

AFFH Steering Committee Meeting

Wednesday, November 8, 2017 1pm

Attendees:	Bob Damewood	Marimba Milliones
	Helen Gerhardt	Bill Price
	Megan Hammond	Rachel Salem
	Chuck Keenan	Carlos Torres
		Richard Morris (phone)

Housing Updates

Mr. Morris opened the meeting with a request that feedback on the proposed by-laws be submitted in writing to Ms. Salem by the end of the January. There will be a vote to adopt the by-laws at the next full Task Force meeting in March.

Mr. Damewood inquired about the “ex officio” language on page two of the by-laws, indicating that this language suggests that the members from government entities will not have a vote. Director Torres indicated that some of the Task Force decisions would affect the government entities, and the idea was to keep those members from banding together to vote down those decisions.

Mr. Damewood also expressed concern regarding the “simple majority” rule for quorum. He suggested taking a look at past meeting attendance and selecting a set number to use as quorum. It was agreed that one-third of the full Task Force membership would be used as quorum, and that this would be changed in the by-laws.

Mr. Damewood’s final point regarding the by-laws was in reference to the breakdown of the Steering Committee, specifically the public and private housing providers. Mr. Morris clarified that the public and private housing providers are the entities that provide the most affordable housing, such as the housing authorities, and could be extended to include the Urban League, the Department of Human Services, etc. There was agreement that this is a good strategy.

Ms. Gerhardt expressed concern over the private housing providers and “at-large advocates and consumer groups” portions of the Steering Committee breakdown,

as those are loosely defined. Mr. Morris stated that private housing providers need to be a part of the process because they are a part of the housing market and can impact housing policies. Mr. Damewood asked for clarification on the organizations obligated to affirmatively further fair housing being mandatory members of the Steering Committee but not getting a vote as Task Force members. Mr. Morris stated that the entities designated to be at the table need to be part of it because of the AI, and the recommendations for the next AI need to be hashed out by 2019. However, this can be looked into further. Mr. Damewood asked for clarification on whether the Steering Committee can slow the Task Force down if it doesn't approve of what is being done, and the group replied that yes that is a possibility.

Ms. Gerhardt expressed similar concern regarding private housing providers and advocates as members of the Steering Committee. She suggested that people in those roles be members of the Task Force and play a strong role in the committees instead, and the representative of those organizations may not always be as committed to furthering fair housing as some of the current private housing providers currently on the Task Force. Mr. Morris indicated that one of the main goals of the annual meeting is to set goals for the coming year so that there is a structure in place. Ms. Gerhardt indicated that the by-laws should be amended to include those who provide housing assistance in general, such as the Urban League, as well as include people in protected classes or those who advocate for protected classes.

Mr. Damewood indicated one final concern regarding language in the by-laws and stated he would submit his suggestions for revision via email. Mr. Morris stated that the amendments would be made and a copy of the by-laws would be distributed to the entire Task Force for comment.

Annual Meeting

Mr. Morris presented the proposed agenda for the Annual Meeting in April 2017. He noted that the event will be the best way to get committees oriented and provide an opportunity to create goals for the following year. Director Torres indicated that Sara Pratt was chosen to present to the Task Force based on her extensive history and qualifications regarding fair housing, U.S. Department of

Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the Analysis of Impediments (AI). It was noted that the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations (PCHR) will pay for Ms. Pratt to present at the Annual Meeting. Ms. Pratt is available to present, however will require notice for what kind of presentation is required of her. Mr. Morris clarified that that Steering Committee is in agreement that Sara Pratt should present at the annual meeting.

Mr. Keenan asked who would be presenting themselves and what would be voted on during the afternoon portion of the event. It was generally agreed upon that the members would vote for the at large seats of the Steering Committee and the Steering Committee would vote for the officers. It was also agreed that the Steering Committee members should be Task Force members. Ms. Nichols asked if there were officers mentioned in the by-laws, and Mr. Morris responded that they are not but will be written in according to Robert's Rules of Order. This would include a chair, first vice chair, secretary, and treasurer.

Director Torres suggested that a general questionnaire be sent to those intending to run for officer positions to help the Task Force members get to know them, and then those people may make a five minute pitch to the entire Task Force on the day of the annual meeting. It was agreed that those who want to run for the at large seat will have to go through a process of presenting themselves and their position in the fair housing community.

Ms. Nichols asked if the committee chairpersons will be made aware of their roles and made clear on the expectations of them during the committee breakout sessions. Ms. Gerhardt suggested that the chairpersons be asked to submit a mini agenda prior to the day of the annual meeting regarding their plans for the breakout session. Mr. Morris suggested a pre-training for the committee chairpersons to brief them on what will be expected of them, which Director Torres offered to arrange. Ms. Nichols requested that there be a voting mechanism put in place for the report out to determine what goals will be acted on by the Task Force.

Mr. Keenan inquired about the option of having the annual meeting on a Friday or Saturday, as the agenda suggests. It was determined that Friday would be the better option, as most members attend the Task Force meetings during the work

week on behalf of their organizations. Mr. Morris indicated that the annual meeting agenda would be revised and sent back out to everyone for review.

Calendar of Events

Director Torres mentioned the schedule for the year, including the quarterly meetings, etc. There was discussion of whether the April annual meeting should take the place of the first quarterly meeting of the year in March, but it was decided that the March meeting would still be held in order to keep consistent with the schedule already in place and to use as preparation for the annual meeting. There was additional discussion on getting the committee chairs together for a pre-meeting coaching session in the next month or so. Mr. Keenan agreed that this would be useful, as he is a committee chair and would like to make the breakout session as productive as possible.

Mr. Morris mentioned a need for a calendar of events for the Task Force that would keep everyone abreast of activities and keep people connected with key audiences and resources. An all-call to the Task Force members to begin a list of events was recommended to get this started. The list could then be published on the Task Force page of the PCHR website.

Ms. Gerhardt asked Ms. Salem to assist with phone banking the following week in order to inform the members of the Task Force of the by-laws, plans for the future, calendar of events, etc.

Other Business

Mr. Damewood mentioned that the IRS is looking for public comment on rules regarding the low income housing tax credit. The internal revenue code provides a preference for low income housing tax credit developments that are located in “qualified census tracts” (low-income or high-poverty areas) provided that the development contributes to a concerted community revitalization plan. “Contributes to a concerted community revitalization plan” has never been defined. The IRS is considering providing guidance and they are seeking public comment. Comments on this are due February 10, 2017.

Ms. Gerhardt mentioned the Planning Commission meeting regarding Penn Plaza, which was an issue due to the lack of affordable housing. Homes for All acquired 65 letters opposing the development because of the lack of affordable housing provided. The pressure and bad press is on the developers but the burden should be on the local government to produce guidelines and laws for developers to follow. Feedback shows that developers want clear rules and guidelines for development, including inclusionary zoning, in order to level the playing field. Homes for All is sending a thank you letter to the Planning Commission for upholding its fair housing obligation. Ms. Gerhardt inquired about the role of the Task Force with promoting the message that the burden of affordable housing isn't primarily on the developers, but on the government entities with the power to control what the developers do.

Mr. Morris mentioned the need for a communication phone tree like the one implemented by the National Headstart Association in order to keep members of the Task Force informed of current events and activities that are of interest to them/their organization. He also mentioned a need for a better Steering Committee meeting agenda in order to include current events such as those presented by Mr. Damewood and Ms. Gerhardt.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00a.m.