

AFFH Steering Committee Meeting

Wednesday, May 17, 2017 1:00p.m.

Attendees:	Bob Damewood	Paul O’Hanlon (phone)
	Helen Gerhardt	Bill Price
	Megan Confer-Hammond	Kevin Quisenberry (phone)
	Chuck Keenan	Gale Schwartz
	Marimba Milliones	Carlos Torres
	Richard Morris (phone)	

I. Fair Housing Updates & Developments

Ms. Hammond mentioned a case in Colorado for a transgender complainant which was filed under sex and sex stereotyping, and upheld in Federal Court.

Mr. Damewood spoke about a Pennsylvania decision regarding reasonable accommodations for people on SSD and SSDI. A penalty for landlords who refused to adjust the date for when rent is due for tenants receiving those benefits. Requirement used to be the first week of the month, which was often well before an SSD/SSDI recipient would receive their benefit.

Ms. Schwartz Supreme Court Miami Bank of America and Wells Fargo target low income communities with high interest refinancing and balloon mortgages.

Mr. Torres stated that there was a status conference on SOI lawsuit, court is waiting on a decision from State court on the Home Rule Charter and the City’s ability to pass the law and whether the law is legal. The lower court will not hear the case until these two questions are answered.

II. Recommendation Process Development Template

There were no suggestions for changes to this template. Mr. Damewood asked for clarification on how the template would be used by the committees. Ms. Gerhardt explained that the template would be used to standardize the submission of policy recommendations by each committee, and that the committees should input their current recommendations into the template for the next full Task Force meeting. Mr. Damewood asked if the committee notes are available and Ms. Gerhardt indicated that they are posted on the website.

III. Committee membership, timetables, and communication

- A. There was unanimous agreement that the Task Force should allow community members to participate as non-voting members of standing or ad hoc committees in order to share their expertise, and that this would be considered a policy and not made an official rule in the by-laws. Community members will be invited as is reasonable to discuss various topics.
- B. Regarding a timeline for completion of recommendations, it was decided that at least the big picture goals be presented by the committees at the next quarterly meeting. Ms. Gerhardt recommended that the first four items on the template be completed by July 2017. Then the research portion will need to be completed by October 2017.
- C. The sub-committee participant lists were presented and the need for follow up with members of the Task Force who are not yet signed up for a committee was presented. Ms. Gerhardt indicated that she and PghCHR staff would be doing follow up on that. It was noted that there is no chair of the Race & Ethnicity Committee thus far, and that the committee itself should choose a chair. It was decided that the PghCHR staff would coordinate the next Race & Ethnicity Committee meeting, wherein the participants would choose a chair and solidify the first four points on the recommendations template.

The idea of the Steering Committee reviewing the standing committee recommendation templates prior to the next quarterly meeting was discussed and generally agreed upon. The next Steering Committee meeting will be held two weeks prior to the next quarterly Task Force meeting on June 27th, which will also be the deadline for these templates. That meeting will also be used for preparing an agenda for the full meeting, considering applicants to the Task Force, and reviewing the templates. Standardized format of the templates was further discussed, and it was decided that the committees should be told to keep consistent font and have the template not be longer than two pages at this stage.

IV. Role of the Outreach and Education Committee

Keeping people educated on the Fair Housing Rule and recent changes due to court cases, etc. Also, presenting Task Force policy recommendations to the community in a thorough way, specifically terminology and the history surrounding the recommendations, to incorporate feedback that is constructive. Ms. Gerhardt also mentioned her upcoming proposal for a public hearing regarding fair housing in order to educate people on systemic segregation by the government and the history.

There was discussion of creating a Facebook and Twitter for the Task Force in order to keep the public informed of current housing events and obtain feedback. Ms. Millions

agreed to the public hearing and suggested a road show or other public forums to discuss policy recommendations and obtain feedback, as well as bringing in an expert such as Richard Rothstein or Sara Pratt to speak to the communities, followed by a dialogue. However, she expressed concern regarding “sanitizing” or minimizing the community’s input. Mr. O’Hanlon stated that the Task Force really needs to emphasize the importance of these community meetings so that people will invest their time.

Ms. Gerhardt introduced the idea of fundraising in order to be able to afford guest speakers. Mr. Keenan stated that the Task Force should begin with endeavors that are free of cost. Mr. Torres stated that the PghCHR is engaging in two research projects this summer, a human rights assessment and a fair housing assessment, and will share the results.

Ms. Milliones asked how strongly linked the PghCHR and Task Force should be, especially in terms of communications. Mr. Torres clarified that while the Commission spearheaded the Task Force, and while it provides a lot of staff support, it is an independent entity. Ms. Gerhardt opined that the Task Force acting independently is truly important at this stage, and that it should not be marketed as directly linked to the Commission. Mr. Torres stated that fundraising is difficult for entities like the Task Force, and Mr. Damewood suggested that there be some brainstorming regarding potential fundraisers. Mr. O’Hanlon offered that we should start with constituents who show an active interest in this topic, even if the cycles of funding may not line up with our time frame. Ms. Gerhardt shared her concern that sources of funding may end up as strings as well as supports, and offered that the funding be more project specific.

There was discussion on how long the Task Force will actually exist, as the analysis of impediments (AI) states that the body will produce recommendations for 2019. Mr. Price stated that his understanding is that the Task Force will exist until the policy recommendations are implemented.

V. Consideration of new member applications and invitations to Task Force

- A.** Peter Kaplan’s membership form was reviewed and agreed upon for a vote by the full Task Force.
- B.** It was suggested that the discussion regarding suggestions for reaching out to additional entities/advocates be tabled. Ms. Milliones suggested one-on-one meetings with potential members. Ms. Gerhardt stated that this may be a task for the Outreach and Education Committee, however Ms. Milliones stated that the task should remain with the Steering Committee, which was generally agreed upon. The members decided to

create a Google document to make suggestions for new members, and Ms. Gerhardt offered to distribute. These will be discussed at the next Steering Committee meeting.