

***Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) Task Force
Annual Meeting Minutes***

April 17, 2017

8am – 4:15pm

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
616 North Highland Avenue, 15206

Attendees: Beverly Harris-Walker, Center for Family Excellence
Bill Price, Allegheny County Commission on Human Relations
Bob Damewood, Regional Housing Legal Services
Carlos Torres, Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations (NV)
Carol Hardeman, Hill District Consensus Group
Caster Binion, Housing Authority of Pittsburgh
Chandana Cherukupalli, Pittsburghers for Public Transit
Cherylie Fuller, Homewood Concerned Citizens Council
Chuck Keenan, Allegheny County Department of Human Services
David Dean, REALTORS Association of Metropolitan Pittsburgh
Derek Kendall-Morris, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Pittsburgh
Ernie Hogan, Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group
Gale Schwartz, Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania
Greg Whitted, Pittsburgh Housing Development Association
Helen Gerhardt, Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations
Janet Wagner, Center for Family Excellence
Jay Dworin, Fair Housing Partnership
John Tague, Jr., JT Disability Consulting Services
Kathi Boyle, Persad Center (NP)
Kevin Quisenberry, Community Justice Project
Marimba Milliones, Hill Community Development Corporation
Megan Hammond, Fair Housing Partnership
Peter Harvey, Allegheny County Department of Human Services
Rachel Salem, Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations (NV)
Rachael Surmick, NeighborWorks Western Pennsylvania
Richard Morris, Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh
Robert Taylor, Fair Housing Law Center – SWPA Legal Service
Sean DeYoung, Pittsburgh AIDS Task Force
Zohra Lasania, Council on American-Islamic Relations

I. WELCOME

Carlos Torres of the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations (PghCHR) welcomed the attendees and gave a short overview of the agenda. He provided a brief introduction of Ms. Sara Pratt, who went on to present information on affirmatively furthering fair housing, statistics specific to the Pittsburgh area, and how to properly form recommendations to be submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

II. PRESENTATION BY SARA PRATT

Video of this presentation will be made available to members of the Task Force via email and will also be displayed on the PghCHR website. The link to the video is as follows: <https://youtu.be/09mNqbW6kfg>

III. Q&A WITH SARA PRATT

The Question & Answer session was recorded as a part of the presentation and will also be available in video format for members to review.

IV. ELECTIONS

Per the By-Laws, there must be at least one-third of the full Task Force membership (11 members) present to hold a vote. At the time of the elections there were 22 voting member organizations and 24 representatives present.

A. Steering Committee

Mr. Torres began the elections with a brief overview of the Steering Committee slate. Representatives were advised to mark their choices with 1 as their first choice, 2 as their second choice and so on. If more than one representative from a single membership organization was present, they were asked to work together on the slate, as there may only be one vote per organization. The following representatives were voted upon as new members of the Steering Committee:

Human Relations Commissions:

1. Helen Gerhardt, PghCHR
2. Carlos Torres, PghCHR
3. William Price, Allegheny County Commission on Human Relations

Planning & Economic Development

1. Charles Keenan, Allegheny Department of Human Services

At-Large

1. Gale Schwartz, Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania
2. Robert Damewood, Regional Housing Legal Services
3. Richard Morris, Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh

Members/Advocates of Protected Classes

1. La'Tasha Mayes, New Voices Pittsburgh
2. Megan Confer-Hammond, Fair Housing Partnership
3. Marimba Milliones, Hill Community Development Corporation
4. Paul O'Hanlon, City-County Task Force on Disabilities
5. Kevin Quisenberry, Community Justice Project

**Tallies are available at the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations office.*

B. Officers

Mr. Torres displayed the list of elected Steering Committee members on the board and asked for nominations for the officer positions of Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary. The persons who were nominated prior to the meeting declined to be considered for the election, and open nominations commenced. Helen Gerhardt nominated herself for the position of Chair and gave a short presentation on why she would be a good candidate for that position. She went on to nominate Marimba Milliones for the position of Vice Chair, who accepted the nomination. Richard Morris nominated Kevin Quisenberry for the position of Secretary, however he declined to be considered. After some discussion, Gale Schwartz was nominated to be secretary. She asked what her duties would entail and Mr. Torres gave a brief description of all of the officer positions. Ms. Schwartz accepted the nomination. There were no additional nominees for any of the officer positions.

After unanimous votes by the Task Force members present, Helen Gerhardt was elected as Chair, Marimba Milliones was elected as Vice-Chair, and Gale Schwartz was elected as Secretary.

V. COMMITTEE BREAKOUT SESSION

Mr. Torres directed the Committee Chairpersons to convene their sub-committees for a breakout session. He reminded the representatives that, per the By-Laws, all members shall participate in at least one committee. Four committees would be meeting on the second floor in the identified classrooms, and the Disability Committee would remain in the John Knox Room. Mr. Torres stated that any representatives who had not yet signed up for a committee, or who may have forgotten which committee he or she signed up for, were directed to see Rachel Salem of the PghCHR for more information.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Torres asked that the committee chairs give a brief report out on their top recommendations or research topics to explore in 2017-18.

Outreach & Education

Chair Cherylie Fuller reported out on behalf of this committee. The committee discussed the target population and determined that it would extend to landlords, tenants, politicians, developers, etc. Lack of education among the target population, regardless of background, was identified as a barrier to fair housing. In addition, lack of enforcement with the City Code and lack of outreach were also identified. It was decided that there should be a go-between entity to facilitate the education regarding fair housing and to also empower the public, who fear retaliation. The committee will begin reaching out to stakeholders to begin the research and information sharing process. There was also the suggestion of legislation for a mandatory disclaimer in housing contracts that informs the parties involved of their rights. The committee's action plan involved providing basic education to all groups through the entities that receive Federal funding. The committee will create curriculums specific to each target population and then provide them to the entities who receive funding for them to implement.

Alternative Protected Classes

Committee Chair Chuck Keenan reported out that the three specific areas of focus for this committee are criminal records, source of income, and homelessness. The actions steps the committee plans to take are as follows:

1. Fact sheets for landlords on the topics of source of income discrimination, criminal background discrimination, and disparate impact;

2. Focus groups on Section 8 for landlords, vouchers holders, and community development corporations/developers;
3. Research on nuisance property, i.e. landlords/property owners incur a fee after multiple police/EMS/etc. calls are made for the property. Specifically, they will research whether the landlords crack down on tenants in these situations;
4. Research how long civil judgment and/or bankruptcy stay on a credit report; and
5. Research procedures for the Housing Authority when a person's income level changes during the course of their time living at a property.

Sexual Orientation/Gender/Gender Identity

Bill Price reported out on behalf of this committee, as Chair La'Tasha Mayes was not present. Having just signed up to participate in this committee, he reported that his understanding is that the committee plans to gather information and empower people with their rights. Foster children are aging out of their homes and are a large part of youth homelessness, and the committee plans to find ways to get this population information on how to navigate the housing system. Specifically, an app was suggested to provide fact sheets, etc.

Disability

Chair Megan Hammond reported out for this committee. The main topics of discussion for this committee are:

1. Chronic inaccessibility, specifically with regard to old properties that are not mandated to adhere to ADA standards;
2. Inclusionary zoning, including the surrounding areas (curb cuts, sidewalks, etc.)
3. A reasonable accommodation clause in lease/rental agreements to make it better known to landlords and tenants alike.

Race & Ethnicity

Chair Helen Gerhardt reported out on behalf of this committee. The committee is working on using the seven categories from HUD's fair housing rule to prepare 2-3 policy recommendations for each. Some examples include having the City's Planning Commission reevaluate how developers are chosen, getting clarification

on “build first” plans and create a one-move policy, and redirecting CDBG funding currently being used for City operations to improvement of amenities in racially segregated.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Torres thanked everyone for their attendance and participation. He indicated that he would continue to work with the City Planning Department to ensure that a diverse community voice is heard, and that input is considered and accepted or provided an explanation of why it was not accepted.