AFFIRMATIVELY FURTHERING FAIR HOUSING
TASK FORCE MEETING

May 21, 2014
University Club
123 University Place
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213

Moderator:  Winford Craig
Reported by:  Rebecca Schnur

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ORIGINAL
IN ATTENDANCE

Winford Craig - Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations
Jay Dworin - Fair Housing Partnership
Angela Reynolds - United Way
Sarah Kinter - Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations
Robert Taylor - Southwestern Pennsylvania Legal Services
Adam Stalczynski - Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission
Thomas Cummings - URA
Chuck Keenan - Allegheny County Department of Human Services
Gale Schwartz - Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania
Pat Fenton - Action Housing
Richard Morris - Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh
Kyle Chintalapalli - Office of Mayor Peduto
Valerie McDonald-Roberts - Office of Mayor Peduto
Nathan Wetzel - Allegheny County Department of Economic Development
Caster Binion - City of Pittsburgh Housing Authority
Marcia Hess - Pennsylvania Housing Financing Agency
AJ Tedesco - City of McKeesport
Angelina Christina - City of McKeesport
John Tague - Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations and Action Housing
Adelaid Smith - Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations
Jilane McKinley - Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations
Emily Alvarado - Pittsburgh United

Johnstown - Erie - Pittsburgh - Greensburg - Harrisburg
866-565-1929
May 21, 2014

9:10 a.m.

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MODERATOR CRAIG: Good morning, everybody. I would like to offer my sincere appreciation for all of you taking the time to be part of this task force. My name is Winford Craig. I'm vice chair of the Commission on Human Relations for the City of Pittsburgh, and, also, I chair the housing committee.

The task force is an initiative that was charged to the commission under 2013 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice Study. That was a study you probably are all well familiar with, the study that was done recently, in the last few years. And, of course, it's on the internet, so you have the opportunity to download it, all 400 pages plus, if you would like.

The task force is an initiative that was charged to the commission under 2013 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice Study, which is completed periodically by the City of Pittsburgh. The purpose of the task force is twofold, to establish better working relationships with agencies and organizations that receive CDBG.
moneys and/or work in housing; and the second is to establish better governmental cooperation and a targeted approach to delivering programs and services to affirmatively further fair housing.

The City of Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations is the official civil rights organization for the City of Pittsburgh to enforce laws that are created to have equal access and opportunity in the areas of employment, housing, and public accommodations. The task force is a short-term body that works on specific issues, in this case fair housing. The goal of the task force is to identify barriers and to create and promote policies to affirmatively further fair housing.

Another thing which you want to take a look at later on -- and I'm going to continue -- is that there are some issues that are coming up later on within the city government. One is land banks that you may want to take a look at as we move forward within this commission and, also, the fair housing choice analysis barriers to housing faced by previously incarcerated persons that was done as a collaborative between the University of Pittsburgh and Pittsburgh Commission on Human
Relations. And as we all know, this barrier is very important on previously incarcerated individuals.

While I represent the City of Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations, I recognize -- and perhaps all of us in this room recognize -- that housing policies require a coordinated approach to ensure that residents truly have equal opportunity to housing. Housing is a cornerstone of life. Housing dictates your access to education, healthcare, neighborhood amenities. This is why it is vitally important that equal choice of housing opportunities is furthered by concerted efforts of our organizations.

Today's meeting has two goals, first, to discuss a series of discussion questions listed on your agenda to get a better sense of the AFFH activities and organizational barriers to furthering programs, and, second, to get a general idea of how the task force should proceed.

This is a fluid task force. We brought all of you together. We have a lot of energy to create a synergy. You all have an individual approach. Bring it together, and let's come together, not with our own separate agendas but
one agenda to further fair housing.

At this time I would like to go around the table and allow you to introduce yourself and your organization. I would like to remind you this is time sensitive. And, also, I would also like to remind everybody to turn off their cell phones. I had to remind myself because I would definitely forget. You can turn it off or put it on vibration and you can get a little charge when somebody is trying to get in contact with you.

I will start off with myself, which, as I just stated, I'm Winford Craig, vice chair of the Commission on Human Relations for the City of Pittsburgh, and, also, I chair the housing committee.

MR. DWORIN: I'm Jay Dworin, the executive director for the Fair Housing Partnership. We are, effectively, an advocacy group that works on behalf of victims of housing discrimination.

MS. REYNOLDS: Angela Reynolds. I currently direct programs for financially struggling adults and families at the United Way.

MS. KINTER: I'm Sarah Kinter. I work with the City of Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations as a commission representative.
MR. TAYLOR: My name is Robert Taylor. I'm a staff attorney with Southwestern Pennsylvania Legal Services in Washington County. We're also a HUD-funded agency that provides fair housing services to 24 counties in Western Pennsylvania.

MR. STALCZYNSKI: I'm Adam Stalczynski. I'm a Pittsburgh regional director for the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission. We enforce the state's antidiscrimination laws.

MR. CUMMINGS: Hi. I am Tom Cummings. I am the housing director at the Urban Redevelopment Authority, URA, which administers housing programs and projects throughout the city.

MR. KEENAN: Hi. I am Chuck Keenan. I work at the Allegheny County Department of Human Services. I administer the homeless programs for the county.

MS. SCHWARTZ: Hi. I am Gale Schwartz. I am a project specialist with Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania. Right now I'm working on helping reboot the zoning board group through the Southwestern PA Housing Alliance.

MR. FENTON: Hi. My name is Pat Fenton. I'm the deputy director of Action Housing.

MR. MORRIS: My name is Richard Morris. I'm
the director of housing for the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh.

MR. CHINTALAPALLI: Hi. I'm Kyle Chintalapalli. I'm the housing manager in Mayor Peduto's office.

MS. MCDONALD-ROBERTS: Valerie McDonald-Roberts, chief urban affairs officer, Mayor Peduto's office.

MR. BINION: Caster Binion, executive director of the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh.

MS. HESS: Marcia Hess. I'm the Western Pennsylvania representative for Pennsylvania Housing Financing.

MR. TEDESCO: AJ Tedesco, CD director of City of McKeesport.

MS. CHRISTINA: Angelina Christina, fair housing officer of the City of McKeesport and program coordinator for McKeesport Housing Corporation.

MR. TAGUE: I'm John Tague. I'm a member of the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations, a member of the housing committee and, also, an Action Housing board member.

MS. SMITH: I'm Adelaid Smith. I'm a member
of the housing committee of the Commission on Human Relations, and I'm a member of the commission.

MS. McKINLEY: Jilane McKinley. I'm the interim director of the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations.

MS. ALVARADO: Emily Alvarado, the director of policy with Pittsburgh United.

MODERATOR CRAIG: Thank you. I really appreciate it.

THE REPORTER: I'm Becky Schnur. I'm the court reporter this morning.

(Discussion off the record.)

MODERATOR CRAIG: I think all of you have received an agenda via your e-mail, and there were questions that we wanted you to think about, consider, and so you can actually talk about these important questions in the very beginning of this meeting.

The first question is: What is your organization currently undertaking to affirmatively further fair housing? So we all have that information. We're ready to talk about that, you know, a little blurb on what you're doing.
MS. KINTER: Can I just make a note? The reason this task force came about is because the analysis on impediments to fair housing choice study that was completed in 2013 tasks the commission to put together a task force to talk about AFFH standards and any barriers, from an organizational stance, that organizations are facing to complete AFFH standards or to further those to the best of their ability. So we're really looking for comments regarding that and other ways in which we can move this task force forward to address those barriers.

MODERATOR CRAIG: Okay. Since we started with Jay the first time, we're going to start with you.

MS. ALVARADO: I would have rather gone first on the last round.

So for Pittsburgh United, we're really interested in advancing policies that would help to make sure that low- and moderate-wage workers are able to live close to their jobs. So as we see employment centers develop, we're interested in supporting the kinds of inclusionary housing policies that would ensure that that development also provides opportunities for housing for
service workers and other low- and moderate-wage
workers, which is obviously very tied into
affirmatively furthering fair housing because of
the way those populations overlap.

MODERATOR CRAIG: Okay. Good.

MS. MCKINLEY: With the Pittsburgh Commission
on Human Relations, I was going to say "ditto,"
because we are also interested in policy. As you
know, as he stated at the beginning, the study was
done in regard to incarceration. We want to deal
with that aspect because there are so many
people -- even though it's under the radar, so to
speak, in regards to what the government sees, we
see that as a very important thing. We have
people who cannot get jobs, who cannot get housing
due to the fact that they have been incarcerated.
They can't get that chance to do what they want to
do. So we want to change policy in that aspect.

MODERATOR CRAIG: I'm going to add something
to that. One of the charges of the Human
Relations Commission -- people think that we are
the enforcement arm for the civil rights laws, but
we also are charged with looking at the current
policy and make recommendation to change current
policy.
Things change; things come into being, depending on different activities going on within the economy, whatever. So this is a great opportunity for this task force to look at: What policies do we recommend? What policies do we want to look at? And what policies do we think that should be amended, changed, as far as the recommendation?

Adelaide?

MS. SMITH: I was going to be very quiet here.

I think that population is really critical. As you said, it flies under the radar.

Emily, what I thought about when you talked about your mission is, there are a lot of tech companies that are developing in Pittsburgh, but there are certain neighborhoods that are coming into a good housing market, places like Point Breeze and North Point Breeze, which did offer housing to people with low and moderate incomes. But my concern is that those neighborhoods then become gentrified. And I think it's happened to a lot of former neighborhoods which were receptive to people of low and moderate incomes but are now priced out of the market. So I think housing
policies should address the populations that
you're concerned about.

MODERATOR CRAIG: John?

MR. TAGUE: It's interesting, Adelaide, when
you were talking about it, because my church is in
Hazelwood, and there is a tremendous amount of
work being done in the Hazelwood community with
Almono and other things.

To Adelaide's question about gentrification
and the results of, when property values go up,
what does that do to the residents that live
there? It forces them out. So there is a concern
about that. And there are a lot of projects, as
Adelaide mentioned, throughout the city that can
affect that. The land bank is another issue
connected to this also. So there are a lot of
things tied into this.

One of the roles that I have, obviously, is
representing the disability community, because
there are lots of issues with housing and people
with disabilities, obviously not just with
affordable but the accessibility of it. So what I
try to do is bring that perspective to the table.
It's not that people don't understand it. It's
just a question of how it's dealt with.
You had mentioned about previously incarcerated. There are a lot of folks with mental health disabilities who come out of that, and there's a stigma connected with that. And I hear it all the time about, you know: Who lives in these apartment complexes of housing? And there is a fear factor, which goes to the stigma. And so we need to address that from that standpoint, from the disability standpoint, again, not just about physical disability but about hidden disabilities. And I think that's something that I look at on a daily basis. And I can't tell you the number of comments I hear about people, especially with mental health disabilities. It's really troubling to me. So one of the things that I think we have to work on is stigma.

MS. CHRISTINA: To be perfectly honest, I came here to learn from everybody else. I'm reasonably new at affirmatively furthering fair housing.

I will say that I have run into the stigma with the mental health and with the previously incarcerated folks.

The City of McKeesport is sort of a blip as compared to the City of Pittsburgh, but we still
have the same issues. We have a fair amount of affordable housing. Unfortunately, a lot of our affordable housing is not in the greatest condition, not accessible. But we do have an accessibility modification program currently, where we can try to get it usable for everybody.

We have a lot of investor landlords that are buying up a number of our properties and jacking up the price and making them almost out of reach for probably most of us. And, you know, our property values are low, so the investors come in; they buy $15,000 houses; and then, they rent it to somebody, who really needs housing, for $900 a month. And they really need the housing, so they go there, and, you know, eventually, they end up getting behind, and then they get evicted, and then they're right back where they started from. That's our biggest issue right now, is the investor landlords, who are really making a mess of things. We're struggling against that.

MR. TEDESCO: To tack on about the slumlords, basically, what we ran into is manpower. We have a landlord-tenant act that we would like to enforce, but we just don't have the money to hire the staff to go out and enforce the
landlord-tenant act.

Really, like she said, there is a lot of affordable housing. There are too many slumlords in McKeesport, and that's what the City is trying to focus on. We're looking to get a new computer system that's going to aid our ordinance officers and building inspectors, tracking on a new computer system. We're jumping in a little bit to the 21st century. But the money factor is just really crunching us on this.

MS. HESS: PHFA strives to stay on top of anything with fair housing as far as training our staff, our developers. We make sure that they have a plan. PHFA tries to stay up on everything to do with fair housing. We're pretty much here just to listen and find out what all of your comments and concerns are.

MR. CUMMINGS: I think one thing we also need is to encourage additional increased accessibility through the tax credit program by offering additional points in the application process for developers to provide more than the required accessible housing.

MS. HESS: Yes.

MODERATOR CRAIG: Also, can we focus on:
What are you currently working on to effect further fair housing? Is there anything special, anything that you're working on?

MR. BINION: As far as the housing authority, we see ourselves as the front line to ensure there is affordable housing in the City of Pittsburgh. What we're doing right now, we have 13,000 people in our program. We will select 5,000. And we will increase our population by 1,500 by 2016. In addition to that, we are building new developments with mixed finance. Addison is doing about 400 units. We are waiting for HUD to tell us that we got selected for the Choice Neighborhood Grant, which is in East Liberty, to be almost 370 units.

So we know the balance. We feel that, with our partners here, we try to maintain a balance of affordable housing in the City of Pittsburgh. The City of Pittsburgh is on a boom. Just like everyone is saying, landlords are trying to take advantage of the situation. We are working with landlords. We look at rent structure. We look at payment standards to make sure that residents of Pittsburgh get an opportunity to have affordable housing. Coupled with that, we are working on job
programs.

So, partners, we have a big job to do.

MS. CHRISTINA: I would also add that, at McKeesport Housing Authority, we have ten new graduating-scale sort of units that are beautiful, called Yester Square. They are in a tax credit program, I think, to build maybe 40 more units.

MR. WETZEL: I'm with the Allegheny County Department of Economic Development. Nathan Wetzel. We are also undertaking an analysis of impediments to fair housing. I think you guys are just a little bit ahead of us. We're hoping to have that wrapped up in the second or third quarter of this year so that that should also outline for the county and its numerous municipalities similar steps to enhance fair housing.

Our study, at HUD's advice, looked at the county, but it excluded the City of Pittsburgh and excluded the City of McKeesport, so we're dealing with the other 126 or so municipalities. So, you know, it's a similar process, but it's different in that the County has no control over the zoning ordinances and things like that, so it's more of a collaborative work with the municipalities, with
the smaller boroughs and the larger boroughs to work with them on some of these issues. But it's kind of advice and encouragement as opposed to any kind of dictating of any steps that might be taken.

MS. MCDONALD-ROBERTS: With the City, the biggest accomplishment was land bank legislation, which will be a huge help in managing the vacant parcels, tax delinquent parcels, et cetera, that are out there, so that there is some type of balance as far as affordable housing, as far as the type of development, et cetera, et cetera. Right now, it's whoever gets to the treasurer first, whoever grabs it first.

The land banking will at least allow some modicum of planning, so to speak, of what that neighborhood looks like, what that area looks like. So that's the biggest thing. And they are setting up the interim board now -- I think this week and next week they will be setting up an interim board.

MR. CHINTALAPALLI: The board is in place.

MS. MCDONALD-ROBERTS: It is in place.

MR. CHINTALAPALLI: They're setting up their first meeting. The interim board was part of the
MS. McDONALD-ROBERTS: Either Thursday or Friday or something like that. They will set the guidelines. And people say: What does it do? That's what the board will decide, is how to manage.

But as far as the Mayor's office, oftentimes we have to react to what city council does. They've talked about inclusionary zoning. They've talked about all types of processes that will help with the affordable housing levels within City of Pittsburgh. So it's an evolving thing for us right now. And I think I'm speaking for Kyle.

Kyle, anything you want to say?

MR. CHINTALAPALLI: Yes. I have been on the job a month and a half, so I'm largely here to learn, to see what the City can do better in terms of policies that we can research and look to enact.

I know you've mentioned it in terms of McKeesport, but as far as trying to get after some of the landlords that are taking advantage of certain populations, we're looking at policy mechanisms that we might be able to utilize more effectively than maybe we have in the past.
MS. MCDONALD-ROBERTS: We have a new director of DBI who is excellent. And the Mayor's vision is to be much more aggressive in managing -- having DBI go out and enforce our current laws.

MR. MORRIS: At the Urban League, we're focusing on two things: One is making sure our staff understands what the fair housing law is, because we interact with a large number of people each year in a variety of programs. And secondly is that we have a dedicated person who is seeking to fill the niche of helping people who are in delicate situations to find housing, people who have been evicted and have three or four children -- there are only so many places they can go -- people who arrived at the city and they're homeless, those kinds of things. And what we find universally is that there is not enough housing for low-income folks.

MR. FENTON: What Richard just mentioned in terms of the need for affordable housing is one of the things, at Action Housing, that drives where we are. Just one of the things I was looking at the other day is the decline in the number of units that can be rented under $500 per month. There's been like a 50 percent decline from 2000
to 2010. At the same time, the increase in the number of units for people at $1,000, there has been an increase of about 300 percent in that category. This is part of the struggle that we all face. So that kind of shapes what we're looking at.

One of the key things that we would look at is preservation of existing affordable housing, how critical that is, for properties -- tax-credit properties reaching their 15th year, to preserve those and continue the use of those. But the other area that we're looking at would be in terms of supportive housing targeted toward people with special needs. And we're looking at, how do we do that at a greater scale rather than just addressing project by project, but to do it at a greater scale. That's one of the things that we're looking at.

Also, when we're doing the housing that we're doing, particularly utilizing low-income housing tax credits, trying to focus as much as we can there on the supportive housing needs and, also, workforce development housing. We have a couple projects underway right now that are very important. One is the construction of a new
development for youth who have aged out of foster care. It's part of a larger development, with the other half of the building -- 24 of those units would be for youth aging out. The other 23 units would be for workforce development housing. That's one of the projects that we have underway right now.

And we're also working with the United Way on what they're calling "21 and Able," which is looking at young people who have disabilities and are living at home and how to develop housing for them so that they can move out and be on their own as they age out of the system that they may have been in through the public schools.

MS. SCHWARTZ: So with the Housing Alliance, I'm really working on two projects. The first is, I've been doing a board development project with the homeless advisory board. Through that, we're really looking to expand, specifically, landlord engagement and finding strategies to really transition people into safe quality housing that doesn't have a lot of barrier challenges, whether it's a criminal record, bad rental history, bad credit record, things like that.

The other project that I'm working on is the
Southwestern PA Housing Alliance networking group. There are two working groups out of that networking group, the first of which is looking at inclusionary zoning, and the second, also, is looking at landlord engagement and really just finding ways to get people with significant barriers back into housing as quickly as possible.

We do have the benefit of the support of the housing and homeless provider network and being able to have that case management component and having that kind of third-party thing. We're going to work with them on budgeting. We're going to work with them and teach them how to be a good tenant, because sometimes people just don't even know that.

MS. CHRISTINA: We have that problem, too. We actually have a number of homeowners who have transitioned from -- one person in particular, applying for a house. She's basically grown that project to the house across the street. She bought it. She's paying a mortgage. She's doing the best she can. She had her cable. She was upset. She said: I had no idea what I was getting myself into when I bought this house.

MS. SCHWARTZ: Right. There is also a big
difference between homeownership and being a
renter.

MS. CHRISTINA: Being able to call somebody
and say, you know, my smoke detectors aren't
working, or something as simple as that. But
she's really struggling, so we're trying to help
her out. She wanted to give up on her dream of
keeping her home.

MS. HESS: We've partnered with a housing
counseling agency.

MS. CHRISTINA: We've also worked with some
landlords. The hardest part is getting people to
come out, tenants, landlords, homeowners. It's
really hard to get people to actually come
together.

I'm sorry to steal your spot. But we started
the Mayor's committee on community issues meeting
where instead of -- obviously, city hall is open
to everybody, to see any of us at any time, but
instead of that, we're going to every ward of the
city and taking everybody with us, community
development, recreation director, public works
director, the mayor, the city administrator, most
of council. We're in the neighborhood. We invite
people to come and talk to us there just to
discuss any community issue, most, if not all, of which can be tied back to furthering fair housing. And so far we've had a reasonably good response.

    We're hoping, if we continue to do this, when we get through all of our wards and start all over again, we'll actually have more people coming out when they see that things are actually occurring: You come in with an issue. Somebody is going to try to be there and take care of that issue. It may not be immediately, but --

    MS. SCHWARTZ: It's a slow process.

    MS. CHRISTINA: It is. Absolutely.

    MR. KEENAN: I'm Chuck. I work for the Allegheny County Department of Human Services. I wrote a couple things down, but they all seem to revolve around access to our services. We're trying to improve access for people, because I know we run a fairly complicated system of housing. So we're doing a coordinated intake and assessment initiative that should start in the fall, where people can call one central number and get referred to other programs that we fund and other programs that are out there, especially for the homeless. We're doing a lot of landlord recruitment, as Gale said and I think some other
folks have said, again, to try to increase the
pool of opportunities that people have from us.
And then, we're also doing like a service review,
so we're looking at our entire continuum of
homeless service to see where there are barriers
to access there.

We're mandating that the providers that we
fund take out restrictions on occupancy around
like methadone use or all kinds of other issues
that they have previously screened on. Now we're
not even allowing them to screen for things like
that. I think that's probably most of what we're
doing.

MR. CUMMINGS: At the URA, we have a couple
of different product lines, I guess. We work a
lot with developers, working with PHFA, the
housing authority, Action Housing, and others, to
provide some of the financing for those affordable
housing programs. We work with those developers
in terms of making sure that they have a
affirmative fair housing plan. So we make sure
that that's in place, that it's monitored for
compliance with the plan.

We do try to promote ready access to all of
our programs, so a lot of that is done -- we try
to get out into the community to partner with community organizations to make people aware of the programs that we do have, primarily for people that own their own home that want to -- that might need some assistance in fixing it up. So I think we do try to be proactive with that, not to say that we couldn't do more, but, I guess, from an affirmative fair housing policy, we do try to ensure open access to all of our programs.

But I would be certainly open -- if there was formalized training for staff, we would welcome the opportunity to send people just to make sure that everybody is sensitive to the issue and try to be as proactive as we can to try to meet the needs.

MR. STALCZYNSKI: So for the PHRC, you know, like many state government agencies, we've shrunk significantly, and so we've had a big challenge in overcoming not just our housing case investigation backlog but all of our investigation backlog. But we're trying hard to do both of our requirements, which also includes education and advocating policies in addition to enforcement. We're trying to get beyond just enforcement.

One of the things that we've done, though, is
to try to expedite any kind of fair housing
discrimination complaints that come to us. They
go to the top of the pile now. That's been going
on for about a year. We're also trying to improve
where different organizations, like at this table,
can come to us and know how to bring their clients
and their people they work with quickly so we can
jump on their case. One way to get a landlord to
talk to you is to put a lawsuit in front of
them -- or at least get their attorney to talk to
you.

But I think we realize that you can't be a
paper tiger. We have to have some real muscle
behind our enforcement. But we have been doing
trainings, too, fair housing trainings last month
with Pittsburgh commission. We have some more in
line coming up this summer.

But I think, for us, the most important thing
is to increase our presence among groups like this
and to try to get people who have impediments that
are discriminatory in nature to us quickly.

MR. TAYLOR: As I had mentioned, I'm a staff
attorney with Southwestern Pennsylvania Legal
Services as well as a program manager for one of
our fair housing grants. As a HUD-funded FHIP
agency, we actually, right now, are operating
under two grants that are directly from HUD and an
additional grant that is a partnership grant with
the Human Relations Commission and HUD. So as far
as fair housing issues, in our organization, we're
equipped to handle pretty much all aspects of it,
whether it's through our enforcement and
investigation grant -- we have a very robust
testing program. We also have the ability to
represent clients through their discrimination
complaint process, whether it's through HUD, the
Human Relations Commission, or in the court
system. Actually, right now, I think we have six
cases that we have filed in federal court that
we're working on.

In addition to that, we also have a component
that's an education and outreach grant, so we're
providing fair housing trainings and education to
different service providers and agencies within
our 24-county coverage area.

As far as affirmatively furthering fair
housing issues, last year we had a grant through
HUD, that I managed as well, that the culmination
of it was looking at the affirmatively furthering
fair housing efforts of 24 counties in our
coverage area. And just for purposes of thinking of a map, we cover from the West Virginia border all the way up to Erie and over to Center County with the exception of Allegheny County. So everywhere around Allegheny County, all the way out to Center County, that kind of is our coverage area, where our services are focused. So we looked at the efforts of those 24 counties in terms of what they are doing in terms of affirmatively furthering fair housing, because the obligations of it don't just apply to the entitlement jurisdictions, but they apply to all the counties because, essentially, they're subgrantees of the state, which is an entitlement, so they have certain obligations that they have to do as well.

So we were kind of looking at what they are doing generally, what the nonentitlements are doing, but then, specifically, we looked at -- within that 24-county area, there are nine entitlement jurisdictions. We gathered all the planning documents, the consolidated plans, the CAPERS, the AIs, and produced a report that essentially looked at the AI, in particular, and really delved into kind of nine core issues that
we had identified, along with HUD, that should be kind of prevalent in every AI. We looked at those nine jurisdictions' AIs compared to these kind of core issues, and we're able to provide those jurisdictions with this report that kind of, in some aspects, was very critical of their AIs and was also critical of HUD as well, so they weren't, initially, too thrilled with that report. But as the affirmatively furthering issue kind of became more prevalent within HUD, they kind of changed their tune and said: Look at us. We're on the forefront of this because we had this report done, so then they liked it.

But as it is now, we're working, with a partnership grant, with the Human Relations Commission where we're doing the same sort of study, looking at these AIs for the jurisdictions -- for the ten entitlement jurisdictions in Central Pennsylvania. So that's what I'm currently working on.

But we're also still keeping an eye on, obviously, our 24 counties and providing comprehensive fair housing services to them in terms of education as well as people being able to, as I said, represent individuals.
MS. KINTER: So at the Commission on Human Relations, we look at fair housing issues through the lens of our discrimination cases. Primarily our cases of discrimination are race based, disability, and familial status.

So with that said, we're looking more to use the task force as a mechanism to look at policy issues and start working on that front, because we're really looking at the nitty-gritty of the day-to-day casework. Someone experiences discrimination. They come to our office. That's our day-to-day work.

So, I guess, my only comment really is -- I'm not going to talk too much -- is just that we're looking to use the task force on the policy end.

As far as the analysis of impediments, I think, you know, we, too, were critical of the analysis for lots of reasons. It can never be as specific as we'd like. And due to that fact, we also had a partnership grant with the University of Pittsburgh to look at barriers to housing for previously incarcerated persons, because we were hearing a lot from the community, complaints about not being able to find housing for persons who were incarcerated.
What was interesting in that is that some people did not receive any convictions; they were just merely incarcerated, but they were still barred from housing. So it's a big, critical issue in a lot of the low- to moderate-income areas, that we went out to community meetings to discuss. We felt like that was an aspect that was missing from the general AI. It was just something that never came up in -- you know, they're supposed to have these community meetings in which they would get information from residents. What are you facing as far as barriers to housing? We are hearing things we didn't see in the AI, so we felt that we needed to look into that more.

So with that said, we hope that we can bring up some of those issues as well in the task force, things that are missing from the AI, and how can we affirmatively further fair housing, in addition to what we've already been told. You know, we get the same recommendations in the AI year after year. We're looking to expand from that.

MS. REYNOLDS: From the United Way perspective, I'll talk on two. One is our role as convener, and the other one is in terms of
supporting quality programs. As convener -- and
Pat, from Action Housing, was part of this
discussion -- we're still trying to figure out
what our role would be as it relates to affordable
housing. It's a major issue. We're not sure
where we can play a role in that, but we did
convene some agencies together to address issues
of barriers to housing as it related to veterans,
and that discussion made it very clear that we
need to think about the larger scope of affordable
housing. So to the extent that we're going to do
that, we're still working it out.

In terms of supporting quality programs, we
don't do direct service. I mean, we have the 211
line, but other than that, we're really fostering
collaboration amongst agencies and supporting them
as they're doing their work. Pat mentioned two of
them in terms of the work that they're doing with
youth who are aging out of the foster care system,
and then, also, with 21 and Able, there's some
work that's going on there.

One that he did not mention is that we also
support a foreclosure prevention program with
Action Housing. We have several homelessness
prevention programs that are supportive. Some
great advocacy work was done by one of our partner
agencies, Veterans Leadership Program, adverse
impact of federal eligibility changes to the
supportive services for veteran families, so they
were able to at least get that suspended for a
period of time. It basically would have rendered
thousands of veterans homeless.

In addition to that -- I wanted to make sure
I focus my comments and didn't talk too long -- we
have a really nice collaboration with additional
support from the Siemer Institute for Family
Stability to address some of the issues related to
homelessness and children as they're trying to
stay within their home school. They're providing
supportive services for them as well as some work
that's going on with seniors to enable them to
stay in their homes.

People might not be aware of one longstanding
one that we support, Program to Aid Citizens
Enterprise. They have an intensive services
program for local nonprofits, many of whom you've
worked with, and they are addressing, within their
own local communities, issues related to fair
housing. For example, North Side Coalition for
Fair Housing is one of them; also, Operation
Better Block. So there are a lot of agencies that
are doing their own little piece in their
communities. A newer one is a partnership with
the YWCA, PA Women Work, and Neighborhood Legal
Services, where Neighborhood Legal Services, for
their component of that, is addressing several
legal issues, many of which, however, are related
to housing. I also know that many of our partner
agencies are connected to Fair Housing Partnership
in some way. That is a our role.

MR. DWORIN: I get to go last this time, huh?

Again, my name is Jay Dworin. I'm the
executive director of the Fair Housing
Partnership. Like my friend from Southwest Legal
Services, we are also a fair housing initiative
program funded by HUD to address issues of fair
housing in the eight-county region, which includes
Allegheny County.

Having said that, with the work that we do,
when asked our relationship to affirmatively
furthering fair housing -- I mean, this is what we
do. So I'm going to try to keep my comments brief
because, otherwise, I will take up all of the
time. But just to kind of give you a sense, the
Fair Housing Partnership looks at things through
two lenses. We've got kind of a reactive lens and a proactive lens.

On the reactive lens, of course, we are dealing with issues of testing, as many of you know -- I've dealt with many of you -- going out and ensuring that landlords, housing providers, are, in fact, acting in a way that is consistent with the Fair Housing Act.

We are doing an incredible amount of reasonable accommodations or reasonable modifications in this region right now. Disabilities have become our number one complaint right now, to move, in the last ten years, where race was our number one complaint to disability being our number one complaint. And that is in no way because somehow now we no longer have racial complaints. It is because, simply, we are overwhelmed with the number of disability complaints that we are getting, and it is actually sapping the resources that we would otherwise use to effect some of these other complaints.

The other things that we currently do, of course, are education outreach. We are heading out and trying to speak to as many people as we can. We're always open to come out to speak to
your organization and train members of your
organization to ensure that they have their fair
housing rights understood.

Having gone very quickly through the
reactive -- and there is quite a bit more -- I
want to give you a sense of where we are and what
we're looking at proactively. The first thing for
us is looking at this idea of what's affected in
concentration of both minorities and poverty in
the region and what can be done to address it.
From where we're sitting right now, we are again
looking at inclusionary zoning and whether or not
it can be put into action in this region; the idea
of source of income protection, which we have long
fought for and will continue to fight for both
within the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny
County, along with looking, again, at mobility
counseling, which we had done a pilot previously
and we really think that this is something that,
when put in conjunction with source of income
protection and inclusionary zoning, can really
address some of the issues that we're talking
about.

The second thing is, we feel it's our
obligation to look at the use of public funds as
they impact segregation, and, of course, that's really what we're talking about in terms of many of you. So this includes, right now, us looking at issues like siting decisions. So, yes, we're getting the money to do affordable housing, but where are we putting this affordable housing? What kinds of decisions are we making on the impact of segregation when we place affordable housing? Are we, as organizations, actually doing an analysis, when we receive these dollars, to ensure that our siting, in fact, impacts integration and not segregation? Along with that, we are also looking at, obviously, what's happening with the full total amount of funds that each one of us receives in terms of federal dollars and our subcontractors and whether or not they are following through on their obligations to affirmatively further fair housing.

With respect to disabilities -- I'm going to attempt to be very short. This is my very short version. With respect to disabilities, you know, again, I ask and I wonder often whether or not we are taking into account the impact of the dollars that we spend and how they are affecting folks with disabilities both in what is our design and
construction decisions, what is our reasonable accommodation/reasonable modification decisions, and so we're looking both at the City and at the County at those who are receiving CDBG dollars and trying to ensure and partner, when possible, that people have a clear understanding so that they are making the decisions that are in the best interest of our citizens who have disabilities. Again, as I said, we are kind of overwhelmed by it right now, and so we really want to find ways in which we can assist in this. One of the ways that we're doing that is we're just about completed with a -- it's been a long-running partnership to produce a DVD that explains, kind of details how one can go through the process of requesting a reasonable accommodation modification. What are the obligations of those who you're requesting it from? What is the process if you're denied? What are legitimate reasons to be denied versus those that are discriminatory -- and try to get those out to folks. We've wrapped up filming, and we're in the middle of editing, but we hope to have that done in the next 60 days or so, that it's out to folks. So if anybody wants a copy, we'll make sure you get it.
Additionally, on the disability status, we're really looking at the grievance process in housing authorities. One of the things that we have found is a concern is that people with disabilities, particularly those in recovery who are attempting to gain access to a housing authority, face a barrier when they are told that, because of their criminal history, they are not allowed to gain access to housing.

If, in fact, we are talking about somebody who was at that time using and is no longer using, then we're talking about somebody who qualifies as a disability in that they are in recovery. We're looking at the reasonable accommodation process and whether or not grievance hearing examiners even recognize that somebody may be asking for a reasonable accommodation during a grievance hearing or as they apply. I have many more, but I will skip past disability for a moment.

Next, really, is accountability. Quite frankly, the job that we do at the Fair Housing Partnership -- and I think at Southwestern Legal as well -- is to both assist you all and to hold you all accountable and to make sure that, if we are not doing what we're supposed to be doing,
that you have that information and are aware of it, and then, hopefully, you'll take the proper steps. That doesn't always happen, but it's our job to try to do that. That accountability means, for instance, here in the City of Pittsburgh, that there is an action plan. That action plan has responsible parties to it. It has general dollar amounts divvied out to it. You know, if you go back and look through the history of the action plans and the dollars that are divvied out, was that actually put into place? Did the City or the County or anyone else for that matter, actually kind of take the dollars that they are talking about and put it to use in a way that affirmatively furthers fair housing?

So I believe it's our role to make sure that people are held accountable to that and that, if you're saying, yes, I'm going to do an AI and I'm going to look at the impediments, that, after that, I'm going to do a plan, and then I'm going to actually follow up on that plan. I'm going to actually implement things that we talked about. So I believe, again, that that is something that is our responsibility to work with you all on.

The other thing that we're looking at right
now is ordinances and the impact that ordinances have on barriers to fair housing. Right now there are two that are really on the table for us. One that has come to the forefront right now happens to be the familial status with respect to kind of two people per bedroom going out there. We received a number of cases that are out right now, and it seems that we have an issue right now where housing providers do not understand what the ordinance actually is versus what they want, and it's creating a barrier to housing for people with children as well as creating a barrier for people who are pregnant. We have a number of cases in which somebody -- I mean a number. I don't know why this influx came. I guess they must be talking to each other, which is great, by the way -- but where somebody says, you know -- it's a couple in a one bedroom; they get pregnant; then the landlord tells them: I will not renew your lease upon the birth of your child.

I have a two year old. I didn't have to go through birthing my child, but I'm pretty sure, if somebody told me six months before, that I have to leave when my child is born, I'm out of there right then. And so it creates a new barrier for
them, and it's one of the things that we are addressing.

The other one has been ongoing, dealing with the issue of nuisance laws in which there is this idea that, if you have a nuisance property and there's police calls, three calls to that unit, that there is a fine put on the landlord. This has the effect, then, for instance, victims of domestic violence, who have had one or two calls, then become hesitant to call as a victim of domestic violence; targeting, where you have a person of color who moves into a neighborhood; the neighbors now, obviously, are being discriminatory so they call the police on that person multiple times. You know, we don't like the music they're playing. So that kind of law, again, is the kind of thing that we're looking at to address currently.

We are also, right now, looking at mortgage lending in the region again. We did a study a while back, but I think we need to be a little more active on our studies and follow up so that we're not simply -- you know, one of the fears that I always have is that, if I just do an academic study and I don't follow it up with
action, then the people who are -- the bad actors
go, oh, that's a really nice study, and then they
just go on doing what they were doing. We want to
be a little more aggressive.

Again, I spoke about the education outreach,
but I can't tell you enough the importance that is
placed on education outreach. I've done a number
of presentations in front of some prominent real
estate agencies, in front of RAMP, rental
agencies.

And the best thing that I can ever do is
present to people when they have requested me to
come to them versus presenting to people when I
told them that they have to show up. So, you
know, our education and outreach efforts now have
shifted to really try and be in front of people
before we have to tell them to come out, to get
them to want to say: Hey, would you come out and
talk to our staff? So we are certainly looking at
that direction as well.

Then, lastly, I think that we are looking and
we are hoping that other people are looking at,
you know, what causes the migration patterns to
Pittsburgh. I talked to a friend of mine who
now -- you know, he used to work for me for
several years. When he came here, he said, you
know, I'm shocked at the fact that I have a
difficult time finding the Latino population. I'm
Latin. I assume -- I'm in a major city -- there
would be a large Latin population. I find this
small Latin population kind of pocketed. Why is
that happening? And I ask the same question. Am
I looking at analysis of impediments that says:
Hey, what is causing the migration or lack of
migration into our city? Why are we not getting
larger numbers of Latinos in here, of Asians in
here? What is causing the continued segregated
pockets that we have within our city, within our
county? How come there isn't this kind of
cross-over?

The last thing I'll say is, I also function
not only as executive director of the Fair Housing
Partnership, but I'm the president of Churchill
council, and so I'm sitting in a borough and
saying the same thing. I'm looking around at the
neighboring boroughs and saying: Okay. My
borough is 20 percent persons of color. My
surrounding boroughs are either 90 percent persons
of color or 3 percent persons of color. So is
there an analysis going on that says what's
happening? And are there action steps being put
into place to address it?

I hope that this task force will be the step
of actually putting into place what goes into
these AIs and not simply having another
collection about it.

MODERATOR CRAIG: Thank you. That was a good
ending to the first question.

Now, the second question -- some of you have
already embedded your first answer into answering
the second question, which is: What are your
organization's key issues on barriers to
implementing affirmatively furthering fair housing
projects and programs?

I'm not going to go around the whole table.
If you have additional information that your
organization is doing than what you have stated in
your previous question, please do so now, if you
have not mentioned anything about the barriers.

MR. DWORIN: I would be happy to start on
barriers.

MODERATOR CRAIG: Jay is going to start on
the barriers.

MR. DWORIN: I'll just come back. And I will
be brief. Quite frankly, you know, as an
organization that works on fair housing, the
barrier isn't going to be the kind of thing that,
if you're a housing provider -- what we're dealing
with right now really is the barrier of resources
and ensuring that those of you who are in a
position who have the resources and have the
obligation are using said resources in a way that
addresses affirmatively furthering fair housing.

I will simply say that, if you are those in
the position of allocating and reviewing the use
of your resources, then you have that obligation
to look at how your resources are used and whether
or not you are giving out what is necessary to
ensure a comprehensive look and action for
affirmatively furthering fair housing. Simply
look at your action plans, look at what it states
that you will do, and then ask yourselves whether
you realistically think that's what's happening
right now.

That, I think, is the biggest barrier, to sum
it up.

MS. KINTER: I'm going to talk briefly about
a barrier that we're having trouble addressing,
which is mortgage lending, because it's a hard
issue to capture. We do not receive any cases,
any fair housing cases regarding mortgage lending. We would like to partner as much as we possibly can to look into that issue. We know it's an issue, but we don't have the casework to support that. When you move further in that, if you can, stay in touch. That's something that we're definitely interested in.

MR. CUMMINGS: Have you ever talked to PCRG, Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group?

MS. KINTER: Yes.

MR. CUMMINGS: I didn't know if they would provide anyone assistance.

MS. KINTER: Do you know if they have done any recent studies regarding mortgage lending?

MR. CUMMINGS: They do look at the banks' lending process in low- to moderate-income areas. I don't know how that falls into discrimination, but it might be somewhat insightful. So somebody like Ernie Hogan, I think, would be a good one to talk to.

MS. REYNOLDS: They do have a more recent one.

MS. SMITH: Sarah, I get their e-mails that I could forward.

MS. KINTER: The PCRG ones?
What we're hearing is that steering is occurring. Steering is when you have a provider who says, I think you should live more in this area than in this area. That's illegal, but we're not getting any cases. We're not getting any complaints about it. It's hard for someone who is in that position to know that that's going on and that they have been steered.

MS. SMITH: Is that an education issue?

MODERATOR CRAIG: That's right. That's what Jay was talking about, education outreach.

MR. TAYLOR: I think, even with the lending discrimination and the steering, it all ties back to education. And it goes with anything with fair housing. People don't know they're being discriminated against. What we've found, a lot of times, is that it goes both ways. You have tenants who don't know that they are being discriminated against until they go through some sort of outreach and find out. On the other hand, you also have landlords who don't know what they are doing is illegal.

It's a lot easier to be able to train and provide that education to the tenants than it is to the landlords. We've had so much resistance
getting to landlord groups and associations to
give them training. It's one of those things:
Look. Do you want to see us presenting
information to you, or do you want to see us
filing housing discrimination complaints against
you? Which side of the table do you want to see
us on? But there is still that hesitation. I
think a lot of the barriers and the issues with
fair housing, it all ties back to lack of
education.

MS. CHRISTINA: I don't know if they're
afraid that they are actually going to learn
something -- that's on the
homeowners/landlords/tenants -- or it's just a
general -- at least in the City of McKeesport -- a
general sense of apathy. It's almost as if they
just don't care. I don't know why that is.

MR. TAYLOR: There is a lot of that. I think
part of it is just the natural self-belief of
like: It's my property. I can do whatever I want
with it. We've heard that so many times: It's my
building. It's my house. I make the rules.

It's like, you can make some rules, but if
you're renting this out to the public and you've
got 15 units or something, there is another set of
rules that you have to follow, too. But it's
getting that education to both sides of it, to the
tenants and to the providers.

MS. CHRISTINA: Yesterday I spent a little
bit of quality time sort of walking on the street,
inviting people to come out to our mayor's
meeting, issues meeting night, just handing them a
flyer, trying to talk to them. I had a number of
people just actually flat out ignore me. They
just walked right by.

MR. DWORIN: If I could offer two quick
comments to that point, one being that I think,
oftentimes, the idea of discrimination has changed
its form, and so the idea of simply that you're
educating them and, therefore, they'll know
they're being discriminated against --

Discrimination has changed. The overt levels
are not as high. People say: How much
discrimination is there? You know, there is a
dramatically lower number of people who simply
stop you in the door and say: I will not rent to
you. What we see now, we always say,
discrimination with a smile and a handshake.
It's, oh, I just rented it, you know. And so that
process requires enforcement measures that are
able to discover what the tenant or what the potential home-seeker can't. What we need from them is acknowledgment that something just doesn't seem right. That's where I think we, as organizations, start to look at it and say: What was going on? How did we get to that point? So that's the first comment I have.

The other comment to your point in terms of landlords participating -- you know, I guess I wore my black shirt today to be the bad guy.

Certainty of punishment remains the greatest motivator of human behavior. I always quote one study on weight loss in which they promise one group that you would get your own car, a brand new car. To the other group they said, if you don't lose the weight, we've already taken a picture of you in a thong. We will place it on the big screen at the baseball game. Now, everybody in the big screen group lost the weight because knowing that you would face certain punishment will motivate people.

What we have right now is a circumstance in which landlords -- they do say, I can do what I want; it's my property, all right, because there is no certainty, if they violate the Fair Housing
Act -- maybe they will, but there isn't that kind of certainty.

Talking about the potential punishment, about the fines, the question becomes: Are we, as a region, willing to commit to ensuring that, when bad actors arise, they are held accountable, and that, when good actors arise, that they are rewarded? Quite frankly, that, I think, is part of the reason why we face that issue.

MR. WETZEL: Part of it might be that, if you have a housing complaint or another type of complaint and you live in the city, you could go to the city human relations commission or the county human relations commission or the state or I believe you can go to HUD with a number of those complaints. I don't know that there is -- you know, there is probably a lot of cases that are being reported that any one of those entities may not be fully aware of.

I know, with the county human relations commission, which is fairly new, maybe 2009, 2010, a lot of the cases seem to be from the LGBT community. Whether that's because those classes are protected under county ordinance but not under the federal ordinance -- maybe that's why. Maybe
it's partly that and partly word of mouth that
that's a place they can go to seek relief. I
don't know. There may be cases of housing -- that
people are concerned about the mortgage lending,
but they are just going to HUD because they're
bigger and they've got more attorneys.

MODERATOR CRAIG: One of the things about
that -- and we had a major discussion with the
Human Relations Commission -- is that people
really don't know what the City of Pittsburgh
Human Relations Commission is and what they do.
So, immediately, they go to HUD. And our caseload
is -- Jilane can speak more to this. Our process
is faster; it's quicker. Even working in
conjunction -- a working relationship with
Allegheny County Human Relations Commission, they
basically built their rules and bylaws in
association with us. They looked at our laws, and
that's how they based theirs.

So one of the things that we wanted to do, we
wanted education outreach. We had some PSAs that
some of you here knew about and, also, some TV
segments -- Jay was participating in one --
actually trying to market who we are and make sure
that people understand, if you would live in the
City of Pittsburgh, you can come to the human relations commission, whether it's employment or housing, and you don't have to go to HUD, because the EEOC and HUD have a backlog, a massive backlog, but we actually execute pretty quickly.

MR. STALCZYNSKI: I was just going to say that we also have a backlog, too. But if we have a City complaint, when possibly, we'll defer it to the City.

I was just talking to an attorney who worked in the DA's office for a number of years, you know, talking about fingerprints and DNA evidence and those kinds of cut-and-dried evidence in a case. And when it's a discriminatory investigation, it's not that. It's a smile and a handshake. It's what took place in a conversation. It's how quickly somebody made a decision after they were informed about your disability or as soon as they learned something that they didn't like, how a decision was made, how they reacted.

So, for us, it's all about the timing as to when they come to us with the information and how quickly we learn about it. Part of our goal is to resolve these cases. I said, yeah, get a landlord
in a lawsuit and they'll talk. But it's to get
the motion, to get the momentum moving. They are
in a discussion. What can they do? What can they
learn? Do they not understand the law? But it
has to be quick. And if folks don't even know
what we are and what we can do for them, they are
not going to call; or if they don't -- you know,
concepts of the law and theories of
discrimination, they are going to go over people's
heads. But all they need to do is give us a call,
and we can walk through the issue. If it's
something that happened within the last few weeks,
that's the best time to jump on it. It's a lot of
he said/she said, but everybody's information and
recollection on what happened is fresh and can be
worked out.

MS. McKINLEY: The bottom line, education and
outreach, that is what we need to do.

In regards to landlords and regards to banks,
many of them know that they are discriminating.
They know what they are doing. However, they know
how to discriminate sweetly, and by that I mean,
they can be very cunning. They can be very, very
cunning in how they do it. It's almost a systemic
part in the manner in which they do it.
Our thing is, when we educate -- and we have to get out there and educate -- that the people not only will come to us but will tell other people to come to us. When we get that landlord, when we get that bank -- and I still want to go to those banks -- but when we get them, we can educate them. And quiet as it's kept, word of mouth goes around.

So our basic thing is to do that education and outreach. That is one thing that we really need to do and keep going out there. Where did she go? She's gone. But keep going out there, handing out pamphlets. Rejection will be your friend after a while, and you won't be afraid to do it anymore. You will just continue to call, continue to give out the pamphlets, continue to be out there until the people say: Hey, I understand this. I get this. Let's talk about it.

MS. MCDONALD-ROBERTS: I do have to say something, trying to flip the script a little bit. Landlords would love to rent more, but I know some of them have been burned with poor tenants and tenants that violate the laws, that just don't care about their neighbors. They don't care about anything. And I would say that, as education
comes through, we also need to educate tenants as to how to live in a communal property or within -- like if they have a house. Some of them have come from rentals, like a contiguous rental apartment unit, and you put them in a house, and all of a sudden they're not taking care of basic things because they never had to before. They weren't trained to do that.

So I believe that some of the solution is educating both parties and supporting good landlords. We don't want to chase away landlords; always with landlords: We're going to get you. We're going to come after you. We're going to fight you.

If I was a landlord, I'm like, maybe I don't want to even bother renting. So you may have lost a very good landlord because of the fear that they are going to not only have bad tenants that they may get stuck with for a year or whatever and have to go to the magistrate and all that, but they are also going to have to deal with powers that be that are going to come on them and scrutinize them.

It has to be a two-way. It has to be a balance. That's what I would caution as we're
talking about affordable housing, is that there is a balance to making this work. And education -- I agree: There needs to be two sides to the education. There needs to be an enforcement, but there also needs to be some support.

Just recently, Mayor Peduto had words that he said in a specific interview taken totally out of context, because he e-mailed all employees with, the exact words of his interview. And I'm wondering how that reporter got what they reported out of that interview. And the reporter had reported that he had broad-brushed the entire police department, that they were mediocre and corrupt. And I read the interview. And I'm like: Where did he say that? He said nothing to that effect. He put everything in its right context as far as reform.

The same goes here. We don't want to broad-brush all landlords either. We want to make sure that we give support to landlords who are providing affordable housing and are doing it right. So I think there needs to be incentives on both parts, for good landlords, good tenants, and that way I think you will expand the affordable housing.
MR. TEDESCO: To back up what Valerie has said, I worked in the civil division before I came to the City of McKeesport. You feel bad for some of these landlords because they don't know the laws as well as the tenants. And they would say: What do I do? I can't get them out, and they are destroying the place. And you feel bad for some of the good people, that they just want to get out of even renting at all because of what they deal with, so you are right.

MR. STALCZYNSKI: We've had property association groups that come to us for trainings, willfully voluntary want to do it. They have a lot of new managers. And they like them. They like to bounce the questions off. I've got this problem. I've got that problem. Is it a problem? Is it not? And they like the assurance of it. So they usually come away from those pretty encouraged, that they feel like they are doing the right thing.

MS. REYNOLDS: In terms of barriers, some of the things we have been hearing from our agencies have to do with complexity of the issues, and I don't know how to separate those. For example, when it relates to those with criminal records,
it's not just the housing barrier; it's also the employment barrier. You can't get the housing without the employment. Action Housing is working with Women's Center and Shelter in developing a network of landlords for women with domestic violence, but we have to expand that partnership because the income wasn't sufficient to be able to access those landlords.

And then, there is the other aspect of -- I'm scared to mention, but I have to mention -- and I'm sorry -- the issue of transportation. So what you end up having is that people get concentrated into certain areas. So when you do the AI or when fair housing does their analysis, you see the segregative patterns, but it's also because those are often the communities that people can get access to.

MR. DWORIN: To your point, though, transportation should be part of that analysis. So when I look at the AI, there should be a section in there that addresses the issue that transportation is creating concentrations of poverty in the segregated neighborhoods. That's what I would expect to see in a well done AI that's looking at all of the issues. So I agree
with you on that.

MODERATOR CRAIG: Can anybody tell me what is the percentage of African Americans that have cars? Richard? Anybody here in housing or anybody? I think we're something like only 20 percent or something. I mean, it was a very low number that had personal transportation. That's going back to what you're saying. They are concentrating in areas where they can actually catch the T or the bus or a jitney, so some place that they can have --

MS. MCKINLEY: Or port authority is stopping transportation in those particular areas at a certain time.

MODERATOR CRAIG: Right. Exactly.

MS. CHRISTINA: We have had that problem in the City of McKeesport. It used to be that you could catch a bus practically on every corner. Now that's not the case, much like, you know, the whole Mon Valley basically.

MS. MCKINLEY: So now we're in a poverty area and now we can't even get a job because we can't get back and forth to the job.

MODERATOR CRAIG: That's right.

MS. CHRISTINA: I will say that Century --
Heritage, they've started some additional smaller bus service in the neighborhoods, some of the main arteries in the neighborhoods, and you don't have to go quite as far to one of the actual -- like Lysle Boulevard or any of the real busy streets to get a bus, that they will get you in your neighborhood and bring you down to Lysle Boulevard so that you can take the bus. We have actually made inroads in getting a little bit more transportation back out into the neighborhoods.

MR. MORRIS: It's part of the thought of the remaking city conferences that we here in America are backwards, that when you plan developments, you have to first start with the people and then work your way back. We start with the buildings, and we put the people in them. And that's part of the problem because we don't account for people who are in prison. We don't account for people who may be homeless. We don't account for low-income people. We meet a specific need, and then we try to jerrymander the rest of the process, and it never works because you don't have all the pieces to the puzzle at any one time. So if we develop some strategy, it needs to be one that is comprehensive and puts people first so
that there is enough affordable housing in or near new developments; there is the opportunity for those people who may live in that area to work in that area. Fair housing is a challenging situation, but until we start a people first thing we're going to continue to piecemeal and no one will be happy.

MODERATOR CRAIG: I have to go back and look at this, and we're going to talk about question C: What strategy should the task force focus on? So what we're saying, some of the issues are transportation, people first, dual roles in educational outreach. Is that some of the strategies that we have just mentioned, or should that be considered a strategy?

MS. MCDONALD-ROBERTS: I would like to add incentives for good behavior, motivators, the carrot and the stick. You can't do everything with just a carrot or a stick. You need both.

MODERATOR CRAIG: Right.

MS. SMITH: When we're talking about education, I think we ought to think about the people who interact with the public, when we talk also about covert discrimination, that a lot of people don't know that they are being
discriminated against in the first place and the
more subtle forms of discrimination.

When Jay was talking about the Latino
community, I remember one time the commission went
out to a community and invited representatives
from the Latino community. And it isn't true of
everybody, but some people were not documented.
And I remember one circumstance that was talked
about: A woman had delivered a baby at Magee, and
the nurse said to her, you have no business being
here, and you ought to go back to where you came
from.

Now, I think, if we had somehow trained the
nursing staff or the people who interact with
patients in some way of interacting and engaging
in appropriate behavior, that that is one way that
we can address it.

The other thing we've learned in meetings is
that students graduate from high school. They
don't know how to reconcile their bank account.
They don't know anything about going out and
finding housing and what they need to be looking
at if they want to live independently. And I know
there have been courses in lifestyle skills, but I
don't know that they are really engaged in it in
high school. But people need to have some practical skills when they leave an educational institution.

And then, also, the thing that has been addressed in meetings is interacting with the police force, giving them training about assault and abuse, domestic abuse, issues. And I think we need to train -- what was emphasized at the meeting is, it's more effective if a police officer does the training, that people are more responsive to one of their own. So I think those are kind of the things that we could be thinking about.

MODERATOR CRAIG: So those are all segments of education.

MS. SMITH: All part of education. You have to think about the messenger when you're delivering the message. If there is a barrier set up against the messengers, then nobody is going to hear it; but if you make it something that the receptor, the person receiving the message, can relate to, then you're going to be more effective.

MS. REYNOLDS: Another comment to Adelaide's -- for that latter portion -- and I'd like to generalize it to just greater
collaboration amongst the public, private, and not-for-profit sector. For example, Highmark is very interested in the veterans' issues, so as it relates to veterans, maybe they could be a partner in promoting fair housing. There are others who are very interested in opening up employment for people with criminal histories. Maybe they could be a partner when it relates to criminal backgrounds at it relates to housing. The task force should find out who are those players, who are some of those bigger-fish voices that need to connect with some of the agencies we have around the table.

MS. SMITH: We all could help in the distribution of resources.

MS. MCDONALD-ROBERTS: Concerning the veterans, we've had meetings with veterans organizations, pulling everything together, particularly in terms of housing. And it's funny you mention that and that we're here to discuss, you know, what is a strategic plan. The Mayor actually said he wanted the Commission on Human Relations to undertake homelessness among veterans and other veterans' issues. We were just brainstorming, nothing definitive. But I'm just
letting you know.

MODERATOR CRAIG: There is something in the pike. Okay. Good.

MR. FENTON: I just wanted to follow up on some of the comments about education, and I'm thinking specifically in relationship to the study on incarceration, ex-offenders. And, also, to Valerie's comment earlier about the good landlords, I think there is a resource out there where there isn't any one landlord who's in the affordable housing business that can solve the issue of ex-offenders, but if organizations such as the Pittsburgh Affordable Housing Management Association were approached and it was requested that they take a certain number of persons who are ex-offenders so that no one provider had to solve the problem. But I think there would be a real willingness to do that type of thing among a lot of landlords, and I think it's a resource that's out there.

I mean, we're running a program now -- I mentioned that we're doing some construction for youth aging out of foster care, but right now we're running 60 units of housing where we utilize private landlords, at scattered sites, to house
these young people. And once they get past the
idea that these are young people who are potential
problems -- and we tell them that, we'll lease the
property from you, and then we'll provide the
services for these young people so that, if you've
got a social problem, you call us rather than
calling the landlord. You know, the landlord
doesn't have to pursue the person we will take.
So I think there are potential partnerships that
are out there that could really be effective in
addressing some of these larger issues.

MR. TAGUE: One of the things that Angela
touched upon -- there are a couple of things.
First of all, staffing is an issue with a lot of
agencies, including the commissions, I would
imagine. And so staffing collaboration -- you had
mentioned about collaboration -- that is something
that's very important, to collaborate with limited
resources, limited staffing to be able to solve
some of these policies issues that we've talked
about.

And I agree, Valerie, that we have to look at
the total package here. We can't just look at
discrimination and say, that's it. Now, there are
good landlords out there, as Pat had mentioned.
Finding those good landlords -- there's a mentoring process here that other landlords can help other landlords understand. Training is important, but training by itself is not the answer unless you implement what you had talked about earlier, Jay. Having a plan without implementation is really somewhat an exercise in futility at times.

So, hopefully, what comes out of this task force is that collaboration and sharing of resources. And speaking of resources, you do have the CDBG money, which has always been somewhat of a bone of contention about how it's used, and that's caused some conflict between existing agencies, even some sitting around the table. So how do we deal with those conflicts between the agencies? We should be writing policies ahead of time so that we don't have to, quote-unquote, sue somebody or go after them. And that's more the carrot approach than the sledgehammer approach, that I'd like to see because, again, it consumes a lot of our time.

(Discussion off the record.)

MS. CHRISTINA: I would add that -- I think you mentioned a little bit about the community and
police relations. I think that that should be its own separate category.

MS. SMITH: Yes. But when we're talking about training, I used that as an example.

MS. CHRISTINA: Exactly.

MS. SMITH: No, I'm not going to take that on.

MS. CHRISTINA: We know that there is some sort of disconnect, maybe, between the police and the community, at least in McKeesport. I'm sure it's the same way. There is a large segment of our population that doesn't trust our police. And on the other side of the coin, maybe -- I realize police officers are not supposed to be cuddly, but maybe our police force -- maybe some of them are a little bit too nails instead of -- I've had a couple of people approach me just about our police and the way that the police interact with the community. And you can see the way the community interacts with the police. There is something missing in the translation.

MS. SMITH: I guess I have a personal take on that because I have a son who's a police officer, so I see it from a community activist's point of view, and, also, because he's my son, I'm
sympathetic to him. And we kind of tease and say
he's one of the good cops. But there does need to
be that -- They have a difficult task. I mean,
they are to enforce the law, and if we want them
to come in and intervene in a very tense
situation --

MS. CHRISTINA: They're trained to be
somewhat intimidating.

MS. SMITH: -- then they do have to be
assertive. But on the other hand, they do have to
know how to interact with the communities.

He has said that he really gets upset when
parents come out -- at one point he was on a bike
patrol, and the parents would come out and say,
don't talk to him. And he was trying to do
some community outreach. But, I mean, there is
kind of a barrier set up between both entities.

MODERATOR CRAIG: Richard?

MR. MORRIS: I want to second what Pat has
said about education. I think that it should be a
main piece, and it should occur on all levels,
using all types of media.

Second, I think that, when we look at the
bigger players -- bigger players are the housing
authority, the URA, PHFA. We have to work with
them to have a policy that allows for folks who
are at the bottom to have entrée, meaning that --
I'll just say Caster. Caster has a policy
regarding individuals with criminals because he's
trying to stop crime. That's why he has the
policy. He doesn't want people who have committed
crimes in his community to come back and continue
to commit them again. So where is the balance?
The policy that he has may seem to be restrictive,
but if you talk to his residents, they are going
to say, that's what we want.

When you look at the housing, yes, we chase
the PHFA dollars and the tax credits and the whole
9 yards. But where are the poor folks in that
equation? Where are they? Because you move them,
you relocate them, and all you do is move the
poverty around, and then you say, you need to get
a job. So there has to be a policy that comes out
of this group which says, that is potentially
discriminatory and sets up people to fail, because
any time a human has to make a choice, they don't
always make the best one. You know, developers
will say: I can rent all these $1,000 apartments,
but, you know, what's going to happen to the one
that I put someone in for $350? What's going to
happen?

I don't want to get on a soapbox, but I think that it's education, looking at the policies that are at the larger levels and, particularly, having something in development that addresses the rules.

MR. WETZEL: I would just expand on that to say to go beyond those agencies. Because, of all the affordable housing that's out there, I would imagine the publicly subsidized affordable housing is 10 percent. I don't know what the numbers are, but it's a small percentage of all the housing that's out there at a certain rent level. So, I mean, even adding up all the resources of URA, Allegheny County, Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh, and the McKeesport Housing Authority and Allegheny County Housing Authority, all those units added together are still only a small portion of the overall affordable marketplace. Most of it is the mom-and-pop investors or big investors. And some are good and some are awful. Some are in the middle.

MS. HESS: There should be incentive and/or training for the mom and pop, some type of a incentive to get these individuals who rent out every year, get them in there and let them take a
course, let them hear what they have to do. And if they don't do it every year, take away the incentive.

MS. CHRISTINA: It's really difficult to get landlords or tenants or anybody -- I know, like our housing authority, they tried to have the tenant councils, and they have a really hard time getting their tenants to actually come and speak at the tenant councils and say what's good or bad about our community, what can we do better in our community. The tenants -- like I said, it just seems there's a general sense of apathy all across the board. People don't want to -- they either don't want to know or they don't care to know. It's hard to get them to participate in things.

MR. TAYLOR: I think one of the big, important things to keep in mind, when we talk about education, is that you have to have some level of some sort of enforcement, because to educate without enforcement is almost meaningless. I think that's one of the things -- for our organization, what has been, I think, the thing that's helped us the most is, we have those two sides. We have the education side. We have the enforcement side. So we have that side where
we're going out and we're doing tests. If a landlord fails their test, if it's egregious enough, they get a complaint filed. If not, a letter gets sent to them saying: Hey, look. We tested your property on so and so date. You failed. We're offering you the opportunity to accept training from us. And something, also, to the effect that we'll continue to monitor this situation, and if we come back six months later and you fail again, come back six months later and you fail again, you're going to end up having a complaint filed against you.

And I think the whole -- being able to educate and say, this is this and this is this, without having that ability to enforce it, you know, it loses -- and that's where we get a lot of our referrals. Our education outreach efforts this time around are really focused on the group familial status and disability groups. So we're able to go out and give these presentations to the caseworkers and the people that are handling the clients that are seeing these things, and they know that, if there is a problem, I can come back to these people to enforce that, to enforce the law.
And I think that's one of the big issues with education is that education without enforcement -- it just doesn't work.

MS. CHRISTINA: That has worked. It has worked for us.

MODERATOR CRAIG: Before you leave, Valerie, I do want to say: We are going to institute a steering committee, and I want to get this information off to you before you leave. Anybody who's interested, we have a sign-up sheet for the steering committee. There is a sign-up sheet. If you're interested, before you leave, please place your name there. Okay?

MS. MCDONALD-ROBERTS: Thank you very much.

MS. ALVARADO: I just wanted to say that it's great to have education programs that help people to navigate the system as it exists, but we also need policies that help promote integration and deal with concentrated poverty. That needs to be a proactive mission. It can't fall just to the housing authorities and to nonprofit developers. It's not only their responsibility to solve fair housing issues. There's an important role that the private development community needs to play. And if that's not going to come from them doing it
at their own will, there needs to be appropriate incentives or requirements in place so that we can deal with some of the issues of concentrated poverty that are created. Right? It's created, so we need to have some policy that's going to deal with that. And I think this committee can play an important role in advancing those policies and creating the political will that's necessary to move them forward.

MODERATOR CRAIG: Jay?

MR. DWORIN: I spoke, obviously, on the enforcement end, and I briefly touched on the education, so I'll kind of reverse it this time. You know, Valerie made a very good point with respect to incentivizing and trying to train both potential tenants along with landlords. One of the things that I think we're looking at now and may be a way of addressing that is, to your point, I believe, incentivizing landlords in order to participate in programs that allow for low income in areas of high opportunity and doing so with the understanding that the residents that would move into these areas would also receive an incentive to go through comprehensive training on how to be a good tenant in these residential areas. It's
effectively a piece of mobility counseling that
I've got to slide out; it's a piece of mobility
counseling that can be used to kind of bring
people into high-opportunity areas where they
otherwise wouldn't be.

The other thing I want to say just with
respect to this task force as a whole, you know,
on the action plans that are put out, many of our
organizations are listed as actors or responsible
parties on these action plans. I would hope, as a
task force, that as this moves forward, we are
able to report back to the task force both on
whether or not we have had the opportunity to do
the actions that are listed that we are
responsible for. Have we spoken to the agencies
that have listed us? Have they responded? Have
they provided the resources for what they said are
necessary? And report that back to us so that we
can collaborate.

The collaboration that we're all talking
about, I think, works best if we are, in fact,
open in our conversation about how this is
happening with respect to AFFH. So I would love
to see this task force come back and say: Hey,
I've looked at the action plan for the entitlement
communities, for the subrecipient. Here's what it said that they're going to do. I'm listed as one of the people. Here's what they have done with me so far. Here's what we can improve. Here's a better way to interact.

I think there is an opportunity for this task force, both as some of us who are listed as the people who are giving and doing and some of those listed as the responsible parties, to really have an open conversation at this table to make sure that these action plans are implemented.

MODERATOR CRAIG: Good. We are going to close right now, and we're going to take care of some small areas as far as what to expect.

Again, like I mentioned before -- these are housekeeping areas. As I said before, there's a steering committee. Anybody who wants to be involved in the steering committee, please sign up. The steering committee will also be charged with setting up task force bylaws for the purpose of managing and regulating internal affairs of the task force. The steering committee will meet more often than the normal group, of course. And then, they're responsible to set up different committees. So if you're interested, please feel
free to place your name.

Also, when we're signing this -- I think Sarah has the majority of everybody's e-mail addresses, but sometimes, if it's not legible, it's hard to get the information out.

(Discussion off the record.)

MODERATOR CRAIG: One of the things I'm going to ask Sarah to do is, once we pull the minutes together, forward the minutes out to everybody so they can review those as well.

And, also, if possible -- how many of you have used Outlook? Now, myself, personally, I live by my calendar. When we have a meeting, if someone can send a meeting request out via Outlook, I like that much better because it goes right in my calendar.

Does anybody like that type of activity?

Okay. So that's what we will do. We'll send the meeting request via Outlook and e-mail, a combination, because I live by it. If it doesn't go in my calendar, I'll just bypass it.

I think this was an extremely good meeting, first meeting. I think, as an overall point, we satisfied what we wanted to satisfy in this particular meeting and we can move forward. But
one of the key issues is that we've got a lot of points, a lot of barriers that we want to attack, but, most importantly, it's the collaboration; it's working together. We are all trying to accomplish the same thing, and we're not working in our individual silos. We have different resources. Let's share those. If we don't have it, somebody around this table has it. So let's talk to each other. Let's satisfy the need of our constituents, the people. Let's further fair housing. So that is what we want to do. I think this is a great opportunity to effect policy -- great opportunity to effect policy, to recommend policy to our legislators and to move forward. This is a great opportunity if all of us get together and be on the same page and move forward.

John?

MR. TAGUE: My only comment was -- I think we had talked about this, maybe, before. It might even be in the e-mail -- about there are other folks that should be at the table that are not here. You had mentioned PCRG as an example. Are there other groups people know of that should be at the table that would help further fair housing? And it's not necessarily just a housing agency,
that that's all they do. It could be anybody else. There are other players that we all work with. I think that would be something to take a look at.

And I don't know, Sarah, if you want to send out an e-mail and then people could respond to that, if there are other folks --

MODERATOR CRAIG: This is what you do: If you have an idea or recommendation -- every one of you have Sarah's address, e-mail address -- forward it to her if you have a recommendation. So just send it to her, and then we can take a look at that and make a decision on it.

Okay. Any last questions?

I really appreciate everybody that came.

Thank you so much. And the next meeting will be in August, date to be determined.

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(Proceedings concluded at 10:55 a.m.)

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

I, Rebecca L. Schnur, the undersigned, do hereby certify that the foregoing pages are a true and correct transcript of my stenotypy notes taken of the proceedings held at the above-referenced address on the above-referenced date.

Rebecca L. Schnur
Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
My Commission Expires: June 16, 2017  

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