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CITY OF PITTSBURGH COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS
AFFH TASK FORCE QUARTERLY MEETING

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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

- - - -
Piatt Place, 301 Fifth Avenue
Room 3023
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Tuesday, December 6, 2016 - 3:11 p.m.

- - - -
PRESENT:

- Carlos Torres - Chairman
- Rachel Salem
- Cherylie Fuller
- Molly Nichols
- Robert Taylor, Esq.
- Christine Castro
- La'Tasha Mayes
- Nicole Jackson, Esq.
- David Dean
- Leslie Aizenman
- Melinda Johnson
- Peter Harvey
- Janelle Kemmerer
- John Tague, Jr.
- Sean DeYoung
- Kevin Quisenberry, Esq.
- Lyle Wood
- Chuck Keenan, Esq.
- Paul O'Hanlon: (via telephone)
- Tricia Henning, Esq.
- Ray Gastil

REPORTED BY: Catherine C. Leverty
Notary Public

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THE CHAIRMAN: Welcome to the quarterly meeting of the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Task Force. Right now we don't have quorum, but we're not scheduled to take any votes on any official matters so we'll conduct the meeting as scheduled.

Today we have a number of subcommittees that are going to be doing a report on their activities for the last quarter, and then we are going to talk about the goals and recommendations, as well as some reminders for the group.

Let's start by doing introductions, so let's go around the table, introduce yourself, and the organization that you represent.

I am Carlos Torres with the City of Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations.

MS. SALEM: Rachel Salem, secretary to the director at the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations.

MS. FULLER: Cherylie Fuller,

1 executive director of the Homewood Concerned
2 Citizens Council.

3 MS. NICHOLS: I'm Molly Nichols,
4 Pittsburghers for Public Transit.

5 MR. TAYLOR: My name is Robert
6 Taylor, from the Fair Housing Law Center of
7 Southwestern Legal Services.

8 MS. CASTRO: Hi, I'm Christine
9 Castro, I'm here for Reproductive Justice, New
10 Voices.

11 MS. MAYES: Hi, I'm La'Tasha Mayes,
12 executive director New Voices Reproductive
13 Justice.

14 MS. JACKSON: Hi, I'm Nicole Jackson,
15 senior litigation counsel for the Housing
16 Authority, City of Pittsburgh.

17 MR. DEAN: David Dean, with the
18 Realtors Association of Metropolitan Pittsburgh.

19 MS. AIZENMAN: Leslie Aizenman,
20 director of the Refugee Program and Jewish
21 Family & Children's Service.

22 MS. JOHNSON: Hi, I'm Melinda
23 Johnson, from the Pennsylvania Housing Finance
24 Agency.

25 MR. HARVEY: Hi, I'm Peter Harvey,

1 I'm with Allegheny County Department of Human
2 Resources.

3 MS. KEMMERER: Hi, Janelle Kemmerer,
4 covering for and here on behalf of Gale Schwartz
5 with the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania.

6 MR. TAGUE: John Tague, JT Disability
7 Consulting Services.

8 MR. DeYOUNG: Sean DeYoung, CEO of
9 Pittsburgh AIDS Task Force.

10 MR. QUISENBERRY: Kevin Quisenberry,
11 attorney at Community Justice Project.

12 MR. WOOD: My name is Lyle Wood, I'm
13 the acting regional director for the
14 Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission.

15 MS. HENNING: Tricia Henning, counsel
16 for the housing authority.

17 MR. GASTIL: Hi, Ray Gastil, city
18 planning, City of Pittsburgh.

19 MR. O'HANLON: And this is Paul
20 O'Hanlon, City-County Task Force on
21 Disabilities.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: So, thank you,
23 everyone, for being here today and
24 participating, despite the weather. We really
25 appreciate you making the effort to join us.

1 Is anyone else on the phone? We
2 apologize for the low tech, but we are going to
3 make the best efforts that we can.

4 So, moving right along with the
5 committee reports, on behalf of the steering
6 committee I can report that at our last meeting
7 there was an idea of, or a motion presented for
8 this larger group discussion on holding public
9 hearings related to affirmatively furthering
10 fair housing.

11 That request will be made to the city
12 Commission on Human Relations at their next
13 monthly meeting after the vote takes place in
14 this body and then discussion will ensue as to
15 where this meeting should take place and the
16 purpose behind those meetings, so that's an idea
17 that was floated at that steering committee
18 meeting for a larger discussion at this meeting
19 if this group feels that it's appropriate for
20 that type of activity to take place as would
21 involve this body.

22 The other thing that we talked about
23 was the scope of our, the commission's,
24 abilities when it comes to receiving,
25 investigating and adjudicating cases related to

1 fair housing and discrimination, as well as more
2 information, more forthcoming information,
3 related to CDBG and the timeline as associated
4 with the next analysis of impediments which is
5 due, I believe, in 2019, and what that body can
6 do to prepare for that process and how we can
7 use the resources available around the table to
8 make sure that the next analysis is as
9 comprehensive as it can be, of course working
10 with the city planning department and other
11 departments and authorities within the city to
12 make that an inclusive process and report.

13 Any questions about the steering
14 committee activities? I know that's kind of
15 brief, but we have other subcommittees that will
16 be making reports.

17 MS. NICHOLS: What's the CDBG thing?

18 THE CHAIRMAN: You mean what's it
19 stand for --

20 MS. NICHOLS: Just, you had discussed
21 need for CDBG information.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: We want a clear
23 timeline of when the city will begin their
24 process for the next analysis of impediment, so
25 we wanted more information on what happens at

1 what time so this group can then have that
2 information and make the appropriate decisions
3 to do whatever needs to be done.

4 MS. NICHOLS: What does that have to
5 do with CDBG, sorry?

6 THE CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry. Good
7 question.

8 So some of the CDBG dollars are
9 allocated after the analysis of impediment, so
10 some information that goes into that report
11 helps determine the amount of money that the
12 city will receive as part of CDBG allocations,
13 so that's what that's about.

14 MS. NICHOLS: Okay.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Any other questions?
16 Okay, so do we have a member of the race and
17 ethnicity subcommittee that would like to make a
18 report?

19 MR. QUISENBERRY: I'm on the
20 committee, there's really not much to report. I
21 think we're looking to have a committee meeting
22 following this meeting to have an initial
23 orienting sort of meeting.

24 I think there is now a chair for the
25 committee, who is Carl Redwood. I think a lot

1 of people will know him, and I think that his
2 appointment as chair was pretty recent, so
3 there's really not much to report from that
4 committee at this time.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

6 How about for the disability?

7 MR. TAGUE: I guess I'll -- Paul
8 O'Hanlon is on the phone -- Megan Hammond is
9 chair of the committee, she's in West Virginia,
10 I guess, today, Paul is on the phone, and then
11 Melinda Johnson is also on the committee, and so
12 I'm going to give a report. I'm not in the best
13 of shape to give a report but I'll do my best
14 with it.

15 As I said, Megan is chair of the
16 committee, and there were several questions that
17 were posed in the meeting before we actually
18 started the meeting, the question on
19 jurisdiction, and I'll read, pretty much, what
20 Ray reported in our e-mail.

21 To answer the question about
22 jurisdiction Director Torres advised us
23 jurisdiction of a task force is Pittsburgh,
24 McKeesport and Penn Hills areas.

25 Regarding purview, the task force

1 may look at access to opportunities such as
2 education, transportation and employment in its
3 purview -- in its review of the affirmatively
4 furthering fair housing.

5 With regard to the percentage of
6 disability-based housing complaints, of the --
7 there were 14 housing complaints during the
8 2015-2016 case year, 11 of them, 79 percent, had
9 a disability basis for filing the complaint. I
10 can provide more detail if you would like, so if
11 there's more detail on that I can, I guess,
12 provide that, Carlos.

13 We met on the 14th of November at the
14 commission offices. Just to kind of go over a
15 few things, one of the things we discussed,
16 Melinda led the discussion on the 811 project,
17 and I think this is the project you had talked
18 about at the link meeting; is that right?

19 MS. JOHNSON: Yes.

20 MR. TAGUE: So if you want to add
21 anything to it it would be helpful, I think, but
22 there's 200 of these units statewide. Now,
23 Carla Falkenstein, who Melinda is here in place
24 of, has more information on that but, as I said,
25 Chuck Keenan has some additional information on

1 that.

2 The other question touched upon was
3 the Community Development Block Grant money, and
4 what we were trying to figure out is is there a
5 certain percentage of that set aside for people
6 with disabilities. We don't know, so we need to
7 get a clarification on that.

8 I'm not sure, Ray, if that's
9 something you can answer or not. The --

10 MR. GASTIL: I can answer right now,
11 submit your question in detail and I'll be happy
12 to follow up.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: And that's something
14 that we can collect and submit to the planning
15 department so that we can bring an answer to the
16 entire group.

17 MR. TAGUE: Oh, that's fine, I just
18 wanted to make sure that -- you know, since Ray
19 is here I figured I'd put him on the spot.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: He may not have that
21 answer right at hand, I'm afraid.

22 MR. GASTIL: Ask me one more time and
23 then we'll prove that I don't know the answer.

24 MR. TAGUE: Look, I'm lucky I can get
25 through this now, I can barely see what I'm

1 reading. I should have made this like an 18
2 point, and it's not that my eyes are -- I have
3 allergies that's affecting my eyes.

4 There's another thing that was
5 discussed is the affordable housing trust fund.
6 Paul had mentioned that the units proposed by
7 the affirmatively furthering -- the housing task
8 force, all of the -- all will be accessible
9 units. They must be visible, even on the second
10 floor, in other words, someone, if you know the
11 standards of visibility it's, basically, you
12 know, wider doorways and either a type A or
13 type B accessible bathrooms. So that's positive
14 news, and, like I said, it includes all those
15 floors.

16 We also were trying to identify
17 policies. The combinations for persons
18 receiving income from government source as they
19 do not incur late or penalties when the check
20 comes in in time to pay the rent, in other
21 words, they get their Social Security or SSI
22 check.

23 There were other policy questions
24 regarding procedures for when accessible units
25 become available and how people are chosen to

1 occupy those units. There is no system for
2 tracking needs of accessible units once they are
3 occupied by a nondisabled person. When a
4 nondisabled -- nonaccessible unit opens up,
5 tenants who don't need the amenities of
6 accessible units can be bumped on their -- from
7 the unit to accommodate a person with a
8 disability.

9 So there's no way, our thoughts are
10 there's no way to really track that, so if
11 somebody is in an accessible unit that really
12 doesn't qualify to be in there, so we'd like to,
13 you know, discuss as part of those policies.

14 The followup and, really, the
15 reporting out on this, I'll go through these
16 quickly. With regard to funding, determination
17 how the CDBG funding, as I said, entities are
18 spending the money both in regard to accessible
19 units and any kind of CDBG set-asides for
20 disability, going back to the initial thing I
21 had mentioned from the e-mail. Get a list of
22 the URA -- from the URA where the CDBG funds are
23 going.

24 So there's a lot of questions about
25 CDBG for all of these, and get with the city

1 planning department on funding mechanisms for
2 developing housing.

3 That's probably a Ray question, we'll
4 have to wait for Ray on that. Did you hear
5 that, Ray?

6 MR. GASTIL: Yes, the funding
7 mechanisms?

8 MR. TAGUE: Yeah, for developing
9 housing.

10 MR. GASTIL: Right.

11 Many of these are questions, just to
12 explain to people that may not be totally
13 familiar with it, the CDBG funds, which are the
14 largest amount of federal funds that come in,
15 about 12.7 million, we estimate, for 2017,
16 that's about what it was last year, those come
17 in and are for expanding the right-of-way, some
18 of them go to the home program, which is
19 administered by the URA, and so we know where
20 that money goes. In some cases we need to
21 actually do further work with URA to get it,
22 some of it goes out to organizations -- I can
23 tell some of you are very familiar with this,
24 some of you may not -- some of it goes to
25 particular training programs, et cetera, but I'm

1 happy to answer any questions you have about how
2 CDBG programs are used for, particularly for
3 housing.

4 MS. NICHOLS: Can I ask real quick,
5 is there already, like on internal documents,
6 showing here's the 12.7 million that comes in
7 and here's, like an itemized budget that just
8 shows where the money goes?

9 MR. GASTIL: There's a budget that
10 has some, but not all, the items in that format,
11 because some would be what we, basically, move a
12 block grant up to the URA, so forth, so -- but
13 I'll find out.

14 We certainly have budgets, and we'll
15 show you the 2016 budget, which will have more
16 detail than the 2017, which has also not yet
17 passed, and also some aspects would not be
18 determined until we're in the process, so I'll
19 get, try and get you a good 2016 overview, I'm
20 happy to do that.

21 MR. TAGUE: Thank you, Ray.

22 Now, reporting out, one of these
23 items is the identify a lack of advertising
24 outreach as an impediment to fair housing with
25 regard to accessible units, promote inclusive

1 zoning to ensure that there are accessible units
2 everywhere instead of points.

3 Request that the city create a
4 reasonable accommodation process rather than a
5 zoning variance process for disability-related
6 requests. Also, add a disability clause to the
7 ordinances. Determine if there are -- is a way
8 to put a stay on landlords/tenant issues with
9 magistrates during the PCHR complaint process.

10 I do apologize, I wasn't as
11 articulate on this as I wanted to be but, as I
12 said, I had trouble reading this.

13 Well, thank you, that concludes our
14 report. We haven't scheduled another meeting
15 yet but we will shortly, but we wanted to make
16 sure we reported on some of the items that we
17 had worked on.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Any of the members of
19 the disability committee have anything to add?

20 Paul? Can you hear us? I'm not sure
21 he's still with us.

22 MR. O'HANLON: No, I don't.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

24 The alternative protected classes, do
25 you guys have a report?

1 MR. KEENAN: Yeah, I have a handout.

2 So we all have enough work, I think,
3 with the existing protected classes we have but
4 I think there are still some impacts on people
5 who aren't in what we would call a protected
6 class with the city right now where there's
7 litigation about the protected class, but we
8 still wanted to take a look to see if there is
9 discrimination going on against three different
10 subpopulations: The first is people with a
11 criminal history.

12 The second is source of income,
13 which, you know, is in litigation, and the third
14 is people who experience homelessness.

15 So our group took a look at those
16 three populations to see if it would be worth
17 recommending to the larger group that it pursue
18 some sort of designation of those as a protected
19 class, so we did some work on background for
20 people with criminal records, so, you know,
21 there's a statement that came out from HUD and
22 the Department of Justice about how you should
23 look at criminal records and housing and there's
24 some questions about, you know, whether what a
25 lot of landlords are doing is a violation of the

1 Fair Housing Act, enforcement of that, so we
2 wanted to do a little bit further review on
3 that, basically, so we wanted to look at a
4 sample of some of the selection criteria that
5 some of the landlords are using, the largest one
6 being the Pittsburgh Housing Authority.

7 So we wanted to discuss with this
8 group, you know, the possibility of asking the
9 housing authority to look at criminal records
10 only for what HUD requires and not to go beyond
11 the HUD requirement, so in the legislation that
12 created public housing authorities they are not
13 allowed to accept, according to law, anybody
14 who's required to register on Megan's Law for
15 life, or anybody that's been convicted of making
16 methamphetamines on the premises of HUD-assisted
17 housing, they have great leeway in denying any
18 other criminal history beyond that, so according
19 to the HUD statute you can't admit those folks
20 but it's still screened beyond the HUD
21 requirements, so we wanted to see if this group
22 would be interested in --

23 MS. NICHOLS: "They" being the
24 housing authority?

25 MR. KEENAN: Yes, but this group

1 wants to look at requiring the housing authority
2 to just look at the HUD requirements and not go
3 beyond the HUD requirements, and then also to
4 see if there's an appetite for something that
5 was done with the employment applications in the
6 city, kind of a band in a box, so you don't ask
7 about criminal history on your housing
8 application to see if the city is interested in
9 pursuing legislation along those lines.

10 That's kind of the first piece on
11 criminal record. Next is source of income, we
12 know that's in litigation right now, so we
13 didn't know if there was an appetite for this
14 larger group, the task force, to hold a public
15 hearing to discuss that ongoing litigation and
16 the need to look at Section 8 of the protected
17 class at source of income as a protected class,
18 so that was kind of our recommendation there, to
19 see if that's something that the group wants to
20 do, and then, finally, do some research on
21 housing status and whether that should be a
22 protected class, so there's a little bit of
23 research in the back of this document from some
24 other cities around their ordinances.

25 Right now it's perfectly legal to

1 deny somebody housing because they don't have a
2 fixed address or because they're in a homeless
3 program or they're in a homeless shelter, so
4 again, we want to see if there's an appetite
5 here as the task force, the full task force, to
6 explore making that illegal in the City of
7 Pittsburgh.

8 So that's, kind of, our report.
9 There's who some more background information
10 here. I think our first, you know, meeting was
11 basically just to figure out if this was
12 something that we wanted to do, that we thought
13 that it might be worth pursuing, again, knowing
14 that there's a lot of other protected classes in
15 the city that are facing discrimination now and
16 we want to add to that, but we haven't really
17 gotten our full house together in order on that,
18 or whether we think this is something creating a
19 new impact for people and making it difficult
20 for folks to find housing and if it was
21 addressed it might be easier.

22 So that's our report. If anyone
23 wants to add anything or has any questions?

24 THE CHAIRMAN: And thank you, Chuck,
25 just, and I'm not sure whether this group was

1 made aware, but the Pittsburgh commission
2 submitted documents to the court intervening in
3 the source of income lawsuit that is pending,
4 basically saying that we, as the law enforcement
5 agency for the city, had an interest in the
6 legislation being upheld, because so many
7 individuals who are in the Section 8 program are
8 members of the protected classes that are part
9 of the city code at this point that, in fact,
10 the source of income, using source of income as
11 one of the determinants on whether someone gets
12 housing or not is still -- it is a form of
13 discrimination, and the law enforcement entity
14 for the city, as the entity for the city we have
15 an interest in making sure that the ordinance as
16 written is upheld by the court, and we're still
17 waiting for an answer from the court on our
18 intervention.

19 MR. KEENAN: I think at this point
20 our group was, like, let's pull back, this is in
21 litigation, let's just taken this for now and
22 see how it shakes out unless there's just, if
23 you want to take a look at doing some sort of an
24 event that would highlight the issues, that's
25 really about as much as we can do at this point

1 in time.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Chuck.

3 MS. NICHOLS: Just to get clarity
4 about the protected class, the commission is
5 charged with the federally-defined protected
6 classes and you're saying technically, source of
7 income is in a protected class?

8 MR. KEENAN: But also there are local
9 protected classes.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Our protected classes
11 go beyond the federal protections.

12 MS. NICHOLS: Okay, but the source of
13 income right now, does that count in either the
14 local or the federal?

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Correct.

16 MS. NICHOLS: It does not --

17 MR. KEENAN: It's in litigation,
18 there was a law passing it into litigation.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: It's in litigation, so
20 the law passed and it was challenged in court,
21 now we're waiting for the courts to make a
22 decision on it.

23 MR. KEENAN: A restraining order, or
24 whatever, against enforcement?

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

1 MR. KEENAN: Okay, so it can't be
2 enforced but the law is on the book.

3 MR. WOOD: I would say this, that if
4 there is a question with regards to
5 discrimination that you proceed with it, anyway.
6 It may be, on its face, source of income, it
7 could be another protected class, could be race,
8 gender, could be because of disability, and
9 sometimes it could be certain impact, certain
10 effect, mixed, so I would forward that on to
11 either Carlos or the feds or to us at the state,
12 at least the inquiry, and once we get the
13 information and get an opportunity to actually
14 talk to the complainant, we may have cause of
15 action with regards to another class altogether,
16 and again, that could just be a neutral reason
17 on its face but have the effect of, actually,
18 illegal discrimination, so whenever you have a
19 question on that I'd send you to the appropriate
20 agency to take a look at it and kind of let us
21 figure it out from there, and that has nothing
22 to do with the litigation that's pending because
23 it may have something to do with another
24 protected class altogether.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Absolutely, and that

1 was one of the motivating factors for looking at
2 these other groups that are not part of, like,
3 you know, like the homeless and the -- because
4 sometimes it may look like it's because they're
5 homeless but it's, you know, other things behind
6 the scenes that, on its face you think oh, well,
7 because you're homeless you're not protected,
8 well, but if you're homeless and you have a
9 disability you are protected; right? So that's
10 what we wanted to look at. Thank you, Chuck.

11 The sexual orientation and
12 gender/gender identity subcommittee.

13 MS. MAYES: Good afternoon, everyone.
14 I had the pleasure to chair the subcommittee
15 with Tricia Daugherty, Ms. Beverly Williams,
16 also with Sean on this meeting for the first
17 time, and David. We, in our one meeting that we
18 did have the opportunity to have in person, we
19 really kind of reviewed from our respective
20 areas of work what we were seeing around this
21 intersection of fair housing, gender and sexual
22 orientation, and so we do have a handout for
23 you, as well.

24 It's kind of articulating what we
25 discussed, and at the end there are some

1 proposed areas of focus which are not,
2 specifically, policy recommendations but
3 incremental steps towards, you know,
4 administrative changes and larger policy changes
5 that we can work towards, and we wanted to focus
6 on things we could achieve in a realistic amount
7 of time.

8 So many of our conversations revolved
9 around information access and intersectionality,
10 and intersectionality means that it's not just
11 one issue, it's not one piece of your identity,
12 there are things that are compounding when
13 people are trying to access affordable housing,
14 and on the heels of the local CEDAW ordinance
15 being passed today, and CEDAW is the Convention
16 on the Elimination of All Forms of
17 Discrimination Against Women, I think it's
18 appropriate that we're meeting today and talking
19 about how access to fair and affordable housing
20 impacts women, specifically, but also LBGTQIA+
21 people, so from -- I just want to review some
22 key points from the conversation that our
23 subcommittee had which are around child care,
24 which, I made an error in omitting it but we
25 will send a revised version of this memo, child

1 care being one of the reasons why women or
2 parents aren't able to maintain housing because
3 they can't maintain employment because they
4 don't have child care.

5 Another significant conversation we
6 had was about exploring how nondiscrimination
7 policy in our region is connected to fair
8 housing and housing discrimination, and I don't
9 know that we fully understand how those things
10 connect and intersect.

11 Connected to that is how landlords
12 can discriminate against LBGTQIA+ people, and if
13 they are nonprotected municipalities, such as
14 the City of Pittsburgh or Allegheny County, they
15 can still be in this region and still face
16 discrimination, and so, you know, a larger
17 policy connected, but larger than this
18 committee, is around the statewide
19 nondiscrimination policy, so that folks are
20 protected no matter where they live.

21 Impediments for survivors of domestic
22 violence and domestic partner violence is
23 connected to access to affordable and fair
24 housing, as well as to mental health, and it's
25 already been mentioned, but incarcerated people,

1 how they are impacted, physically and formerly
2 incarcerated women or women who are returning,
3 what options are available to them when they do
4 return back to society, and also not just those
5 who were actually incarcerated, but those who
6 were just involved with the criminal justice
7 system, they may be on probation, they may be
8 living in a halfway house, what are their -- do
9 they understand their housing rights and what
10 fair and affordable housing is available to
11 them?

12 Another concern for us, especially in
13 the work for women's voices, is what are the
14 options for women, and particularly teen, young
15 women, who are pregnant or parenting? What
16 access or options do they have around fair
17 housing, and do they understand what their
18 rights are and what policies apply to them.

19 And, lastly, another key part of our
20 conversation was around environmental justice
21 and fair housing and how an inside climate or
22 how development gets done is related to
23 environmental impacts that can impact a person's
24 health.

25 So below, I think in the final

1 section, are some initial areas of focus that we
2 want to put forth, and we talked about how
3 people navigate the system and how we have to
4 make it as easy as possible for people to do
5 that, regardless of their background or their
6 walk of life, and so one thing that came up was
7 around literacy and understanding paperwork and
8 documentation, so making sure that they are
9 written in -- you know, written in language that
10 is understandable. Because we are a changing
11 region it's important that any housing documents
12 or paperwork or applications are available in
13 multiple languages, that is something that our
14 region struggles with consistently, and we know
15 that that would be a great help for people who
16 do not speak English as their first language.

17 And also related to documentation and
18 navigation is expanding definitions of gender,
19 gender requirements for, like, understanding
20 what's gender required for and in what instances
21 and for what programs. I think that's a huge
22 thing that could make a difference, particularly
23 for transgender people who may have
24 documentation that doesn't match their gender
25 expression currently.

1 We thought about, again, about
2 information. All people don't have access to
3 Internet in their homes, they have it through
4 their phones, so what kind of access can we
5 create as a task force that really combines all
6 of the different resources, agencies and
7 information that is out there to make it
8 available to those who can only, maybe, access
9 the Internet through their phones.

10 We really talked about, extensively,
11 about homeless youth, particularly those who are
12 heading out of the foster care system and those
13 who are LBGTQIA+ youth who may have been kicked
14 out of their homes or wherever they may be
15 living, and there seems to be a huge gap in
16 providing housing for them or connecting them to
17 housing that accepts them as they are and does
18 not engage in discrimination.

19 We talked about the long-term thing,
20 what organizations are already providing
21 resources, how do we just identify what they do
22 provide, particularly for women and for LBGTQIA+
23 residents and so that we can connect people in
24 their communities to trusted resources for them
25 to get information about fair and affordable

1 housing.

2 And, lastly, in developing
3 partnerships to increase literacy and reading
4 comprehension to help residents improve their
5 understanding of how -- understanding of the
6 different systems they have to navigate in order
7 to secure and maintain fair and affordable
8 housing.

9 So those are our initial
10 recommendations, there's so much research we'd
11 like to continue to do and things that are
12 connected to other subcommittees, because I
13 think it will be significant for looking at this
14 in an intersectional and multidimensional way so
15 when we're addressing a problem, we're
16 addressing the entire problem by having a
17 comprehensive vision for what actually needs to
18 be solved.

19 So that is our report. Any questions
20 or thoughts?

21 THE CHAIRMAN: All right. I do have
22 a question, and this is for the larger group,
23 I'm a new transplant to the city, as many of you
24 may know, but is there currently a resource
25 guide of Social Service providers that lists

1 what services they offer that is readily
2 available to anyone who wants to access it, is
3 anyone aware?

4 MS. MAYES: I'm not sure.

5 MR. DeYOUNG: Yeah, 211, United Way.

6 MS. NICHOLS: Is there something
7 specific to housing, like within 211 do they
8 break it down by --

9 MR. KEENAN: At CHS we have a
10 database of all the assisted housing in the
11 county, they have that database, so if somebody
12 says oh, I want -- I'm looking for a
13 three-bedroom subsidized apartment in East
14 Liberty they can tell them where those are, or I
15 don't care where I live, I need a four-bedroom
16 apartment, can you give me a list of
17 four-bedroom apartments, so they have that list
18 that they've put together.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Is that available
20 online or do you actually have to speak to a
21 person to get that information?

22 MR. KEENAN: That, I don't know.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay.

24 MR. WOOD: A lot of times when we
25 deal with folks and they have issues beyond what

1 we do we have a referral list of agencies that
2 can simply address their issues that we might
3 refer them to housing counseling services or
4 Housing Authority for City of Pittsburgh or PHFA
5 or to the county housing authority, so we
6 generally know where we can send, refer them to,
7 and even those agencies have sublists of
8 services, you know, and again, United Way is
9 another one, Action Housing, there's all kinds
10 of agencies, so there's more, a list of agencies
11 that provides services that can give referral
12 sources, and that is a master list.

13 MS. MAYES: Well, and I think that's
14 what we're talking about is where is all this
15 information living and how can I look up
16 something according to what I need,
17 specifically, not just send me to an agency, but
18 I'm an LBGTQU and I'm trying to figure out where
19 I can fit in, so that's what we're trying to
20 solve, or I'm in a domestic violence situation,
21 I have two children under the age of 18, what
22 are my options, and I think that is a different
23 approach than what I'm hearing, which is kind of
24 like, oh, talk to the Urban League or talk to
25 Action Housing, but there's going to be a

1 limitation on what may be available to them.

2 There may be other organizations that
3 are not housing organizations that could provide
4 resources, such as New Voices, where, you know,
5 that's not our lane, that's not, maybe, what you
6 think that we do, but if you list us as LGBTQ
7 housing will come up, as well, so I think the
8 data is important to people having access to
9 information.

10 MR. KEENAN: We do have coordinated
11 entry in Allegheny County that can do referrals
12 to any agency in the homeless system and beyond
13 that, so if you're not homeless and you're still
14 looking for housing they have good resources on
15 those, that database is within the county, is
16 run through the Allegheny link, so that's how
17 you can access any homeless service or emergency
18 needs, work with the shelters or with the
19 domestic violence shelters, you know, youth
20 shelters.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: And do you know
22 whether they have individuals who assist with
23 folks who are not, maybe, English-proficient?

24 MR. KEENAN: Yes.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Good.

1 Thank you, La'Tasha, for that report.

2 And, last but not least, we have
3 outreach and education, Ms. Fuller.

4 MS. FULLER: Thank you.

5 We met on November the 22nd and we
6 had three key points that we discussed, one of
7 them was the need to provide education to tenant
8 groups, we talked about the usefulness of having
9 a forum to facilitate dialogue between housing
10 providers and housing consumers.

11 David Dean had spoken about the year
12 of fair housing celebration and its 50th
13 anniversary of fair housing in 2018 that's
14 coming up, so we sort of talked around what
15 could we do together to prepare ourselves for
16 the 2018 summit as far as communities and
17 outreach that -- during that summit, what can we
18 do on that level.

19 Some of the things that we discussed
20 was bringing together a forum for consumers
21 around fair housing, and reaching out to them
22 and talking with them concerning what their
23 rights are concerning fair housing, and then we
24 talked about reaching out also to the providers
25 about fair housing, because whether you're

1 talking to some consumers concerning fair
2 housing, a lot of them do know, a lot of them
3 have a wealth of that information and some of
4 them have no information, and when you put them
5 both together is where you get opinions and
6 what -- if we put them all together as far as
7 the consumers and do a dialogue with them alone
8 and then do a dialogue with the providers, and
9 we discussed about putting the providers and the
10 consumers together to have a dialogue, and I
11 think we had discussed this, that would
12 sometimes, or would often seem to create a
13 clash, as opposed to having them meet together
14 or separately, so I think we came up with the
15 idea, particularly for the 50th anniversary
16 summit, of doing outreach and education with
17 them separately, and then bringing them together
18 as one group for that outreach summit.

19 We also talked about revisiting the
20 registration legislation so that the real estate
21 professionals would have a comprehensive list of
22 housing providers in the City of Pittsburgh, so
23 how we reach the providers. You know, we have
24 the housing authorities, but all other HUD
25 providers, private providers, how do we bring

1 them all together around affirmative fair
2 housing and the fair housing?

3 We talked about the -- the third
4 thing we talked about was crafting a
5 recommendation to the municipalities that have
6 to complete an assessment of their fair housing
7 analysis for their choice -- for the choice
8 study, that we would include having at least one
9 public meeting in each neighborhood that's
10 eligible for CDBG funding and that the task
11 force could assist in outreach for these
12 meetings and the neighborhood-specific data that
13 they would need to go into their assessments for
14 their fair housing.

15 So we're going to meet again and work
16 around how that could be done what that can look
17 like as far as for outreaching and fair housing
18 for tenants and for landlords.

19 Ours is very brief but it was a
20 really good meeting, so any questions or input?
21 Did I leave out anybody, anybody that's on the
22 committee? Myself, David Dean, Jay, Helen,
23 Sarah, Rachel and Carlos were in attendance.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Dean, was there
25 anything else from that meeting that you would

1 like to add?

2 MR. DEAN: The only thing that I just
3 wanted to bring to the attention of the
4 committee was I think the last time that I was
5 here, in this body in particular, there were
6 questions that were raised as to why was the
7 Realtors Association of Metropolitan Pittsburgh
8 on this committee, and I wanted to -- I stated
9 to the committee at that time my credentials and
10 my background.

11 What I want to elaborate on is
12 something that Ms. Fuller talked about, but we
13 discussed what would be a baseline mechanism to
14 all people who are seeking rentals in the City
15 of Pittsburgh, what would be the way for us to
16 get the basic tenets of fair housing out to
17 them, and one of the things we talked about was
18 in my particular business we always give any
19 client a consumer notice that they either have
20 the option of signing or not signing, but we
21 give it to them, and it, basically, states what
22 the obligations and the law is for the consumer,
23 and we thought that if we could revisit the
24 Rental Registration Act, which, I know some of
25 you in this room know that my association took a

1 very hard line at, and that is not shared by
2 everybody in my association, that we might be
3 able to include that in the legislation going
4 forward that any landlord would have to provide
5 to any applicant a form that, basically, they
6 would keep, so you don't have to worry about if
7 you don't have Internet access because this
8 would be for everybody, and this would give you
9 a baseline of information about what are your
10 rights and where you can go if you have a
11 problem, and I just think that, going forward,
12 that this idea could at least address and give
13 us something that no other municipality has
14 presently and, hopefully, that that will give us
15 a baseline of knowledge that, again, as I said,
16 I don't think anybody else has.

17 So that was about the only addition
18 to that report I wanted to add.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, and that
20 was a very crucial point that was made during
21 the subcommittee meeting and, from the
22 commission's perspective, we think it's a great
23 idea of getting some basic information into the
24 hands of potential tenants as to what are their
25 rights and what are their remedies if they

1 believe that they have experienced any sort of
2 discrimination based on whatever protected class
3 they may be part of, whether it's race, gender,
4 ethnicity, and so on, so thank you, Mr. Dean,
5 because that was a crucial part of that meeting.

6 Any comments, questions or concerns
7 about the report from the subcommittees? Great.
8 Thank you everyone, for those reports, we really
9 do appreciate you taking the time to meet
10 separately and create some information for this
11 larger body to consider.

12 The next piece on the agenda is the
13 goals and recommendations, and the first piece
14 that we wanted to discuss are identifying what
15 the goals are for this body. I know that
16 initially we were brought together to assist the
17 city with the next analysis of impediment and
18 making sure that there was a robust effort to do
19 outreach to different protected classes to make
20 sure that their needs, their concerns, their
21 issues, were brought forth as the city plans on
22 their next analysis of impediment, but we wanted
23 to explore to see are there other goals that are
24 still associated with fair housing that this
25 body should consider, so we wanted to bring that

1 idea to the larger group to see what opinions
2 there may be that are, or ideas that may fall
3 outside of the subcommittees or the things that
4 we have talked about up to this point, so this
5 is just a point of dialogue with the members of
6 the group.

7 MS. AIZENMAN: Since working with
8 immigrants, I just didn't hear reference to it
9 here, I don't know if it's part of your
10 committee, but the rights of people who aren't
11 citizens, are landlords allowed to deny them
12 access due to status?

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, and it goes back
14 to, I think, to the basic question that La'Tasha
15 brought up, right, so if a landlord is asking
16 for immigration status, why do they need that
17 information? Are they required by law to do so,
18 and if so, what law, and is that information
19 being used, because even if you are a U.S.
20 citizen or a resident or have a green card,
21 whatever it may be, so what? Why does my
22 landlord need that information from me?

23 MR. TAGUE: Carlos, does that go to
24 the point of if it's subsidized, if you're --

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, it's different

1 for federal programs, but we're talking about,
2 you know, a private landlord. So I have two
3 apartments that I want to rent; why do I need to
4 know your immigration status in order to rent to
5 you?

6 MR. WOOD: It really doesn't matter,
7 I mean, the landlord is obligated to follow what
8 the law says, either the -- in our case PHRA, as
9 Carlos stated, the act of the City of
10 Pittsburgh, federal housing, it really doesn't
11 matter, and the bottom line is we've had cases
12 where we've had individuals who, in one case an
13 individual was from Central America, English was
14 very limited, had a representative assist him in
15 seeking housing, one of the first things that
16 the landlord asked was, I want to say, I forget
17 how he asked it, but it was very articulate, but
18 they, basically, asked were they in this country
19 legally, and that if they weren't then they had
20 to be deported, which is garbage, and,
21 essentially, it was a way that that individual
22 sought to deny the complainant, in this case,
23 the opportunity to be able to secure housing.

24 We were able to take that case --
25 that was a case that ended up settling but it

1 was, the inquiry, itself, was troubling, the
2 fact that it didn't matter whether this person
3 was a native American or citizen or not, what
4 mattered was it was a different set of terms and
5 conditions to be able for that individual to,
6 possibly, secure that unit and it was based on
7 their natural origin.

8 So I would say that if there's ever a
9 question whether or not that person was being
10 afforded legally discriminatory terms and
11 conditions that you contact Carlos, contact us,
12 and again, we'll take a look at it and kind of
13 go from there, but they had the same obligations
14 to adhere to the law as anyone else does, and
15 just because they're a private landlord doesn't
16 mean that they get special privileges to
17 discriminate against people or to deny that
18 person their right to a -- to safe and decent
19 housing, one way or the other.

20 And I notice, too, in the atmosphere,
21 post-election atmosphere that we have, we've
22 seen a lot of, I don't want to call it, classify
23 them as hate crimes, but let's just say very
24 unfortunate circumstances that have taken place;
25 children being harassed at school, people being

1 assaulted in public accommodations, swastikas,
2 graffiti being placed on different properties,
3 and it's increasing, it's not decreasing at all.

4 We've pretty much tried to keep a
5 really good eye on that and to be able to add
6 our technical assistance to anybody who needs
7 it, we're required to do that. The government
8 can send us anywhere, if there's civil tension
9 or unrest, or any of these instances, we can
10 say, okay, we want you to go here.

11 In the school, since our act also
12 covers education, there's been a lot of
13 instances in the schools, and in some cases it
14 was with immigrant children in schools, and
15 we've had contact with organizations, we've been
16 able to make contacts with the principal or
17 superintendent at that district because we can
18 cover those types of incidents that take place,
19 and have been able to give some of those people
20 who are victims of this some kind of relief in
21 terms of remedy.

22 So, yeah, just because they may be an
23 immigrant population, they may not be a citizen,
24 they may not be a natural-born American citizen,
25 they still have rights, and they still have the

1 right to be free from this kind of
2 discrimination, so we have Carlos, me, we can
3 kind of go right from there to see what we can
4 do to alleviate these.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: We've recently had a
6 complaint from a woman from, again, Central
7 America, three children, two of those children
8 had disabilities, and a month after renting the
9 unit the landlord said sorry, you have to leave,
10 your children make too much noise, and we took
11 that complaint and that complaint settled, and
12 it had nothing to do with other things, but when
13 we take complaints we don't ask for people's
14 immigration status.

15 One thing to keep in mind, if a
16 landlord is saying, well, I cannot rent to you
17 because you don't have a Social Security number,
18 for example, again, why do you need Social
19 Security numbers? Now, if they say well, we
20 need to run a background check, or a credit
21 check, there might be ways around that,
22 particularly if the person can prove that they
23 are able to pay the rent because they have the
24 means to do so, whether it's because they're
25 connected to a social service agency or because

1 somebody else is just going to pay the rent and
2 they, the person wants to live there.

3 So there are ways, and again, it can
4 be a little sneaky, like the Social Security
5 thing, because it's about country of origin,
6 right, so if you're here as a foreign student,
7 we have many universities in our city, you will
8 not have a Social Security number; would you?
9 But you still need a place to live. So it can
10 happen, and we'll be happy to take a look at
11 those issues.

12 MR. WOOD: We have President-elect
13 Trump who has tapped, unfortunately, one of the
14 most unqualified individuals I could ever think
15 of to be the HUD secretary and who has said that
16 one of his first priorities, if he is confirmed,
17 is, number one, to do away with affirmatively
18 furthering fair housing, number one.

19 Number two, to cut back on
20 enforcement, those are his two priorities, so --

21 MS. NICHOLS: Enforcement of what?

22 MR. WOOD: Enforcement of the fair
23 housing laws, and he will be the, maybe we're
24 being punished, the secretary of HUD, okay.

25 So the bottom line is, and we do this

1 with advisory panels and commissions, we do
2 about 27 that we have jurisdiction over, and
3 especially with this group, you're kind of like
4 our eyes and ears, you know, Carlos and the
5 people -- you're our eyes and ears, you know or
6 hear of different things that happen that could
7 be true violations of the act, you know, and the
8 fair housing laws. We depend on different
9 agencies here, in particular, to be able to say
10 hey, Carlos, hey, Lyle, there's something going
11 on here, someone is being discriminated against,
12 they're timely, they're members of a protected
13 class, we'd like to be able to refer those
14 people to you, because that is the only way that
15 you are able to stop some of this garbage, or at
16 least put it in these people's minds that if you
17 discriminate it could be very costly; okay?

18 A lot of these guys, their bottom
19 line is their financial ability to be able to
20 operate in whatever way they see fit, a lot of
21 times they don't believe that the law applies to
22 them, it's my property, I can do what I want to
23 with it, and, to a degree, that's fine as long
24 as you don't illegally discriminate against
25 someone because they're members of a protected

1 class, and if you know do there are consequences
2 to that if, in fact, we're able to prove it.

3 So, you know, we depend on the groups
4 here to be able to refer those individuals to us
5 so we can adjudicate those cases, and some
6 people we work with are very, very good at it,
7 to be able to represent, to be able to advocate
8 for those individuals, and to be very effective,
9 and it's probably the best lesson a person could
10 learn is when they get a cause finding, they've
11 got a decision to make, we've got to either
12 settle this case with the findings enforceable
13 in court, or whether I roll the dice and try to
14 go to public hearing and really get zapped if,
15 in fact, there is probable cause to believe that
16 that took place, that's what they have to
17 decide. You know, that's not the cost of doing
18 business, it's the cost of not obeying what the
19 law says, and every individual has certain
20 rights, and so we're here to enforce that, and
21 that's, basically, what we do.

22 So if you guys hear anything, know
23 anything, send them to us, refer those people to
24 us, call us, you know, we'll have our people go
25 out there and deal with it, and that is one of

1 the few ways, even if we have the brain surgeon
2 get in, okay, and attempt to roll back the
3 progress that's been made over the past 50
4 years, you know, we have a state act that's not
5 dependent upon him, Carlos has a city, an act
6 for the City of Pittsburgh that's not dependent
7 upon him, or the feds, so we can take care of it
8 and adjudicate it.

9 MR. QUISENBERRY: One thing I'd like
10 to add to what Lyle said, the other enforcement
11 mechanism under the fair housing act is for
12 victims of discrimination to assert their own
13 rights in court. It's difficult to do that as a
14 plaintiff if you're not represented by counsel,
15 but it's sort of, that's one of the key
16 ingredients.

17 I think one thing this task force
18 could do would be to identify and mobilize
19 attorneys in our area to be available to
20 represent clients who need attorneys to file
21 cases when that's appropriate, particularly if
22 administrative enforcement, if the capacity for
23 administrative enforcement dwindles to some
24 degree or other because of, you know,
25 Congressional funding or politics.

1 MS. NICHOLS: You do it in court with
2 an attorney?

3 MR. QUISENBERRY: Sure you do, you
4 can, absolutely.

5 MS. NICHOLS: I like the idea of
6 getting attorneys as a part of the resource
7 guide that people know if they can't -- if they
8 go to Neighborhood Legal Services and their case
9 isn't covered for some reason, you know, or
10 like --

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Yeah, and we're
12 currently working, kind of compiling a list, and
13 it has been proven a little challenging because,
14 you know, having an attorney costs money, and
15 attorneys do have a, you know --

16 MR. QUISENBERRY: And the good thing
17 about the Fair Housing Act, it provides for fee
18 shifting, so if the case is attractive to the
19 private bar the private bar can get paid upon
20 prevailing, they don't have to get paid by the
21 client, the statute, itself, has a provision
22 that entitles the victim of discrimination to
23 seek and obtain attorney's fees if they prevail
24 in the case, and so the attorney can take it on
25 a contingency basis and wait to prevail in order

1 to get paid, it doesn't have to be that the
2 attorney is receiving a retainer and ongoing
3 payments from the client.

4 Again, there's a cost-benefit there
5 that the attorney is going to look at, it's the
6 thing that motivates the private bar is, like
7 everyone knows, money makes the world go 'round,
8 that's not all but, you know, it's an
9 ingredient, so there are some cases that are
10 smaller that I would always recommend go to
11 administrative enforcement where an attorney may
12 not be incentivized financially to invest the
13 time to bring that case to court, but then there
14 are other cases where, dependent on the injury
15 or the scope of the problem, or if you can find
16 an attorney who's just willing to do it, that
17 court enforcement is a viable and very
18 persuasive mechanism, both specifically for that
19 client, but also for, sort of, broader public
20 education.

21 MR. WOOD: We have two good
22 attorneys here that I'm aware of, the one who
23 just spoke and Mr. Taylor, from Southwest, here
24 will take -- and our counsel are very, very
25 aggressive in regards to discrimination, so

1 there's options here, and lack of legal counsel,
2 or someone who thinks that they have to
3 absolutely have counsel should not be an
4 impediment to someone to exercise their right,
5 and that's the thing, so again, this is a great
6 route in terms of a resource for individuals who
7 may have been discriminated against.

8 I think that is the real core
9 strength of this group, it is so diverse and has
10 got so many different parts moving here to run
11 the engine, you know, for fair housing, and we
12 have to really use the resources we have,
13 because I can guarantee you, what I'm seeing,
14 we're going to need them, it's going to get real
15 exotic real fast.

16 MR. KEENAN: You know, I apologize if
17 this is too much of a political comment, but at
18 least when Mr. Trump was running he ran on "I'm
19 the law and order candidate," and I thought this
20 was a lot of what's on the books that should be
21 enforced, so is this something that can kind of
22 be used to say, well, you said you were going to
23 be for the law that's on the books; if the law
24 is on the books why don't we hold them
25 accountable for enforcing the laws that are on

1 the books?

2 MR. TAGUE: Chuck, who's the attorney
3 general going to be?

4 MR. KEENAN: I don't know.

5 So I don't know if it's going to come
6 up in a confirmation hearing or something like
7 that, but this is something that he promised as
8 a candidate. I would hope that the advocates go
9 out and hold him to the promises that he's going
10 to be a law and order president.

11 MR. TAYLOR: I think the big concern
12 isn't, necessarily, is the law going away, but
13 it's enforcement, and so what, you've got a law
14 on the books, but there's groups, like ours, out
15 there that are able to enforce it.

16 MR. WOOD: And no one said that -- go
17 do this. You know, we deal with people every
18 day who will sit there and tell us what the law
19 is. Well, the law isn't there to tell us, I can
20 do what I want to do, it's my property, I don't
21 have to listen to you. That's every day.

22 I've had people sit across from me in
23 fact-findings and tell me, yeah, so what, and
24 that makes my job easy, you know. I can
25 guarantee you, by the time they get to the

1 public hearing, into a court, someone is going
2 to amend that, and I would misunderstood what
3 they initially said to me, that was in writing
4 and a verbal statement.

5 So you have people who don't care
6 what the law is, you have people who will do
7 what they want to do who have their own beliefs
8 and their own biases, and we all have our
9 beliefs and biases, okay, that's human nature,
10 but when you actually, this is like a question
11 that was asked me when I first applied for this
12 job, what's the difference between prejudice
13 discrimination, and you sit there and go ah, ah,
14 ah, you know, prejudice is a belief,
15 discrimination is an action that, manifested, is
16 something that can be illegal, and when they
17 discriminate or say I'm not going to rent to you
18 because, and you tick off the list and they're
19 all protected classes, that's illegal under the
20 law, and it's not that it's not law there, it's
21 not that someone advocates for that, it's that
22 individual made a conscious decision, most
23 times, not always but most times, that they are
24 not going to do what the law requires that you
25 do.

1 So that's why we're here, we enforce
2 that, and again, there's consequences if an
3 individual is found to have purposefully
4 violated the law and discriminated and caused
5 another party harm, so it's going to happen,
6 under the best of circumstances it happens, so
7 this is going to be the worst of circumstances
8 and it's going to happen, so the only thing we
9 can do is use the resources we have to make sure
10 that all, everybody, residents, citizens of this
11 Commonwealth, you know, are protected against
12 individuals who would illegally and unlawfully
13 discriminate against them.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. So any other
15 comments about the goals for the task force? So
16 I know we have the issue of immigrants and
17 immigration status; anything else?

18 MS. NICHOLS: I think this is
19 maybe -- requires a bigger conversation that we
20 can't have right now, but it sounds like, you
21 said the bigger goal has to do with assisting
22 the city with the analysis of impediment to fair
23 housing, which is more of a, kind of,
24 research-based work, because an analysis is,
25 like, a written document that gets produced and

1 used, but it also sounds like what Lyle is
2 saying, like, help us enforce the law, like, I'm
3 just thinking about, like, what role this task
4 force plays in, like, helping that enforcement
5 happen if it's about connecting individuals that
6 different folks in here know already to know
7 what their rights are, or whatever, then that's,
8 like, a piece, but then if we're thinking about
9 these bigger public hearings then it's like
10 making them bigger public issues that could be
11 centered around a kind of mobilization, like the
12 band in the box kind of example.

13 So I think it's still kind of open,
14 to me, where the -- I don't know if you guys
15 agree with me, like is it research, literally
16 helping to enforce the law by connecting
17 residents that we know to, you know, know what
18 their rights are connect with you all to get
19 protected or get connected with lawyers, or
20 bigger, like, public issues that are
21 opportunities for mobilization to help make it
22 better for everyone without having to just do it
23 on a case-by-case scenario?

24 THE CHAIRMAN: I, personally, don't
25 think that we have to do one and neglect the

1 other, it might be an opportunity to do multiple
2 things at the same time, in my personal opinion,
3 but that's for the group to think about and
4 decide, I cannot impose my thinking on the
5 group, I wish I could.

6 MS. AIZENMAN: From what I see
7 dealing with landlords around, people who don't
8 speak the language, they mostly say something
9 that's not exactly nice -- I don't know about
10 "nice," but are they drug dealers, are they
11 terrorists, are they legal? I mean, but then
12 they'll reassure them they're not and then they
13 might rent to us. So we're doing business with
14 these people and they end up, usually, liking
15 them, it usually goes well, so I just wonder
16 who's educating them, maybe there's something
17 from your organization? I mean, the things that
18 come out of their mouth, is that happening with
19 every group, because I haven't been doing this
20 for other protected classes, but it's --
21 unbelievable things, even employers, too, but
22 then they'll end up -- I'm feeling where is this
23 education, especially as immigrants are growing
24 in number, so that's what, maybe -- I'm just
25 curious?

1 THE CHAIRMAN: We, the commission,
2 have been doing some work around some education,
3 but sometimes we don't know where we are needed
4 until we are told, you know, there's an issue
5 going on in this particular neighborhood or with
6 this particular employer, and then we can step
7 in and do some damage control, if you will.
8 Sometimes the damage has already happened before
9 we're able to intervene, but I guess the point
10 earlier about the members of this group knowing
11 what their resources are and trying to connect
12 people to those resources, I think it's going to
13 be really crucial.

14 One thing that, and this goes to our
15 agency, specifically, but one of the things that
16 we can do is we can initiate investigations once
17 we know that harm has happened, but we need to
18 know that the harm has happened, if we don't
19 know then there's nothing we can do.

20 And one of the other pieces that we
21 are trying to do or be better at is making sure
22 that we have materials in a variety of different
23 languages to have some of that basic information
24 about what your rights are as a potential
25 tenant, as a potential employee, to make sure

1 that people at least have some very basic
2 knowledge that it's in a language that they can
3 understand so they can at least make some
4 decisions, or when they call us they can say I
5 think this happened because, you know, whatever
6 the circumstance may be.

7 So it's really important, and I think
8 it's crucial, to answer your question, Molly,
9 that I think we can accomplish more people and
10 things at the same time, but it's just what the
11 larger group feels is necessary for this body to
12 do.

13 MS. NICHOLS: Yeah. I guess it's
14 about determining priorities, but that's a
15 longer conversation.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Yeah, absolutely,
17 absolutely.

18 MR. QUISENBERRY: On the point of
19 trying to identify and engage attorneys in
20 private to represent victims of discrimination,
21 I think there's a natural relationship to be had
22 with the bar association, I think there must be
23 a committee on the bar association that is sort
24 of tuned into the issues. I think we could
25 identify, you know, who that is and do some

1 direct outreach, probably, to see if there's
2 already some pool of attorneys who are engaged
3 in somewhat of the plaintiff's side on these
4 cases.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: Absolutely, and we're
6 working on that, as well, trying to identify
7 what resources are available, whether it's
8 through the law schools and law clinics that can
9 do some minimal, you know, advising or
10 counseling, but if it's something larger that
11 then that can be referred to someone or some
12 thing that has the capacity to look at larger
13 issues if that's what's needed, so we're
14 exploring multiple options right now.

15 MR. WOOD: Even Tracey Lewis, down at
16 Duquesne University, Tracey does -- refers a
17 fair number of cases to us, and we've done
18 things for her and her law interns, employment
19 or housing or accommodation or education, will
20 refer cases that the attorney, that we get and
21 we'll go ahead and serve and investigate those
22 cases, too, so there's a bunch of resources
23 around, and again, this group, it's so
24 resource-rich and resource-laden in terms of
25 just the institutional memory and knowledge is

1 fabulous, and it is a great source of
2 information for all of us, individually, and for
3 the city as a group.

4 I think that one thing we're not
5 looking at is it's a great, you know, great
6 repository we have here with different minds and
7 individuals. I think as we evolve and develop
8 and figure out some more pathways, this is a
9 fabulous resource, this is a fabulous, you know,
10 information bank that we can use for the
11 purposes of affirmatively furthering fair
12 housing, and I think the more we work together
13 the more we will realize that.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: So on the issue of the
15 public hearings, is that something that this
16 group feels is needed, yes, no, maybe, perhaps
17 we need to think about, as it relates to fair
18 housing?

19 MR. TAGUE: Well, there's one
20 question that always comes up is the use of CDBG
21 money, and I wonder if having something along
22 those lines, a public hearing on how those
23 monies are spent?

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, we're going to
25 send the information to the planning department,

1 we're going to ask the questions and wait to
2 receive that information and see, you know,
3 because Ray said that they do have --

4 MR. TAGUE: Right, but I think what
5 it is, and I think it goes to education and
6 outreach, there's a lot of people who don't know
7 anything about it and what information they know
8 isn't correct, even, and I think Ms. Fuller
9 talked about that at the public event you had
10 out in Homewood, and I think -- so it's
11 important for people to understand that, because
12 a lot of people don't understand what the money
13 is to be spent for, and I think informing the
14 public, and, sure, we should wait until Ray
15 responds to our request, but I think that is
16 something we can take a look at.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Absolutely,
18 absolutely. So I think there's an opportunity
19 to, number one, get information about the
20 dollars, but also do some basic education with
21 the members of the community as to what is
22 this -- what does this mean, how is it meant to
23 be used, and, by the way, here's how the city
24 has allocated those resources for the current
25 fiscal year or the last fiscal year or whatever

1 it may be, so I think that's a good idea.

2 MR. TAGUE: One of the things we
3 talked about was how the council districts
4 have -- you get so much money, I'm not even sure
5 what the amount is, but they get a certain
6 amount of funds to spend on that, and then
7 there's a question of how that's being spent by
8 the council districts, and I think, Ray, doesn't
9 that go through planning?

10 MR. GASTIL: You're talking about
11 it's a particular fund, it's done by an
12 unspecified local option budget, and there's one
13 portion of it which council members allocate,
14 there's one portion which the mayor allocates,
15 and there's one portion that's allocated through
16 the ACPO advisory panel, and they are not a
17 growing pot of money, as you know, from -- the
18 overall funds and the CDBG funding, but the
19 council, for example, usually had about 70,000
20 for each district, 75, and actually, in the
21 budget this year it's lower because of the
22 overall reduction in funding, so -- and then as
23 -- the other ones went down, as well, but
24 there's three different ways.

25 Those are usually smaller grants,

1 they're not the -- there are other ways the CDBG
2 allocates.

3 MR. TAGUE: But the council members,
4 do they decide how that money is spent in their
5 district, the 70,000?

6 MR. GASTIL: It might be less in
7 2017, but yes, --

8 MR. TAGUE: 2018 it might be less,
9 too.

10 MR. GASTIL: -- yes, they do.

11 MR. TAGUE: So in some respect what's
12 the oversight on that?

13 MR. GASTIL: The oversight is that
14 you -- we -- the oversight is that the money is
15 actually used for what -- HUD has very strict
16 reporting requirements as to how it's used, what
17 it's spent on, but as the invoices come in and
18 they're reviewed and then the end-of-year
19 review, that's the oversight.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: And we can
21 certainly -- I think it might be useful to get
22 the process done in the district, you know, a
23 council member, if they decide to do this within
24 a certain amount of time the invoices have to
25 come in and report it and so on and so forth, so

1 again, people get a better idea of how the
2 money's funneled, distributed, decisions are
3 made, how things are reported, so that
4 transparency level is there for --

5 MR. TAGUE: There's also a concern
6 about what HUD actually does, is there really --
7 do they really do oversight or is it lip
8 service? That's a question, also, as part of
9 this.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: We can certainly ask
11 the HUD partners, take a look at that and
12 provide that information back to the larger
13 group.

14 MR. GASTIL: I can assure you that
15 HUD keeps a very close eye on how the money's
16 spent.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Kevin, you had a
18 comment?

19 MR. QUISENBERRY: The issue of CDBG,
20 it's a huge issue but, luckily, it is relatively
21 regulated, the statute and HUD regulations
22 require certain things, you know, to happen. A
23 key aspect of it is, you know, sunshine,
24 transparency, but the words they use are
25 "citizen participation."

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

2 MR. QUISENBERRY: I think it's
3 important for this full task force to fully
4 understand what those requirements are, the
5 statute and regulations, because that is the
6 opportunity for the public to become aware of
7 what CDBG can be spent on, what the city is
8 proposing to spend it on, what the city has
9 spent it on, and that's the avenue and the
10 opportunity for folks, advocates, residents,
11 people who may benefit or be harmed in some way
12 by the way that those monies flow, to step up
13 and, you know, make their voices heard and try
14 to influence that spending.

15 So it's not a mystery, it's not a
16 mystery how the process is, it's a five-year
17 planning process, the AISB tied into the
18 five-year plan, but also every year there are
19 two different stages, there's an annual action
20 plan which forecasts what the spending will be
21 for the year and at the end of the year there's
22 an evaluation and performance review.

23 Both of those annual steps are
24 available, and supposed to be, you know, avenues
25 for the public to become aware of this program

1 and what it can do and what it is and has been
2 done, and to voice differences of opinion or to
3 raise new ideas, and also, though, with regard
4 to fair housing, it's very important for this
5 task force to understand that, because whatever
6 the analysis of impediments calls for, whatever
7 it identifies as the impediments and describes
8 as the steps that are going to be taken it's as
9 the money's spent, you know, that those things
10 need to be kept in mind, you know, and if
11 there's not a real connection between those
12 impediments and those goals and the spending and
13 the actions that occur, then, you know, the --
14 and the statement of the impediments and goals
15 can become somewhat useless.

16 So that's something that we, as this
17 task force, certainly can become aware of, it's
18 not a mystery at all. We can designate someone,
19 somehow, to sketch this stuff out and then, you
20 know, this task force can figure out what are
21 the most appropriate times and places for it to
22 insert itself in fair housing thinking and how
23 that relates to spending, and those things.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Absolutely. Thank you
25 for articulating that so well for us.

1 MS. NICHOLS: On the public hearing
2 issue, I think the suggestion from that
3 committee about a public hearing about Section 8
4 vouchers, I think that's worth considering.

5 I don't know what -- how to consider
6 that in relation to the lawsuit, you know, like
7 what relationship that would have, but, you
8 know, over 50 percent of vouchers get returned
9 because people can't use them. Why is that?
10 Because they're being told that they can't get
11 them accepted.

12 We hear about it a lot, but if
13 there was, like, a public forum for people to
14 become -- be able to come out and share that and
15 connect with resources and then -- I'm just not
16 sure on, like, a bigger scale in terms of the
17 public, what role it would play in the lawsuit
18 or not, if it would be a lot of work and then
19 it's also caught up in the lawsuit, like in
20 terms of timing, maybe, but I think it seems
21 like a worthwhile --

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Another piece to
23 consider is that the issue with the vouchers and
24 the reason for -- excuse me, legislation, are
25 kind of clear and tied together, you know, the

1 legislation was enacted to help reduce the
2 number of vouchers that do get returned because
3 landlords won't return them, so for this group
4 to consider, what would be the benefit of having
5 that specific public hearing, and I'm not saying
6 that we shouldn't, I'm just saying this
7 committee should think about how will we use
8 that information moving forward.

9 MS. NICHOLS: Right. And I don't
10 understand how it works in a court of law but it
11 would -- like if we're just caught up in the
12 legal thing and we're like a waiting game, or is
13 there some difference that's made if there's
14 some kind of public hearing like that that would
15 highlight how significant of a problem this is.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: We'll have to let the
17 lawyers tell us that because I really don't
18 know, I'm not a lawyer.

19 MS. NICHOLS: Do other people think
20 it's --

21 MR. HARVEY: I've thought about the
22 hearing idea for awhile and, obviously, it's a
23 very explosive issue in communities, both for
24 and against, so part of it is you open it up to
25 people, they're going to voice their strong

1 opposition to the program, but, I mean, if you
2 had a -- it may be worth doing but really broad,
3 maybe not just on the availability of vouchers
4 and the return ratio but you get landlords, the
5 Section 8 program doesn't work because X, Y and
6 Z, the bureaucracy, I can't get my payments on
7 time, blah, blah, blah, or I can't make -- my
8 unit doesn't pass inspection, the inspections
9 are too slow, you don't get any response from
10 the housing authority when you call, so you can
11 hear that. You can hear from consumers and all
12 the horror stories that they have from having a
13 voucher and problems that they have, so it's
14 just such, obviously, a key program in terms of
15 affordable housing, but people, we've never
16 really had, sort of, a public airing of what can
17 we do to make it better, and, obviously, there
18 are -- we're limited. Maybe there's nothing we
19 can do, it's a federal program, there are limits
20 to what we can do, but there are things that the
21 housing authorities can do to make it a more
22 effective program. I think it would be a
23 significant undertaking to have a full-blown
24 hearing on the Section 8 program.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: It may also require

1 more than one hearing, you may not be able to
2 go, you know, everything will be done in one
3 shot.

4 So again, it's something for this
5 committee to consider, for the task force to
6 consider and see what opinions are regarding
7 that idea, but before we leave, really quickly,
8 and that conversation is not over, just in the
9 interest of time, we wanted to talk about the
10 schedule for 2017, the schedule for the
11 quarterly meetings so we have dates.

12 Right now they have been taking place
13 on the first Tuesday of every quarter, so we
14 wanted to ask if that is still a date and time
15 that is convenient for folks moving forward. So
16 if you need to know the dates, or just like
17 we've been doing it the first Tuesday of the
18 quarter and continue with that same schedule or
19 not?

20 Not everyone speak at once because
21 the court reporter is --

22 MS. AIZENMAN: What are you referring
23 to?

24 THE CHAIRMAN: So for this meeting
25 happens the first Tuesday of every quarter, so

1 we're trying to figure out for 2017, --

2 MS. AIZENMAN: From July --

3 THE CHAIRMAN: -- so it would be, the
4 first one will be in March, and then June,
5 September, and then December, again, for next
6 year.

7 MS. NICHOLS: March, June, September,
8 December.

9 MR. KEENAN: The first Tuesday of the
10 last month of the quarter.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: The first Tuesday of
12 the last month of the quarter. Is that
13 something that's still convenient for folks or
14 is that something that needs to change?

15 MR. DEAN: Well, if we ever have to
16 have something that needs to be voted on how do
17 we inspire the people that are on that table
18 there to be here (indicating), because when you
19 sent out the notice someone, I don't know who it
20 was, I'm sorry, I don't know if anybody replied,
21 but I think it would be helpful, if you're going
22 to be here, to reply just so we know, because if
23 we have to vote on something and we don't have
24 quorum, then that just gets dragged on and then
25 we won't be doing this until 2018, which, I

1 mean, you know --

2 THE CHAIRMAN: We can certainly do a
3 calendar invite, and then if people decline that
4 will be an indication that they're not coming,
5 and that might be the easiest way to --

6 MS. NICHOLS: It's good to know if
7 you have a quorum before.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: Oh, absolutely, I
9 agree.

10 MR. TAGUE: So we have nothing to
11 vote on today?

12 THE CHAIRMAN: No, what we're asking
13 right now is if that is still convenient or not?

14 MS. NICHOLS: Well, it might not be
15 good for the people who aren't here, but I don't
16 know.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Again, we're not
18 making a decision, we'll reach out to those
19 folks and send an e-mail out and say hey, is
20 this still something that is convenient, yes or
21 no.

22 MR. DEAN: I think having it in
23 advance is good, because if you just wait until
24 that month and then say okay, what's convenient,
25 you could send out a meeting, say that you click

1 on, and you're going to have everybody off the
2 map.

3 MR. KEENAN: So the group here says
4 it's good but then if the group you're reaching
5 out to says no, then what's going to happen?

6 THE CHAIRMAN: We'll do it
7 electronically, to be fair to everyone.

8 So the next steering committee
9 meeting is on Thursday of this week, so if you'd
10 like to join us it's going to be at the
11 commission offices downtown on the 9th floor.
12 Other than that, any questions, comments,
13 concerns before we adjourn?

14 Thank you everyone, have a good rest
15 of your day.

16 - - - -
17 (The proceedings were concluded at 4:37 p.m.)

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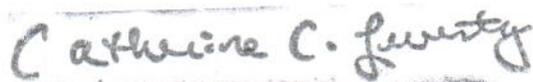
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11 cause; that the transcription was reduced to printing
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13 correct transcript of the same.

14

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January 10, 2017

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Catherine C. Leverty, Notary Public
In and for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
My commission expires August 31, 2020

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