing
4 Task Force are to inform on and help assess
5 impediments to fair housing, both in the city
6 and county; professional coordination and
7 collaboration regarding research, data, and
8 ideas; fair housing assessments to do our due
9 diligence to obtain public input regarding
10 fair housing; responding to public
11 recommendations with information founded on
12 research; and providing recommendations on
13 how to obtain feedback from specific
14 community groups.

15 Carlos, did you want to talk about
16 these various subcommittees or --

17 MR. TORRES: We can talk about them in
18 the next item on the agenda, yes.

19 MS. GERHARDT: And for number B, for
20 collaboration with the Affordable Housing
21 Task Force, do you want to address that?

22 MR. TORRES: Sure.

23 So as many of you know, the city
24 brought together a group of experts who
25 will -- about a month and a half, maybe seven

1 or eight weeks ago -- issued their final
2 report on the affordable housing state for
3 the city, and that -- that task force
4 identifies certain goals or ideas for the
5 major and city council to -- to consider as
6 part of how the city can go about increasing
7 the number of affordable housing units
8 available both to renters and home buyers.

9 Part of -- and this kind of applies to
10 numbers, letter C on the agenda, as part of
11 those recommendations was an affordable
12 housing trust fund, so on the 21st of this
13 month there's going to be a public hearing of
14 the City-County -- excuse me, City Council
15 Chambers at 5:30 to hear from community
16 members, from advocates, regarding the
17 affordable housing task force recommendation
18 for this trust fund.

19 The initial recommendation is that the
20 trust fund should have a minimum of
21 \$10 million in the bank to achieve this goal.
22 However, there are several suggestions of how
23 to go about securing that type of funding,
24 some of which increase -- a real estate
25 transfer tax increase, and that will fall on

1 homeowners like myself -- I'm glad I bought
2 before that went into place -- but if
3 nobody's familiar with those recommendations,
4 I will encourage you to -- to look them up,
5 find out what those are, and, if available, I
6 will encourage you to participate in that
7 public hearing on the 21st, because city
8 council and the mayor need to hear from a
9 variety of different people from the
10 communities, so if you have clients, family
11 members, neighbors, whoever it is that will
12 be impacted by this -- by this idea of an
13 affordable housing trust fund, they should go
14 and raise or share their opinion or their
15 concern with the members of the city council
16 who will be present during that day. It's
17 really important that, again, they hear from
18 a variety of different sources.

19 Yes, sir?

20 MS. GERHARDT: Bob first.

21 MR. DAMEWOOD: Where will that be
22 held, and at what time?

23 MS. GERHARDT: Are we stacking or not?
24 It was Bob first.

25 MR. TORRES: I'm sorry. Bob, go

1 ahead.

2 MR. DAMEWOOD: I just wanted to give
3 some background, if that's okay.

4 MR. TORRES: Absolutely.

5 MR. DAMEWOOD: Okay. So one of the
6 things that a consultant retained by the city
7 for the Affordable Housing Task Force -- one
8 of the things they found is there is a
9 shortage of approximately 20,000 affordable
10 units in the City of Pittsburgh, so that's
11 20,000 households who, you know, don't
12 have -- there's no unit available and
13 affordable to them to rent or purchase in the
14 City of Pittsburgh, and because of that, that
15 creates this ripple effect of unaffordability
16 where you've got one-third of the households
17 in the city paying more than they can afford
18 for housing. You've got 25,000 -- or, 23,000
19 households, excuse me, paying more than half
20 of their income for housing, so this is a
21 huge issue in the City of Pittsburgh.

22 The \$10 million was seen as the bare
23 minimum that the affordable housing trust
24 fund would need in order to even start to
25 close that gap, and, you know, so, of the

1 various sources -- potential sources of
2 revenue, the -- the task force looked at a
3 lot of various sources.

4 The only two that the city currently
5 has the legal authority to enact, to
6 implement, and that could come anywhere close
7 to raising \$10 million per year were an
8 across the board millage increase, so
9 increasing the real estate taxes for all
10 property owners in the city, so a half
11 percent millage increase, or a realty
12 transfer tax, so a 1 percent realty transfer
13 tax, which -- and the committee chose that,
14 the task force chose that, because it's a tax
15 that's paid once upon, you know, the
16 acquisition of property, it's paid at a time
17 when the people paying the tax have the
18 resources to pay it, right, and they have
19 financing to purchase that property, and
20 assisting first-time home buyers, low income
21 home buyers, is a task force activity, so
22 the -- or, a trust fund activity, so the
23 trust fund, itself, could ameliorate the
24 effect, any potential negative effect, that
25 this realty transfer tax would have on home

1 purchases, so because of all those things,
2 that's -- that's the revenue source that
3 was -- that was ultimately selected.

4 So I just wanted to get that out there
5 to, you know, make sure that everyone
6 understands, you know, why those decisions
7 were made, what's the justification for --
8 for that trust fund.

9 MR. TORRES: Great. Thank you.

10 MR. WHITTED: I just needed the time
11 and location of the Affordable Housing Task
12 Force.

13 MS. GERHARDT: It's actually on the
14 agenda.

15 MR. WHITTED: It is?

16 MS. GERHARDT: Everybody that needs a
17 reminder, it's under C, the affordable
18 housing trust fund.

19 MR. WHITTED: Okay. Thank you.

20 MR. DeYOUNG: Who would manage the
21 trust fund?

22 MS. SCHWARTZ: The URA would
23 administer the fund.

24 MR. DAMEWOOD: Yes, decisions would be
25 made by a governing board that would be

1 appointed by the mayor and -- you know,
2 nominated by council and appointed by the
3 mayor, based on recommendations by a citizen
4 advisory board that would also be nominated
5 by council and appointed by the mayor, but
6 the funds, themselves, would be administered
7 by the URA.

8 MR. DeYOUNG: Okay.

9 MR. TORRES: And when if -- and the
10 original list of potential members for those
11 groups did not include a Affirmatively
12 Furthering Fair Housing person, but now that
13 has been changed and now it does.

14 MR. DAMEWOOD: Yes.

15 MR. TORRES: So now that membership
16 will have at least one member who is a --

17 MR. DAMEWOOD: Fair housing advocate.

18 MR. TORRES: -- fair housing advocate
19 or expert, if you will, so that's good news.

20 So, again, please encourage folks
21 to -- to lend their voice to this public
22 hearing, because city council should hear
23 from a variety of different members of the
24 community. Whether they are for or against
25 it, it does not matter, but they should hear

1 from members of the community.

2 MR. QUISENBERRY: The one fair
3 housing -- clear fair housing concern or
4 issue that I think should be on city
5 council's plate when they're thinking about
6 this is location, location, location. If
7 they're going to create this fund to
8 subsidize affordable housing development,
9 it's critical that they think about where
10 they're going to assist that affordable
11 housing development.

12 I think what is clear is and
13 demonstrable is that affordable housing
14 within the City of Pittsburgh is largely, if
15 not exclusively, segregated in the areas of
16 racially concentrated poverty. It can be
17 mapped out, it can be assessed, it can be
18 evaluated. I think the city should put this
19 special fund, you know, to projects that go
20 at addressing that problem, and I think that
21 should be stated to city counsel clearly. I
22 think that's something this task force should
23 consider, and consider commenting to city
24 council about.

25 MR. TORRES: And I think they need to

1 hear it more than once, which is the other
2 piece, right, so we have different groups
3 that are advocates, housing advocates, and
4 they're all kind of saying similar things.
5 Maybe it would sink in that, "Hey, you have
6 five different groups telling us the same
7 thing. Maybe we should listen," rather than
8 just one voice going up and saying it. Thank
9 you.

10 MS. GERHARDT: Kevin, are you putting
11 that forward as a proposal for this group to
12 consider and to perhaps vote on so that we
13 might make some statement?

14 MR. QUISENBERRY: If this group is
15 capable of doing that, sure.

16 MS. GERHARDT: In terms of the
17 membership forms that we have received,
18 Carlos, do we have a quorum here?

19 MR. TORRES: I have to look at Rachel,
20 because she was handling the forms.

21 MS. KINTER: A quorum is a simple
22 majority; correct?

23 MR. TORRES: Yes.

24 MS. KINTER: So how many organizations
25 do we have?

1 You should continue talking and come
2 back to this.

3 MR. TORRES: Thank you. No pressure.

4 MS. GERHARDT: So is there any other
5 discussion on this possibility?

6 Kevin, could you reframe your
7 proposal, if you were thinking of this as a
8 proposal? I think you were just tossing it
9 out there.

10 MR. QUISENBERRY: Well, I would
11 propose that city council direct the URA to
12 make the location of sites that would be
13 assisted with this funding one of the top
14 priorities in their decision making process,
15 and the location should be limited to areas
16 that are not in those racially concentrated
17 areas of poverty.

18 You know, the idea here is we need to
19 develop affordable housing in areas of higher
20 opportunity and areas that are not
21 concentrated by poverty, areas that are not
22 segregated by race, and the affordable
23 housing stock that exists in the city, by and
24 large, or perhaps exclusively, is located in
25 those areas, or adjacent to those areas, and,

1 so, you know, as part of the obligation of
2 the city to affirmatively further fair
3 housing, I think they should take this tool
4 and ensure that there is a special pot of
5 money dedicated to creating affordable
6 housing opportunities that promote fair
7 housing choice for residents in the city.

8 MR. TORRES: Go ahead. She's doing
9 that.

10 MR. DAMEWOOD: I would like to add a
11 couple wrinkles to that. I agree,
12 absolutely, with that, with the sentiment.
13 You know that, Kevin.

14 I do need to add a couple wrinkles.
15 One is that one eligible use of the funds
16 would be home repairs for existing
17 homeowners, low income homeowners, and I
18 don't think we should limit those repairs not
19 to -- what's -- you know, to areas that are
20 not racially or ethnically concentrated
21 areas.

22 MS. SCHWARTZ: As well as rentals.

23 MR. DAMEWOOD: Right.

24 So the other wrinkle I would add to
25 that is, you know, if you look at someplace

1 like the lower Hill or East Liberty, right,
2 where there's a lot of market rate
3 development going on where I think anybody
4 would call that an area of opportunity, where
5 there's going to be lots of jobs, really good
6 access to public transportation, under the
7 definition that you just proposed, Kevin, I
8 think those areas would be excluded, and that
9 shouldn't be the case.

10 MR. QUISENBERRY: See, I don't -- I
11 don't -- I don't agree with that. I think
12 the footprint of the lower Hill development
13 is -- I think it's within the city, the
14 Downtown business core. If you look at the
15 city maps, I mean, it's located Downtown. It
16 is proximate, you know, to -- to the lower
17 Hill neighborhood, you know, but I think that
18 that's a unique situation.

19 MR. DAMEWOOD: All I'm saying is that
20 we need to be careful, because we should --
21 my own personal opinion, only speaking for
22 myself, not for my employer or -- and not any
23 of my clients, but we should absolutely
24 advocate for that principle, but we should be
25 careful about the way that it's implemented,

1 that we should try to avoid, you know,
2 unintended consequences.

3 MS. SCHWARTZ: I think this is part of
4 why there's a strong community review board
5 and a strong community review process, so
6 that we can really be thoughtful and be sort
7 of case by case, you know, put a little bit
8 of faith in the process that was developed
9 into this legislation, you know, there's
10 community review that is not going to approve
11 50 affordable units going up on a hill
12 isolated from whatever, but if, you know,
13 there is a neighborhood that we all have a
14 good sense of are we on the precipice of
15 turning that hasn't quite gotten there yet,
16 but we want to get something on the ground
17 before it does turn, that's the right
18 opportunity, we don't want to tie our hands.

19 MS. KINTER: Chuck was next.

20 MR. KEENAN: This isn't a very well
21 formed out idea, either, but I think the
22 community development block grant program is
23 required to be used I think in lower-income
24 neighborhoods, so that might be a way to
25 offset some of the things that you guys are

1 talking about with the trust fund, that we
2 already have a program that's supposed to be
3 working in those communities, and let's make
4 sure that we use those funds in those
5 communities, and that way we can use the
6 trust fund, which is more flexible, kind of
7 someplace to work where the federal money is
8 really not eligible, so I don't know if
9 that's kind of a way we look at a strategy,
10 an overall strategy, about how the city is
11 spending their housing money and what each
12 thing is doing, their effects on, you know,
13 the disparities in incomes across the city.

14 MR. TORRES: Again, when we were
15 thinking about the hearing, I guess my
16 encouragement is that council gets to hear
17 the different opinions --

18 MS. GERHARDT: Yes.

19 MR. TORRES: -- that we just
20 exchanged, right, because it's useful for
21 them to hear what the people working on the
22 ground and their -- and their clients could
23 benefit, or their consumers, could benefit
24 from when this is implemented, so I think all
25 these ideas should be shared at this -- in

1 this setting so no one, you know, goes
2 unheard, if you will.

3 MS. KINTER: And to answer your
4 question, we do not have a quorum.

5 MR. DAMEWOOD: Wow.

6 MS. KINTER: There's a lot of
7 duplicate people.

8 MR. TORRES: Which is okay. We can do
9 something electronically. We can send it
10 electronically and ask people to either say
11 yes or no, and we can do it that way, give
12 people a specific deadline, you know, by
13 Friday we need to know, and we can
14 communicate that to the rest of -- you know,
15 to everyone in the group.

16 MS. GIBSON: Just for clarification on
17 this form, we have 33 people who have filled
18 out forms, not including the forms that were
19 handed out today for you guys to fill out, so
20 quorum would then be 17 people, and we have
21 13 voters.

22 MS. GERHARDT: So if there's two
23 people from one organization, there's only
24 one vote for the organization.

25 MS. KINTER: Right.

1 MS. GERHARDT: One vote per
2 organization, so Carlos and I can't be
3 counted. There's three of us from the same
4 organization.

5 MR. KEENAN: So there's 33 separate
6 organizations?

7 MS. KINTER: Yes.

8 MS. GERHARDT: Yes, with more pending.

9 MR. TORRES: With more pending, yes.

10 MR. QUISENBERRY: Can I add one thing?
11 If something would come from this task force
12 to city council regarding the affordable
13 housing trust fund, of course it would be
14 fair housing minded, that's the point of this
15 task force. Bob's point, I think, is well
16 taken. It would need to be carefully thought
17 through.

18 You know, if there are three purposes,
19 each of the purposes should be looked at to
20 think about whether this locational aspect is
21 relevant to that or not. I think I could
22 concede, you know, money for homeowners to
23 repair their own homes. It should not be
24 limited just to wealthier, higher opportunity
25 areas.

1 I was concerned more with housing
2 development. I was concerned more with using
3 the money to develop new affordable units,
4 and those should be targeted locationally to
5 create better opportunities for lower income
6 renters in Pittsburgh.

7 MR. TORRES: Okay.

8 MS. GERHARDT: So I was actually
9 hoping that Paul would talk a little bit
10 about this next point, D.

11 Bob, do you think you could address
12 the -- just a brief description of -- and
13 maybe Gale, if you could weigh in here
14 together, or others, anybody else?

15 MR. KEENAN: Oh, I apologize.

16 MR. TORRES: If you printed it, the
17 agenda changed, sorry, but we have copies.

18 MR. DeYOUNG: I got it.

19 MR. DAMEWOOD: I'll give it a shot.
20 If anyone's interested in this, they should
21 talk to Paul because he's, I think, preparing
22 some comments, but -- so the housing
23 authority is what's called a moving to work
24 agency. Moving to work means it's -- it's
25 regulatory flexibility. It means that --

1 that housing -- that the Pittsburgh Housing
2 Authority was designated to have flexibility
3 from many HUD regulation, and how they get
4 flexibility is every year they come up with
5 a -- they prepare a moving to work plan, and
6 they submit that to HUD, so they tell HUD how
7 they're going to operate, you know, what --
8 what rules they're going to operate under,
9 and HUD reviews those rules and usually
10 grants them, you know, usually says --
11 blesses them.

12 Well, so, the housing authority has
13 posted its draft moving to work plan that
14 it's going to submit this year, and it's
15 accepting public comments on that plan before
16 it's submitted to HUD.

17 Paul, I think, could probably go
18 through what some of the concerns are a lot
19 better than I can. You know, I know one of
20 the things that the housing authority does is
21 they get -- the last time I looked at it was
22 two years ago -- but the about \$41 million
23 worth of voucher authority. They spend about
24 \$30 million of that on vouchers. They spend
25 the other 11 million repositioning their

1 existing public housing stock, basically
2 taking it off-line, taking much of it
3 off-line, redeveloping it in a less dense
4 mixed income configuration, so reducing the
5 number of affordable units. The housing
6 authority would say -- and Dave Weber is on
7 it -- would say that they're repositioning it
8 in a way that was stronger, more sustainable,
9 better living situations, safer for existing
10 residents, you know, mixed race setting, you
11 know, that it furthers fair housing agendas.

12 I think Paul would say they're taking
13 vital affordable housing off-line that people
14 need, and they're taking money that could be
15 used for rental subsidies out of the rental
16 subsidy pot to do it, but, again, Paul should
17 address that.

18 So I think that's one of the concerns,
19 and then there's some other -- there's some
20 specific fair housing concerns, so, for
21 instance, the -- the voucher -- you can use
22 Section 8 vouchers for home ownership, so
23 voucher holders can use their voucher to
24 purchase a home.

25 The way the housing authority -- well,

1 the way HUD -- the way the HUD regulations
2 were is it can be an actual income support,
3 so it can be treated as family income, as
4 household income, to -- to support principal,
5 interest, taxes, and insurance. That way, if
6 something happens to the household's income
7 while they're purchasing the house, while
8 they're paying off their mortgage, their
9 rental subsidy or their housing subsidy can
10 adjust to compensate for that. They won't
11 lose their house or default on their
12 mortgage.

13 Also, under the HUD system, households
14 with disabilities get an extended period of
15 voucher assistance. The way the housing
16 authority runs its Section 8 voucher program
17 is they block grant -- they capitalize it up
18 front. They convert it into ten years of
19 assistance at a certain level, and they use
20 that to buy down the mortgage. What that
21 does is it doesn't provide any income support
22 to people who are purchasing the home, and,
23 you know, I think, whatever, you can debate
24 whether that's -- that's the way everyone
25 else buys a house, right, so we can debate

1 how essential that is, but the other thing is
2 it deprives -- and the fair housing point is
3 it deprives people with disabilities what
4 they're entitled to under normal HUD rules,
5 which is twice the assistance that people who
6 don't have disabilities get to purchase a
7 house, so, you know, so there are fair
8 housing implications that -- I wish Paul was
9 here. I'm doing my best to channel him. He
10 could --

11 MS. GERHARDT: I don't know if he just
12 took a quick break. Here's a suggestion, we
13 table this for now, and that we come back to
14 it so the people really understand what's at
15 stake. The public hearing is on Thursday
16 at -- there's actually two different hearing
17 times, at 12:00 noon and at 5:30, and Paul is
18 very willing to work with people, answer
19 questions, and so on, if you want to prepare
20 any testimony or comments for those hearings.

21 So if we could go to the subcommittee
22 sign up, and, Carlos, do you want to address
23 this?

24 MR. TORRES: Sure. So as Helen said
25 at the beginning of the meeting, this group

1 was -- was formed to help inform the next
2 analysis of impediments that the city
3 planning department conducts every so often
4 to comply with federal rules, and during the
5 last assessment it was suggested that the
6 commission on human relations, which is our
7 body, convenes this group to help identify
8 how the planning department can improve input
9 from certain members of the community to the
10 analysis of impediment.

11 What has traditionally happened,
12 according to what I have been told, is there
13 are opportunities for the public to comment,
14 and the public doesn't show.

15 MS. GERHARDT: Or if they show --

16 MR. TORRES: The other part of what I
17 have heard is that if the public does show,
18 their comments are not included on the final
19 report that is created and submitted to the
20 federal government, so this group was formed
21 to kind of help bridge that gap on how not
22 only information is provided, but also how
23 information is included in the report.

24 So the steering committee met about a
25 week and a half ago, and talked about what

1 are the best strategies to helping form that
2 process, so a series of subcommittees were
3 established in the hopes that the rest of the
4 body will kind of volunteer to help on
5 specific subcommittees, and then those
6 subcommittees will come back to the quarterly
7 meetings and provide updates on what their
8 progress has been during that time period.

9 So we have a total of five -- let me
10 look at my notes before I -- so we have four
11 subcommittees. The first subcommittee will
12 deal with race and racially and ethnically
13 concentrated areas of poverty. The second
14 subcommittee will deal with disability. The
15 third committee will deal with gender --
16 sexual orientation and gender identity. And
17 the fourth committee will deal with
18 homelessness and the formally incarcerated.

19 So the goal is, again, that these
20 groups, we each work on these topics and come
21 up with ideas or suggestions on how the
22 housing authority -- excuse me, the -- the
23 planning department can work with these
24 different groups to make sure that, number
25 one, their input is heard, input is

1 collected, and included in the final report,
2 and they will do that independently of this
3 body, but when we have quarterly meetings,
4 then they will come back and say, "Okay, the
5 race and ethnicity committee worked on A and
6 B, and our next step is" -- whatever the next
7 step may be, and then we move to the next
8 subcommittee, so the work gets advanced
9 without all of us having to work on
10 everything together, because that's a little
11 overwhelming. So -- yes, sir?

12 MR. DAMEWOOD: Yeah, so I'm curious,
13 is the only role of the committee to help the
14 city -- the department of city planning with
15 community engagement, or will -- will these
16 committees also be identifying barriers to
17 fair housing choice?

18 MR. TORRES: Yes, absolutely. So,
19 number one, having to include the members of
20 these different groups to participate, but
21 also identify specific barriers or
22 impediments with those members of those
23 groups to access affordable, fair housing
24 within our jurisdiction, absolutely. Thank
25 you for clarifying that.

1 MR. DAMEWOOD: Okay. Thank you.

2 MR. KEENAN: Is there a reason why
3 formerly incarcerated and homeless were
4 chosen when they're not technically protected
5 classes, and families, for instance, aren't
6 on the list?

7 MS. GERHARDT: So there's actually, I
8 think, both familial status -- and in the
9 groups I believe that we can address some of
10 those issues, but I think that the thought
11 was that formerly incarcerated and
12 homelessness, there's a strong conjunction
13 with issues of with race, racial disparity,
14 and, of course, the commission did a really
15 wonderful report on conditions, housing
16 barriers based by the formerly incarcerated,
17 and there was a very strong connection.
18 Probably Sarah can speak to these a little
19 bit more.

20 MR. KEENAN: But is the idea to then
21 add those as protected classes, or to just
22 look at the issues that --

23 MR. TORRES: So one of the things that
24 we realized is that some of the protected
25 classes fall under many different --

1 different groups, so they're not necessarily
2 being excluded, it was just presumed that,
3 you know, familial status will fall under
4 race and ethnicity, and will fall under
5 poverty, and will fall under probably
6 disability, and will fall under, you know,
7 gender and sexual orientation, so the idea is
8 that we're not trying to exclude groups, but
9 that multiple -- or, that the same group may
10 fall under multiple categories, so each
11 committee will then -- yeah, because each
12 committee will then decide how broad or how
13 narrow their scope of what they're doing will
14 be. So, again, we're not necessarily saying,
15 "Only focus on race and not families," or,
16 "Focus on race, but don't focus on, you know,
17 the elderly," or any other thing like that.

18 MS. KINTER: I guess I have a comment
19 and a question. I wasn't here when the
20 steering committee put together these
21 different groups, but something that keeps
22 coming up at all of these meetings is the
23 financing of affordable housing, it's
24 Section 2, fair housing, and I was wondering
25 if that would be its own committee or not, or

1 it may just be part of other committees.

2 And to Chuck's point, I think familial
3 status discrimination is a big issue. We see
4 a lot of difference in treatment. You can
5 even find it on Craigslist, you know, "\$50
6 extra for your kid," or whatever, but I don't
7 know if it's worth having a committee for
8 that, as well, or putting that with another
9 group, but it --

10 MR. TORRES: And it's definitely not
11 100 percent inclusive to this group. There's
12 four groups that the steering committee
13 identified, so we're not necessarily saying,
14 "This is it, no more." It's just the initial
15 four that we thought were important, but if
16 there's anything more, than more shall be
17 created.

18 MR. KEENAN: I'm not objecting to it.
19 I just wanted to understand the rationale.

20 MR. HARVEY: And just to respond,
21 Chuck, so I think it is -- obviously, they're
22 not protected class in the case of homeless
23 and people who are formerly incarcerated, so
24 I think that the trick with that committee is
25 going to be to make the case of the

1 intersection of -- so I think, like, the HUD
2 guidance recently on discrimination by
3 private landlords against folks who have --
4 you know, that may be a disparate act, so
5 that's a clear overlap, and I think --

6 MR. TORRES: And there's a lot of
7 disabilities, mental health --

8 MR. HARVEY: Yeah, and you can make
9 the populations out of concentrated people
10 might be becoming homeless, but I think it
11 is -- it will be, like I say, tricky to put
12 that into, you know, how does that find its
13 way into an analysis of impediments that's
14 supposed to be specifically --

15 MS. SCHWARTZ: Maybe it just needs to
16 be sort of broadened, instead of just
17 formerly incarcerated and homelessness, to
18 perhaps, you know, non-protected classes, but
19 still have high barriers to housing.

20 MR. HARVEY: You know, I just -- I
21 think --

22 MS. SCHWARTZ: It's hard to make that
23 disparate impact argument because they're not
24 a protected class, so how to design the
25 intervention is going to be different.

1 MR. HARVEY: Right, but I don't know
2 if that's the -- like, that's not a fair --
3 if the -- if the city and county is going to
4 use impediments to address fair housing
5 barriers, you know, there's all sorts of
6 housing issues, but what are the specific
7 ones that can be addressed using fair
8 housing, but I -- not -- you know, I just go
9 back to my original point, there's a way you
10 can make the argument, I think.

11 MS. GERHARDT: Gale, are you
12 suggesting that we have a group that would
13 take these -- would make that case, really
14 make those connections very clear, so that it
15 could include -- but I could see where
16 familial status --

17 MS. SCHWARTZ: Well, familial status
18 is a protected class.

19 MS. GERHARDT: That's true. I'm
20 sorry.

21 MS. SCHWARTZ: So familial status, and
22 that leads to both sexual orientation and
23 gender identity, I mean, but there are some
24 things that are not a protected class.
25 Source of income, as of right now, because of

1 the stay in court, is still not a protected
2 class. Homelessness, you know, former
3 housing status, you know, criminal history, I
4 mean, there are things like that that are not
5 the protected classes, but, I mean, I think
6 those of us on the ground who are, you know,
7 working with folks are seeing that sort of
8 disparate impact of bubbling up, and because
9 there isn't the protection of the law, how
10 are we going to make that argument if -- you
11 know, because we can strengthen fair housing
12 locally. I mean, that's why we have sexual
13 orientation and gender identity as a
14 protected class now, even though it's not
15 recognized at the state or federal level, so
16 I do think that there needs to be some sort
17 of concerted effort to really look at what is
18 our local need.

19 MR. HARVEY: I would like to speak,
20 but I think you're right, and I think maybe,
21 you know, let's get -- in this instance,
22 homelessness or formerly incarcerated, so I
23 understand our jurisdictions where those have
24 been -- you know, housing, former housing
25 status, as a protected class; right? And

1 there's -- there's the housing authority, at
2 least like the one in New Orleans, they
3 changed their -- to make it that you would
4 not -- your -- your criminal background would
5 not be an impediment, so these are things
6 that we can -- we can make the analysis and
7 recommend that to see actual change.

8 MS. GERHARDT: I think that's a great
9 idea.

10 MR. TORRES: And, again, these are
11 committees that the steering committee
12 thought of, but they're not everything we're
13 going to do, so if there's a need for more,
14 let it be more.

15 MR. HARVEY: Also make -- let's do
16 some of the homework and then kind of see
17 where we are, and maybe this doesn't --
18 maybe -- maybe the impediments analysis,
19 maybe this is the place for that, but maybe
20 we'll find that it isn't.

21 MR. KEENAN: I think if you frame a --

22 MS. GERHARDT: Go ahead.

23 MR. KEENAN: I'm saying if you frame
24 it kind of like Gale did with, you know,
25 let's look at all the barriers that are out

1 there, and maybe we can get that -- get that
2 wired -- you know, we all heard about the
3 evictions, the problems that's causing
4 people, Desmond talk, and credit, criminal
5 history, all of those kinds of things can
6 really be detriments to people's ability to
7 get housing, so we should take a nice look at
8 that.

9 MR. QUISENBERRY: I think the Fair
10 Housing Act, the state and the federal and
11 what the commission does are very broad, and
12 also very enforceable, and they're to be
13 aggressively pursued, and, so, if there's an
14 argument to be made why there should be
15 another protected class in the city, I think,
16 you know, this is the guy to make that
17 argument to, to the commission, to have them,
18 you know, identify it, study it, declare it,
19 push for it, you know, to have that added or
20 included.

21 MR. TORRES: We welcome it.

22 MR. QUISENBERRY: Peter's other point
23 about proving disparity impact with regard to
24 a criminal history or homelessness, I think
25 HUD's position in the April guidance that

1 they gave, what the criminal history was,
2 there's a strong case to be made on the
3 national level already, and I think HUD cited
4 to the data to support that argument, and I
5 think HUD's recommendation was for state and
6 localities to analyze their local data in the
7 same fashion that it's been analyzed in these
8 national looks, so that's something that this
9 committee should recommend to the city, to
10 analyze within the city, to the county, to
11 analyze within the county, the disparate
12 impact on the basis of criminal record, on
13 the basis of other things that we believe
14 clearly have a connection, but could use that
15 localized data to make an argument.

16 MR. DEAN: You mentioned that --
17 you're saying that there's four
18 subcommittees, but there's a fifth one on
19 here that is outreach and education, and I
20 didn't know whether that was just one to be
21 considered, or whether that was one that may
22 actually -- because everyone in this room, we
23 all -- we're all huge supporters and believe
24 in fair housing, but the challenge that I
25 have, especially in my industry, is that

1 I can preach to my committee and they're gung
2 ho, but it's getting the message out, and
3 that's where the real struggle, especially
4 with the particular area of -- of concern
5 that I've been having, which is with support
6 animals, because we've been getting -- we've
7 been getting a lot of blow back from
8 apartments from property managers, it's not
9 only statewide, but it's now nationally, and
10 there's a lack of outreach and there's a lack
11 of education, and that, to me, is -- that is
12 probably the most important, because where we
13 already know what the problems are; it's the
14 people out there who are actively involved in
15 what we are trying to change that will look
16 at us and say that we're trying -- that we're
17 either overstepping, or they don't -- "you
18 don't understand what we deal with on a
19 day-to-day basis," so I just want to make
20 sure that this fifth committee is still -- is
21 still viable.

22 MR. TORRES: It is.

23 MR. DEAN: Okay.

24 MR. TORRES: The only reason, because
25 that -- that one is not attached to a

1 specific group. It's, like, overall.

2 MR. DEAN: Okay.

3 MR. TORRES: All the groups, you know,
4 all the information related to fair housing,
5 to all the different communities, so that one
6 is not attached to race or ethnicity, just
7 overall.

8 MR. DEAN: Okay.

9 MR. TORRES: So, yes, you are correct,
10 there's a fifth one, except it's not attached
11 to one of the groups we identified earlier,
12 so thank you for that. So, yes, I do have a
13 sign-in sheet for that one.

14 So the goal is that -- so we have
15 sign-in sheets, so if you are interested in a
16 particular topic, that you have the
17 opportunity, and, so, what we're going to ask
18 to start with, we are going to ask people to
19 volunteer for just one group to start and see
20 how much work there is involved with that
21 particular topic before you volunteer for
22 another one. We don't want people to be
23 overcommitted and then not be able to, you
24 know, fulfill their obligations with more
25 than one group.

1 MR. O'HANLON: On this -- this reminds
2 me of another process I was involved in, and
3 what we arrived at was the realization that
4 there are subject matter subcommittees and
5 then there is a function oriented
6 subcommittee, which is the outreach and
7 education, and I think that maybe we want to
8 look at it being populated in a different way
9 where, in other words, if we don't have
10 representatives of each of the subject
11 oriented subcommittees, there's no way that
12 the function can be adequately carried out.
13 Now, the flip side of it is if you don't have
14 a functioning committee, then it sort of
15 becomes everybody's job and it's nobody's job
16 and it often doesn't get handled, so I like
17 the idea of having a subcommittee
18 responsible, and it's clearly distinct from
19 the others in a certain way, so I just think
20 that maybe we want to give some thought of
21 how we populate that, because if it's all
22 people engaged in outreach, but they're not
23 really involved in the subject, you know,
24 we're probably going to lose stuff, so just
25 as a thought.

1 MR. TORRES: Thank you. Absolutely.
2 So maybe we as the -- I don't know, I don't
3 know, but it's a good thought.

4 MS. GERHARDT: And one of my initial
5 thoughts is that this may be -- like, we may
6 begin with more specific subject-based
7 subcommittees and work to develop products,
8 and then the outreach and education committee
9 works to help in engaging those areas, so
10 that -- that's just one possibility.

11 MR. TORRES: This body gets to decide.

12 MR. DAMEWOOD: When we have a quorum.

13 MS. GIBSON: So I think, too, what
14 product are we expecting out of these
15 subcommittees? I think we kind of touched on
16 it, but I still don't have a great idea of
17 what to expect, and that might provide some
18 clarity, too.

19 MR. TORRES: So one of the things is
20 that -- because the angle is to help inform
21 the AI, correct, the analysis of impediment,
22 so before the committee reaches, you know, a
23 conclusion as to how and why or who the
24 department of planning needs to reach out to,
25 that they do some analysis, then they look at

1 literature, that they look at studies of what
2 has been done somewhere else, right, because
3 we cannot compare Pittsburgh to Chicago or
4 New York or San Francisco for that matter,
5 right, so what comparable city can we look at
6 that will help us get an idea how this
7 community standard can be included, and there
8 may be that there's nothing out there, we
9 don't know, but that may be the starting
10 point, that a couple people will do some
11 research and find out, okay, what has been
12 done related to race and ethnicity in
13 whatever city, and it may be within the
14 state, it might be in a different state, and
15 then they say, "Okay, they did these three
16 things. Is that something that is doable in
17 Pittsburgh, and what would it take to do
18 those three things in Pittsburgh," whether
19 there's, you know, resource -- financial
20 resources, human resources, whether it's, you
21 know, working with existing groups or forming
22 a group, or whatever the -- whatever the
23 ideas may be, and I'm just talking right off
24 the top of my head.

25 MS. GERHARDT: Recommendations for

1 laws and policies.

2 MR. TORRES: Exactly, recommendations
3 for laws or -- at the local level, at the
4 county level, or whether it may be the trust
5 fund that we were talking about earlier, and
6 we have a little bit of exchange about how we
7 should not limit ourselves, so those kinds of
8 ideas is what is expected, and if the -- if a
9 specific subcommittee wants to have some sort
10 of forum where they get input from the
11 community, they're free to do that. If they
12 want to just do a literature review, talk to
13 experts, or talk to social service providers,
14 whatever the committee may choose to get to
15 whatever their angle may be, so the committee
16 and their chair will get to plan what their
17 work will look like.

18 MS. GIBSON: And do we have an overall
19 timeline of what we want to see the
20 committees complete so -- yeah, there's the
21 literature review or any comparisons --

22 MR. TORRES: So I believe the next
23 analysis of impediment doesn't start until
24 2018, is that correct, or later?

25 MS. KINTER: 2019.

1 MR. TORRES: So we have some time.

2 MS. GIBSON: So it's already
3 September.

4 MR. TORRES: So we have some time, so
5 it's not like in the next three weeks,
6 because it starts January 1st or something,
7 so in that sense, we have a little bit of
8 breathing room so we don't have to rush, but
9 we can definitely provide more specific goals
10 or -- or benchmarks after today.

11 And after the committees have a chance
12 to meet and decide, "Oh, only two people
13 signed up, we need more people to accomplish
14 this work," and we'll reach out to the folks
15 who are not here, saying we need more people
16 for the disability subcommittee or whatever.
17 That's basically just on top, that's why I
18 mentioned that one.

19 MS. GERHARDT: And for the outreach
20 and education committee, I could see ongoing
21 work being really valuable, so, like, helping
22 to educate on the source of income,
23 legislation, and, you know, there are -- I
24 think there were some misconceptions that,
25 you know, might help to prevent a lot of

1 concern if there had just been better
2 communication on some things, so more time to
3 develop a kind of outreach and education on
4 things like that.

5 So beyond work on the analysis of
6 impediments, maybe that could be a useful
7 committee for just ongoing work to support
8 fair housing through outreach and education.

9 MR. O'HANLON: This is Paul. I would
10 just sort of add to that, that thinking about
11 this as the function subcommittee, I mean,
12 you've already brought up the issue of
13 recruitment. I mean there are a variety of
14 functions. It could be research -- I mean, I
15 think that in the end there will be certain
16 functions that we need to kind of
17 operationalize, and, so, it may be that
18 outreach and education is part of a longer
19 string, but, you know, just sort of food for
20 thought.

21 MR. TORRES: So we have the sign-in
22 sheets. I'll pass them around. If you are
23 interested -- if you're not and you have to
24 think about it, feel free. Please volunteer
25 for just one to start with.

1 MR. DAMEWOOD: Well, one of the
2 subject matter committees; right?

3 MR. TORRES: Yes.

4 MR. DAMEWOOD: So someone could
5 volunteer for one of the subject matter
6 committees and for the outreach and
7 education; right?

8 MR. TORRES: Yes, yes. That's the
9 only exception.

10 MR. DAMEWOOD: Thank you.

11 MS. GIBSON: Do we -- do we want the
12 subcommittees to meet before our next
13 quarterly meeting on December 6th?

14 MS. GERHARDT: I hope.

15 MR. TORRES: Ideally, at least, even
16 if it is just a phone or e-mail exchange or
17 something, to introduce yourselves and say,
18 "Hey, let's set up a time to talk," and at
19 least you can say, "Hey, we talked about
20 meeting, and our meeting is on, you know,
21 January 10th," I don't know, whatever it may
22 be.

23 MS. KINTER: So correct me if I'm
24 wrong, but I think the staff of the
25 Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations will

1 contact everyone who signed up for a sheet
2 and get you guys together so you know who's
3 on the committee.

4 MR. TORRES: Yes, yes.

5 MS. KINTER: And then go forth.

6 MR. TORRES: And then we'll tell you
7 who your chairperson is, and then that
8 chairperson will take the lead.

9 MS. GERHARDT: Carlos, do you have one
10 more?

11 MR. TORRES: Oh, yes, outreach.
12 Sorry. Education.

13 MR. O'HANLON: So someone like Rachel
14 would be sending us an e-mail and saying
15 which subcommittee are you interested in
16 serving on, and then the potential chairs of
17 said subcommittee would get a list of these
18 folks that are interested, that kind of
19 thing. Okay.

20 MR. TORRES: Exactly like that.

21 MS. GIBSON: For further
22 clarification, are we requiring all
23 33 members -- each person must be on at least
24 one subcommittee, and they must sign up by --
25 you don't -- do we not put a deadline?

1 Because my worry is it's going to drag out a
2 long time if we don't set up a deadline with
3 those requirements, so I would say by the end
4 of the month?

5 MR. TORRES: That's fair.

6 MS. GERHARDT: For those that don't
7 sign up, if we don't see your name, we follow
8 up on those for committees.

9 MS. SURMICK: And then just one other
10 clarification question, we're signing up for
11 one subject matter, or, I mean, for example,
12 we're a housing counseling agency, and it
13 makes more sense for us to be more heavily
14 involved in the outreach and education,
15 especially from a consumer perspective,
16 because we don't necessarily focus on any of
17 the specific subject matters specifically;
18 rather, we see them all.

19 MR. TORRES: Um-hum.

20 MS. SURMICK: So we don't necessarily
21 have to do a subject matter?

22 MR. TORRES: No.

23 MR. O'HANLON: But I would urge that
24 each subject matter committee --

25 MR. TORRES: Has at least one

1 representative.

2 MR. O'HANLON: -- has at least one
3 person --

4 MR. TORRES: In the outreach.

5 MR. O'HANLON: Yes.

6 MR. TORRES: That make sense.

7 MS. SCHWARTZ: I have a question --
8 well, more of a comment. With these -- these
9 sort of group four groups, I guess I'm just
10 curious as to why home ownership isn't
11 necessarily included, but as a subject group,
12 I mean, there's -- there's a huge problem
13 with minority home ownership in Pittsburgh.

14 MR. TORRES: It can be.

15 MS. GERHARDT: It can be included, but
16 it just would be addressed in race and
17 ethnicity, it would be addressed in
18 disability, so if Paul has concerns about
19 barriers to home ownership, so couldn't that
20 be in all of them?

21 MR. TORRES: Well, so, this is what --

22 MS. SCHWARTZ: Yeah, I guess that's
23 the question of how do we want to --

24 MR. TORRES: So this panel would be --

25 MS. SCHWARTZ: -- to tackle it, do we

1 tackle it through the protected class, versus
2 through the type of housing?

3 MR. TORRES: Because one of the
4 barriers we talked about could be home
5 ownership, right, because of our -- whether
6 it's your income, your family status, or your
7 race or your ethnicity, or whatever the
8 protected classes are, so I think the
9 expectation is that -- and, again, maybe we
10 need to say it, put it in writing, like, when
11 you're thinking -- when you're working on the
12 race and ethnicity or whatever the
13 subcommittee is, you need to be thinking
14 about also about home ownership, not only
15 renting or --

16 MS. SCHWARTZ: But I think my concern
17 is oftentimes -- and it's happened throughout
18 this meeting, even -- is that when we talk
19 about fair housing, it often slides to renter
20 issues, and, granted, the low income folks,
21 they are predominantly renters, but, I mean,
22 with fair housing, it's -- it's not just a
23 renter issue, and, so, for me, it's sort of
24 like this home ownership gets overshadowed a
25 lot in conversations that I am witness to,

1 and I'm just sort of --

2 MR. TORRES: So we can certainly
3 include that when we send out more details or
4 a timeline about the different subcommittees,
5 remind folks like, "You need to also be
6 thinking about home ownership for this
7 particular group so it doesn't get, you know,
8 pushed aside or" --

9 MS. GERHARDT: And for the one -- the
10 sign-up sheet for the formerly incarcerated
11 and homeless, if we -- I think we came to a
12 conclusion that that group will really focus
13 on not just those two groups, but looking at
14 ways -- you know, are -- is there a need for
15 other -- disparate impact, but then is there
16 a need for us to advocate for there being a
17 new protected class, as well, where it's an
18 explicit part of our city code, so just keep
19 that in mind when you're signing up for that,
20 that that is going to be kind of a more broad
21 range than just those two groups listed at
22 the top.

23 MR. DEAN: So these four, you sign up
24 for, but this overarching outreach and
25 education, you could put your name on this

1 and put your name on one of these four, as
2 well?

3 MS. GERHARDT: Yes.

4 MR. TORRES: Right.

5 MR. DEAN: I just wanted to make sure.

6 MS. GERHARDT: But you don't have to.

7 MR. DEAN: You don't have to, but --

8 MS. GERHARDT: If you put your name on
9 outreach and education, you don't have to do
10 one of the subject areas.

11 MR. TORRES: And, I'm sorry, we don't
12 have your information. Put an e-mail next to
13 your name, or your phone number, so that we
14 can reach you. Do we have a form for you?
15 We should have it, but if we don't --

16 MR. DEAN: Okay.

17 MR. TORRES: So I know how to reach
18 you, because otherwise you will be waiting to
19 hear from us and you'll never hear from us.

20 (Discussion off the record.)

21 MR. TORRES: Helen, do you want to go
22 through 3-D, since he's back, and see if he
23 has anything to share with us? Although we
24 put him on the spot. His face is, like,
25 "What did I do?"

1 MS. GERHARDT: Paul, you left exactly
2 when I was hoping that you could address the
3 hearing on Thursday, the moving toward the
4 annual plan with the Housing Authority of the
5 City of Pittsburgh, if you wanted to address
6 any special areas of concern, or if you think
7 there's anything that we might speak to
8 regarding fair housing concerns.

9 MR. O'HANLON: Okay. Well, so, this
10 Thursday is a public comment period. The
11 housing authority is submitting their annual
12 plan to HUD to their move to work yearly
13 action plan. It impacts both the traditional
14 public housing community, as well as
15 Section 8 housing choice voucher programs, so
16 there's very little that it didn't impact.

17 So I think that there are
18 opportunities for written comments till maybe
19 the 15th or something, but I know that the
20 public hearing is on the 8th, so time is
21 short; the 8th is Thursday, this is Tuesday.

22 I mean, there's a lot of things to
23 say. I mean, one of the overarching concerns
24 is that nothing in the principles of it
25 mentioned affirmatively fair -- furthering

1 fair housing, nothing in the body of it seems
2 to address fair housing issues, but -- and,
3 so, in a certain sense that's completely
4 missing.

5 What is present are a number of
6 proposed changes, and I'm not quite sure how
7 much detail you want from me about it, but
8 the proposed changes include changes dealing
9 with the Section 8 voucher rent
10 reasonableness standards. In other words,
11 what Section 8 will -- how much -- how much
12 apartment you can afford in rent. That will
13 apparently be reduced. It basically amounts
14 to large amounts of dollars that come to the
15 housing authority primarily for the housing
16 choice voucher program being redirected to
17 construction and kind of creating additional
18 units largely in mixed income communities,
19 which means that the housing authority
20 will -- apparently is proposing to reduce the
21 number of housing authority units, as it has
22 been doing, and increasing other units, some
23 of them tax credited properties, some of --
24 there's a whole variety of things which they
25 propose moving money to.

1 They will be creating a fund to pay
2 the landlords who are engaged in the
3 Section 8 home ownership -- or, housing
4 choice voucher program who have damage claims
5 against tenants that the housing authority
6 will, in fact, be a payor, a lot I can say
7 about that.

8 What are the other major points to
9 remember?

10 MR. KEENAN: Bob was talking about a
11 home ownership concern you had, something
12 about capitalizing the vouchers.

13 MR. O'HANLON: The housing authority
14 had -- so with respect to Section 8 housing
15 choice vouchers, you can, in effect, buy a
16 house with that Section 8 money instead of
17 renting a house, and you know as I will say
18 lots and lots of people are buying houses
19 with Section 8 money, and they're all
20 landlords, and that what you could do is have
21 a tenant or the recipient actually buy the
22 house, but the housing authority has not
23 chosen to implement the housing choice
24 voucher program, they have their own program,
25 which has -- I have a number of concerns

1 about, having represented gazillions of low
2 income homeowners and tenants over the years,
3 and one of which is that it's all directed
4 toward the mortgage amount and none of it is
5 directed toward the utilities, taxes, and
6 other expenses that often end up kind of
7 crushing the deal, but they proposed to
8 essentially limit the number of available
9 home ownership vouchers because of some kind
10 of capitalization of the expense concerns
11 that they talk about in the report, so in
12 other words, they're talking about a
13 rationing of available slots for home
14 ownership, which is particularly concerning,
15 given that they're -- they're able to place
16 less -- maybe 30 percent of the people with
17 vouchers in actual rental housing. The
18 return rate of vouchers is nearly 70 percent,
19 so people get a voucher they can't use, they
20 end up returning it, and that is creating a
21 huge cascading problem where people who could
22 get housing assistance aren't able to use it,
23 and, so, there are whole ranges of concerns.

24 MR. DAMEWOOD: So the -- the problem
25 that Paul mentioned earlier about the payment

1 standard is really relevant here; right? So,
2 I mean, the city just passed a law to make
3 source of income a protected class to expand
4 the housing that's available to -- to voucher
5 holders who are looking for housing; right?
6 It's a serious issue. But I would argue that
7 the payment standard is at least as important
8 in terms of expanding housing choice as
9 outlawing discrimination against voucher
10 holders, you know, because if the payment
11 standard isn't high enough, you just can't --
12 certain neighborhoods just off limits, right,
13 because you can't find a house there within
14 the housing authority's voucher payment
15 standards.

16 So the housing authority in this
17 moving to work plan, they -- on one hand,
18 they say, "Well, we're going to study that.
19 We're going to -- we're going move to
20 something called a success rate payment
21 standard," and no one really knows what that
22 means.

23 MR. O'HANLON: No one knows what that
24 is.

25 MR. DAMEWOOD: But they're going to

1 study that, but while they're studying that,
2 they're going to reduce -- they're going to
3 eliminate their exception payment standard,
4 their exception rent. So, in other words,
5 right now, they have higher rents in higher
6 rent areas, higher payment standards in
7 higher rent areas. They're going to
8 eliminate that right now, except for with
9 people with disabilities, that's the one area
10 where they will keep it in place. While they
11 study this other kind of payment standard
12 that no one really knows what they're talking
13 about --

14 MR. O'HANLON: While the lion's share
15 of their Section 8 money is going -- spend on
16 the people that it's really intended to
17 benefit.

18 MR. DAMEWOOD: So that's a huge issue.
19 I don't know how that impacts the work of,
20 you know, this committee.

21 MS. JOHNSON: Home ownership issues,
22 too, there is this concern that home
23 ownership is being undercut by these changes,
24 that the ability of people to buy homes with
25 Section 8 vouchers would be undercut by these

1 proposed changes; am I understanding that
2 correctly?

3 MS. SCHWARTZ: But that's not
4 something that's being utilized in the first
5 place.

6 MR. DAMEWOOD: Not in Pittsburgh.

7 MS. SCHWARTZ: So when I say -- I'm
8 talking generally limited to Pittsburgh.

9 MR. O'HANLON: But, nonetheless,
10 they're talking about putting further limits
11 on it.

12 MS. SCHWARTZ: Right, right.

13 MR. O'HANLON: I mean, I don't
14 disagree. It doesn't -- I'm not convinced
15 that they're getting a ground swell of
16 interest in it in the first place, but
17 they're talking about kind of -- even
18 further.

19 MS. GERHARDT: So the lack of interest
20 due to the restrictions put on it by this
21 housing authority, as compared the other
22 places?

23 MS. SCHWARTZ: I always thought the
24 lack of interest had to do with it's hard to
25 find a lender that's going to want to, you

1 know, originate that mortgage.

2 MS. SURMICK: And then there's also,
3 in my experience, a lack of awareness that
4 people can even take advantage of the
5 program, the Section 8 home ownership
6 program.

7 MR. O'HANLON: The market is the
8 public housing tenant who are in the family
9 self-sufficiency program as an inducement to
10 get them out of public housing. It's not
11 marketed to really Section 8 voucher holders.

12 MS. GERHARDT: So outreach and
13 education.

14 MR. TORRES: Yeah.

15 MS. SCHWARTZ: Well, that's more
16 advocacy towards the housing authority
17 before -- I mean, you don't want to do
18 outreach and education on a program that
19 doesn't exist.

20 MR. QUISENBERRY: On the payment
21 standard question, do we know what
22 neighborhoods will become unavailable to
23 Section 8 voucher holders when they reduce
24 the payment standards?

25 MR. DAMEWOOD: That information -- you

1 can get that information. I don't know
2 offhand. I mean, you know what those
3 neighborhoods are.

4 MR. QUISENBERRY: Squirrel Hill,
5 Shadyside, Highland Park, you know, places
6 with very high amenities and --

7 MR. DAMEWOOD: They're higher rent.

8 MR. QUISENBERRY: -- public schools
9 and higher rent.

10 MR. HARVEY: Planning a suit already,
11 Kevin?

12 MR. QUISENBERRY: I'm suggesting that
13 may be a disparate impact on the basis of
14 race or other protected classes by a
15 reduction of that payment standard. I just
16 wondered how the housing authority has looked
17 at it, and if they have looked at it through
18 a fair housing lens or not, and I think if
19 they haven't, they should, and I think we
20 should.

21 MR. TORRES: And that's why people
22 should go on Thursday and talk.

23 MR. O'HANLON: I see a distinct dearth
24 of data justifying these changes. I mean, I
25 read the report, and it's like they're

1 implementing things, and I'm wondering,
2 "Well, what's the data to suggest this is the
3 right thing to do," and it's not there.

4 MR. QUISENBERRY: Is there a rationale
5 stated for it?

6 MS. SCHWARTZ: I'm sorry, I'm still a
7 little --

8 MR. O'HANLON: The rationale --

9 MS. SCHWARTZ: -- their payment
10 standards reduced, because Section 8 just
11 raised their payment standards.

12 MR. DAMEWOOD: Overall, but there is
13 something called exception payment standards,
14 so the housing authority can --

15 MS. SCHWARTZ: Who gets the exception?

16 MR. DAMEWOOD: In higher rent
17 neighborhoods, so it's --

18 MR. KEENAN: It's done through rent
19 reasonableness, right, so the fair market
20 rent in a particular neighborhood is higher
21 than the fair market rent for -- for MSA,
22 they can go above --

23 MR. O'HANLON: There's a HUD authority
24 that implement changes up to 120 percent of
25 the federal fair market rent.

1 MS. SCHWARTZ: Right, right, because
2 any -- any voucher holder or -- or whatever
3 in the second year of the voucher, that
4 second year, they're saying that they can
5 have the rent raised to the rate of rent
6 reasonableness; right?

7 MR. O'HANLON: That's a different
8 thing.

9 MS. SCHWARTZ: That's a different
10 thing?

11 MR. O'HANLON: That's a different
12 thing.

13 MR. QUISENBERRY: The idea is the
14 housing authority will not let you use a
15 voucher if the rent for the unit is higher
16 than what the payment standard can pay.

17 MS. SCHWARTZ: Okay.

18 MR. QUISENBERRY: Except they can when
19 they employ this exception, and what they're
20 talking about doing now is taking away the
21 exception so that there's a cap at the
22 general PMSA payment standard.

23 MR. O'HANLON: My sense is they had
24 only recently started granting exception to
25 rents.

1 MR. QUISENBERRY: So, for instance,
2 in, say, what is it, lower Lawrenceville or
3 upper Lawrenceville, you know, I haven't
4 looked at this in five years or so, but the
5 rents are generally cheaper in upper
6 Lawrenceville than they are, say, in lower
7 Lawrenceville or Friendship or Bloomfield or
8 Highland Park or Shadyside or Squirrel Hill
9 or a number of other places, and, you know,
10 if you're a voucher holder and you want to go
11 live in one of those other places, you may
12 not be able to do it.

13 I mean, the payment standard might
14 afford upper Lawrenceville, but not those
15 other places, and that's where the exception
16 payment standard comes into play. The
17 housing authority can and has exercised its
18 discretion to give exceptions where the rents
19 are higher. Now they're saying, "We're going
20 to take that away while we look at some other
21 thing."

22 MR. HARVEY: Do you know, has the
23 exception been granted only in cases where
24 the voucher holders are disabled? Do you
25 know if those are the only times it's been

1 granted?

2 MR. DAMEWOOD: No, it's not the only
3 time it's been granted.

4 MR. HARVEY: I wonder if that in
5 practice if it's really only been granted
6 to -- I'm just saying, in practice, was that
7 the case that they made?

8 MR. DAMEWOOD: It was the basis of a
9 reasonable accommodation request, which when
10 received kind of forces them to do it, unless
11 it's a fundamental alteration or undue
12 burden, so, you know, those were the few
13 cases there was a way to compel them to offer
14 this exception rent standard.

15 Because the data was so horrible in
16 the last recent years, they were compelled to
17 implement it on an increasing basis, which,
18 of course adds some cost to each voucher, but
19 given that most of their money is going
20 unspent, they're using it for other reasons,
21 you can argue, "Well, what's the problem?"
22 Well, I don't know, but they're not doing
23 that any more.

24 MS. GERHARDT: So the public comment
25 period, we think, in terms of written

1 comments, goes to the 15th, and if we could
2 find out what that date is send it out to the
3 group so that those who can't make the
4 hearing this Thursday could at least submit
5 written comments, that would be important.

6 Paul, is -- how much weight do they
7 give public comment? How much influence can
8 we have here? Do you have some sense?

9 MR. HARVEY: Who tends to show up at
10 these things, and who they represent?

11 MR. O'HANLON: I know there have been
12 times in the past where the public comments
13 were delivered to the housing authority's
14 lawyer and there was nobody else in the room,
15 and I never thought that it made much of a
16 difference unless it got outside that room,
17 and I wasn't convinced that it did, so I
18 think that it behooves us to reach out to
19 board members and other people, because, you
20 know, I think people need to hear dissenting
21 opinions, and I'm afraid that within that
22 loop there's not a whole lot of dissenting
23 opinions that get expressed.

24 MS. SALEM: So I have the printout
25 from the website, and the final date is

1 September 15th by the close of business at
2 5:00 p.m. for written comments.

3 MR. QUISENBERRY: I think under the
4 regulations, which they are still obligated
5 to follow, even though they're moving to
6 work, I think they have to respond to written
7 comments, and those responses -- the comments
8 and response have to be submitted to HUD for
9 HUD's review and approval of the plan.

10 MR. DAMEWOOD: The actual comments or
11 a summary of the comments?

12 MR. QUISENBERRY: Well, no, if you
13 show up in person, my understanding is they
14 can summarize the comments, but if you submit
15 written comments, my understanding is they
16 have to show the written comments and respond
17 to the written comments.

18 MR. O'HANLON: But, again, I wouldn't
19 hold my breath with respect to what HUD would
20 do, because HUD is usually faced with the
21 Hobson's choice of denying everything that's
22 being asked for -- you know, it's sort of
23 like you really hope to get a more nuanced
24 approach. I'm not holding my breath that
25 that would get us there, but --

1 MS. GERHARDT: So it really is the
2 housing authority's decision makers that we
3 need to reach and help inform or persuade.

4 MR. O'HANLON: Right, right. I mean,
5 there are aspects of the move to work thing
6 that I don't like, which is that all of the
7 HUD protections that are built into the
8 regulations are essentially waived, so it
9 allows the housing authority to do things
10 that are potentially worrisome because
11 they're waived, they're all -- all of that is
12 essentially waived. Given the level of
13 crisis I feel that we have in this city, for
14 them to have discretionary authority to play
15 with a program and do things that tweak it
16 and make it work here I feel is critical,
17 and, you know, that discretion that they
18 have, if utilized correctly, could be a
19 lifesaver. I just don't see it happening in
20 the current plan.

21 MR. KEENAN: So, again, I don't know
22 how accurate this is, but this is what I
23 think has been happening with them in the
24 past because their moving to work, so because
25 I haven't used some of their Section 8

1 funding, I think you said \$11 million a year,
2 they would have normally turned that back,
3 they can repurpose that money into their
4 capital fund, and I believe that's how they
5 did a lot of Addison Terrace redevelopment,
6 they scaled that way down, and they used
7 money that could have gone to Section 8 to
8 actually tear down public housing units to
9 further reduce the amount of money that we're
10 saying can go to programs, and I think
11 they're going to do the same thing with
12 Allegheny Dwellings --

13 MR. DAMEWOOD: They already do.

14 MR. KEENAN: -- because they don't --
15 they didn't get their low income housing tax
16 credit application approved, so they could
17 potentially use the Section 8 money that they
18 were going to spend there to tear down --

19 MR. DAMEWOOD: I think they've already
20 started demolition.

21 MR. KEENAN: They're on voluntary
22 relocation right now with the intent, I
23 think, to tear it down, so I think it's
24 important that we go and say something like,
25 you know, "You should use the money that

1 you're given and the intended purpose." If
2 not, you know, the flexibility is great, at
3 least they don't have to turn it back in to
4 HUD, but really using it to tear down more
5 units, and we can't afford to have units torn
6 down, so at least to get them to do a
7 one-for-one replacement, maybe if they're
8 going to use it for tear downs, I mean,
9 there's a lot of things we can talk about,
10 but I think it's important for us to
11 understand kind of what is going on with that
12 money, how they're using it.

13 MR. QUISENBERRY: There might be a
14 contradiction between the market analysis
15 that Bob mentioned earlier and the market
16 analysis that the housing authority has done
17 to justify this continued reduction of units.
18 I know in the stated justification there was
19 this theme again that the population of
20 Pittsburgh has been shrinking since 1980 or
21 '60 or '40 or something. That seems
22 inconsistent with the conclusions of, you
23 know, the study that was done recently that
24 found a great need for -- especially deeply
25 affordable units, not that we need to

1 continue reducing deeply affordable units, so
2 maybe there's some expert debate that needs
3 to occur, or maybe the housing authority
4 hasn't analyzed it in that way.

5 MR. O'HANLON: I think the review from
6 20,000 -- demonstrating need for about 20,000
7 more affordable units in this city. It's a
8 social responsibility that we have. Okay?
9 What we're essentially doing is we're --
10 we're filling a social responsibility of
11 building affordable housing by taking money
12 that was earmarked for needy families and
13 essentially picking their pocket and doing it
14 from their funds. I mean, it just seems
15 wrong to me. I mean, I really think we need
16 to find a way of building affordable housing
17 that takes the money from people who can
18 afford to give it to them, instead of taking
19 it from families that are kind of depending
20 on this to be able to keep a roof over their
21 heads for their family, so I'm just really
22 not happy with the policy.

23 MR. QUISENBERRY: The one
24 justification I have heard about that policy,
25 taking rental assistance and putting it into

1 capital development, is that there aren't
2 enough units that, you know, ipso facto, is
3 demonstrated by the poor utilization rate, so
4 why would we continue to do something that is
5 not working, why wouldn't we redirect that
6 money and create some new units so we create
7 the housing where people can live, but I
8 don't know that that has been vetted at all.
9 That's the justification that I've heard, but
10 my sense is if utilization has failed, focus
11 on improving utilization --

12 MR. O'HANLON: By increasing the
13 payments.

14 MS. SCHWARTZ: Well, there's more that
15 needs to be done, just in addition to
16 increasing the payment standards. I mean, we
17 have a quality issue in this city that is
18 really, really, like, pretty epidemic. Our
19 housing stock kind of sucks, it's really old,
20 and it is not economical for the folks who
21 are operating and managing these units to be
22 able to make the capital improvements to make
23 sure that they can pass inspection, so is
24 there anything in this that's -- you know, I
25 mean, instead of putting \$250,000 into one

1 affordable unit, why not do, you know, 25
2 \$10,000 matching grants to private market
3 landlords and now you've got 25 units that
4 are working with vouchers. I mean, is there
5 anything like that in --

6 MR. KEENAN: Not until you make a
7 comment, so --

8 MS. SCHWARTZ: Well, I've think it's
9 been in the comment for about two years, if
10 anybody knows --

11 MR. KEENAN: Write it down and submit
12 it.

13 MS. GERHARDT: I am just wondering if
14 there is enough energy and expertise in this
15 room to actually form a subcommittee to look
16 at and work on advocacy regarding housing
17 authority policies, payment standards, you
18 know, how this housing voucher program is
19 being administered, and how outreach and
20 education are done.

21 MR. HARVEY: Quick, let's do it before
22 David is here.

23 MR. DAMEWOOD: We'll make David the
24 chair of the committee.

25 MS. GERHARDT: So let's table that

1 question, but if -- as many people as can be
2 there at the hearing, that would be
3 wonderful, and as many comments as can be
4 submitted.

5 Would it be useful to share comments
6 so that that becomes a common basis of
7 knowledge, and our various angles on this
8 issue?

9 MS. SCHWARTZ: We can also compile,
10 like, a file of different comments from
11 different members of the task force and then
12 e-mail it to each board member in addition to
13 submitting it.

14 MR. TORRES: Yes.

15 MS. GERHARDT: That sounds great.

16 MR. TORRES: That's something that is
17 very easy to do.

18 MS. GERHARDT: Okay. So we are over
19 time. The last -- let's see here, the last
20 thing we have, the next quarterly meeting is
21 December 6th, and if it would be possible --
22 I'm actually going beyond what Carlos said --
23 if it would be possible for those committees
24 to try to meet once, I think would be
25 wonderful.

1 MR. TORRES: Once we have the
2 information, we'll send them, and encourage
3 them to do at least something before the next
4 quarterly meeting, even if it is just set an
5 appointment to meet or something, a
6 conference call, or whatever may be, yes.

7 MS. GERHARDT: All right. And, so,
8 goals to reach prior to the next meeting,
9 beyond the committees, compiling those
10 comments on the housing authority, I think is
11 a good goal, and making that a useful
12 document and perhaps using that as a basis of
13 either a committee or some sort of action
14 plan for this group to advance work on it, I
15 think, might be another good thing.

16 Are there other goals that people want
17 to suggest?

18 MR. DAMEWOOD: Can our transcript be
19 used for that purpose?

20 MS. GERHARDT: I hope so.

21 (Discussion off the record.)

22 - - -

23 (Thereupon, at 4:43 o'clock p.m., the
24 conference was concluded.)

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C-E-R-T-I-F-I-C-A-T-E

I, Eileen L. Drake-Ober, the undersigned, do hereby certify that the foregoing eighty-four (84) pages are a true and correct transcript of my stenotypy notes taken of the task force meeting held at Piatt Place, 301 Fifth Avenue, Suite 390, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15222, on Tuesday, September 6, 2016.



Eileen L. Drake-Ober
Notary Public in and for the
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
My Commission expires: December 6, 2016

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