

## AFFH Steering Committee Meeting

Thursday, October 13, 2016 10am-12:00pm

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Attendees:	Bob Damewood	Molly Nichols
	Helen Gerhardt	Rachel Salem
	Ronell Guy	John Tague, Jr.
	Megan Hammond	Carlos Torres
	La'Tasha Mayes	

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 am by Mr. John Tague, Jr. and the agenda was reviewed.

Director Carlos Torres began the discussion on the testimony submitted on the Housing Authority's "Moving to Work" plan. The Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations (PCHR) submitted testimony on behalf of the Task Force. The testimony was prepared based on the talking points from the last full Task Force meeting on September 6, 2016. The PCHR sent the testimony in an email to the entire task force, however no feedback was received.

Ms. Ronell Guy indicated that she did not receive an email about this testimony. There was then some general discussion regarding the distribution of information and follow up with the Task Force members. Ms. Helen Gerhardt indicated that the PCHR secretary, Rachel Salem, distributes information via email to the Task Force, however **there should be more telephone follow up to ensure that the information has reached the members.** Ms. Gerhardt volunteered to make these phone calls. Mr. Tague also requested that a second email be sent as follow up, and that the subject line of these emails specify that a response is requested. He also volunteered to help with phone calls.

Mr. Tague then moved on to the sub-committees and identified who at this meeting was a part of what committee. Mr. Bob Damewood and Ms. Guy are both a part of the Race & Ethnicity Committee. No one has volunteered to chair the Race & Ethnicity Committee and Ms. Gerhardt has stepped in temporarily to help coordinate. Ms. Gerhardt is primarily participating in the Outreach &

Education Committee, as is Ms. Molly Nichols' associate, Chandana Cherukupalli. Mr. Tague and Ms. Megan Hammond are participating in the Disability Committee and Mr. Tague volunteered to chair, as Mr. Paul O'Hanlon is in poor health. **He indicated that he would reach out to the rest of the Disability Committee members to set up their initial meeting.**

Ms. Gerhardt inquired as to what committee would cover familial status, and there was a question about the definition of familial status. She and Director Torres responded that familial status covers families with children, primarily under the age of 18. **It was determined that the Sexuality/Gender/Gender Identity Committee, chaired by Ms. La'Tasha Mayes, would cover familial status.**

**Director Torres indicated that an email will go out after this meeting regarding the general scope of work the committees are expected to complete,** which should help give the participants a better idea of what will be expected of them. **At this time, each sub-committee should have at least one meeting by the next full Task Force meeting on December 6, 2016.** Also, each member of the Task Force has been asked to participate in at least one sub-committee, and based on the response so far not all members have signed up for one of those committees. Ms. Gerhardt mentioned that during her phone calls to members for committee sign-ups that many organizations had people interested in participating in committees who are not members of the Task Force, and it was confirmed that this would be appropriate.

Mr. Tague asked if any of the committees have met yet, and it was confirmed that none have. **It was clarified that there is no assigned staff for these committees, however Ms. Salem will be available to take notes and write up minutes if the meetings are held at the PCHR office and during a time that will not interfere with her regular work duties.** Director Torres also mentioned the conference call service that the PCHR uses is available to hold committee meetings.

Ms. Nichols requested an explanation of the short term goals expected of the committees rather than having the committees come up with these themselves. This will give the participants something to focus on when they meet. **Director Torres explained that the committees should develop a list of barriers to fair**

**housing that their particular group faces, and what should be done about them.**

This will help to inform the next, Analysis of Impediments (AI), which isn't until 2019. The Director also clarified that the AI will be completed by an outside firm chosen by the City Planning department. Mr. Damewood indicated that the Task Force is tasked with bringing the issues and data about disparities in each committee category to the City's attention in a way they can't ignore. Ms. Gerhardt stated that there are a lot of obvious disparities that were left out of the AI, and the coordinated efforts of the Task Force and the PCHR can bring them to light in a way that the Task Force alone cannot.

There was a discussion regarding Task Force membership and voting: who should be a voting member, what organizations should have a liaison only, and how the voting will work. On what grounds can people or organizations be excluded simply because they do not agree? The general consensus was that all members should be voting members and the difference in opinion will not halt the work being done by the Task Force as a whole unless it is the majority.

Ms. Nichols mentioned the People, Planet, Place, Performance Conference (P4) which is an initiative of the Mayor's office, the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) and the Heinz Endowments, and how the Task Force and PCHR were not consulted to get perspective. Ms. Guy questioned how influential the Task Force and PCHR can really be when they were not even invited to this event. She mentioned that she was invited, however after attending the first two events and seeing the people contributing to the development of the City she did not want to lend her name or credibility to the process. Ms. Mayes indicated that she is speaking at the conference and her focus is on a process that speaks to the root cause of the City's current position. **Ms. Nichols indicated that she would inquire as to how a person/organization gets an invitation to the conference.**

Ms. Gerhardt encouraged that the advocates and organizations participating in the Task Force speak with a collective voice to point out the disparities. Mr. Tague and Ms. Guy asked about the scope of the Task Force to get a better idea of where the committees fit in. **Director Torres shared that the scope of the Task Force is to improve intergovernmental and interagency cooperation and**

**information sharing pertaining to discrimination. Mr. Damewood added that this is a minimum requirement.**

**Director Torres stated that the PCHR will be doing two research project next year, one specific to housing.** We are looking at what it takes for a particular protected class to find affordable, safe housing in the city. The second project is a Human Rights Assessment which will cover employment, housing, and public accommodations, which will be completed by the University of Pittsburgh. This will give us a better idea of what is going on and provide data to back up our assertions and recommendations for policy. Ms. Gerhardt stated that this project would also more comprehensively cover access to schools, public transportation, nutritious food, etc. Director Torres also mentioned municipal services, and breaking data down by district in order to present specific information to the council members. **All information will be available to Task Force members.**

Ms. Young opined that there is already enough research and the Task Force and PCHR need to take action. Mr. Tague offered that the research may also be about collecting individual stories, and Mr. Damewood stated that the Commission's research projects are being done alongside the work of the Task Force. Ms. Gerhardt interjected that this will shine a light on agencies and institutions that are not meeting their obligations. Ms. Nichols spoke to Ms. Guy's point that the people need to be mobilized to take action. The Task Force also needs to identify people who are already making this kind of organizing a priority. Director Torres agreed and stated that the council members have stated time and again that no one comes before council to present issues, but that we do not have to wait to bring people together and get them talking. **Ms. Nichols suggested asking the people from the research study if they would be interested in participating in an advocacy effort, and also reaching out to the groups already organizing an advocacy effort to coordinate.** Ms. Gerhardt stated that this kind of effort is very time consuming and requested that the Director authorize Ms. Salem to compile this information as it is funneled to her. **The Director indicated that the PCHR will soon have a housing intern to help with this kind of work.**

Ms. Guy asked what kind of power the PCHR has, specifically can the body call a public hearing? Director Torres and Ms. Gerhardt confirmed that the PCHR can in

fact call a public hearing as well conduct education and outreach, and that **he will forward the full scope of the Commission's abilities to the committee members.**

As an example to determine how the PCHR can help, Ms. Nichols mentioned the Bedford Dwellings redevelopment by the Choice Neighborhoods Grant, and the proposal to build first, move once. Unfortunately, the redevelopment group could not commit to this plan and residents are under the impression that they will get to return to the location after the development occurs. Director Torres indicated that he was unaware of this meeting and that unless the Commission is informed, he will not be able to participate.

**Mr. Damewood offered that the PCHR could hold a public hearing regarding development without displacement.** Also, he asked if a public hearing regarding the way CDBG funds have been spent would be an option. Ms. Gerhardt stated that she and Ms. Nichols spoke to the city controller, Michael Lamb, who is planning an audit of how the CDBG funds are spent. Mr. Damewood stated that **the hidden issue is how the city's capital budget is spent, and whether it is equitable throughout the neighborhoods. Then look at if the CDBG funds are being spent only on low income neighborhoods. Ms. Gerhardt suggested that the Task Force go to the controller to request an audit of how CDBG funds are used across neighborhoods. Mr. Damewood offered to help draft a request with the help of Mr. Kevin Quisenberry.** Ms. Nichols pointed out that the budget would have been spent differently from year to year and that there are only so many years that could reasonably be audited, therefore maybe the Task Force should determine if this is the best question to ask. **Mr. Damewood clarified that the CDBG funds are intended to be used as an add-on to the capital budget and that if only CDBG funds are being spent in a particular area then the funds are not being used appropriately.**

Director Torres suggested that a few Task Force members attend the next Commission meeting to speak during public comment about the request for the CDBG fund audit. Then the Commission can make the request to the controller's office. **Mr. Damewood is to discuss the CDBG audit with Mr. Quisenberry and Ms. Guy and send their thoughts to the Steering Committee. The Task Force will then determine what Commission meeting to present this request at.**

There was then general discussion regarding the Commission meeting, the deliberative forum regarding discrimination, and the public hearings regarding police-community tension to be held next year. There was also a question of how many voting members the Task Force has (31) and whether there has ever been quorum for voting purposes (no). It was determined that this Steering Committee meeting had quorum.

**Helen Gerhardt made a motion for the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations to hold a series of public hearings on fair housing broken into discrete topics to be determined with consultation with experts and fair housing advocates. The motion was seconded by Mr. John Tague. All were in favor and the motion was passed unanimously.**

The topics of the public hearings were briefly discussed. Ms. Nichols mentioned development without displacement, and following up to identify where the people who have been displaced were relocated to. Mr. Damewood suggested that the committees conduct appropriate outreach and identify one or two topics within their subject areas that focus on fair housing.

The meeting adjourned around 12:00pm.