

COUNCIL ON HOUSING  
Public Session  
Luther Towers  
Dover, DE  
August 10, 2016

**Motions**

- Approval of June 8, 2016 Minutes
- Election of Officers

**Important Dates**

- September 14, 2016 – next Council meeting – Huling Cove, Lewes
- September 8, 2016 – Governor’s Conference – Dover Downs
- OMB Budget hearing will be November 17, 2016

Mr. Peters, Chair, called to order the public session of the Council on Housing at 2:00 p.m. on August 10, 2016. In addition to Mr. Peters, the following Council members were present:

Connie Harrington	Corrine Massey	Norma Zumsteg
Ruth Sokolowski	Hugh Leahy	Vincent M. White

The following council members were absent and excused from the meeting:

Donna Mitchell	Robert Harra	Francis Julian
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Also attending:

Susan Eliason, Director of Housing Development, DSHA  
Marlena Gibson, Director of Policy and Planning, DSHA  
Shanná Alicea, Administrative Specialist III, DSHA

Guests present:

Rachel Stucker, Homeless Planning Council

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. White motioned, and Mr. Leahy seconded, that the Minutes of June 8, 2016 be approved as written. The motion was passed unanimously.

**DSHA REPORT** – Susan Eliason and Marlena Gibson

- **FY2016 Budget** (footnoted)
  - Funds taken out of the General Fund appropriation and made up with Settlement funds:
    - HDF - \$4 million
    - SRAP - \$3 million
  - Bond Bill
    - Affordable Rental Housing Program \$1.5 million allocated from Settlement funds and the rest (\$4.5 million) from the Bond Bill
    - DDD - \$8.3 million, with \$225,000 from Settlement Funds
  - DSHA Settlement funds allocations:
    - Strong Neighborhood Housing Fund 1<sup>st</sup> round to go out in about 3 weeks. Will be in touch with stakeholders to get some feedback on the 1<sup>st</sup> first round and what

changes will be needed for the 2<sup>nd</sup> round. Applications to go out around late August and probably due early November.

- Post-Foreclosure Financial Coaching program notice for funding ability is out and due late August. A review committee will be put together to review applications.
  - SRAP still pursuing expanding the SRAP-DOE program with the Christina School district. The program has now been renamed HomeWorks. DSHA is reaching out to the superintendents of all school districts to see how much interest there is from the school districts. An additional one-time allocation for \$2.5 million Settlement funds was made to SRAP-DOE on July 1<sup>st</sup>. With the HomeWorks new program SRAP funding has increased and additional partners will be solicited. This program is geared to the districts which have the most homeless student population.
- Downtown Development Districts
    - Governor announced 5 new districts: Georgetown, Laurel, Milford, Harrington, and Smyrna.

Celebration for the new districts was held in Smyrna where each of the districts town mayors spoke about what they hope to achieve for their district. Mayor Christiansen of Dover spoke of how he was able to use the program to encourage development in downtown Dover.

- FY17 Budget: \$8.3 million was allocated to DDD

We will be announcing this funding round in early September with applications due sometime late November or early December and announcements made in January 2017 on what projects will be receiving reservation of the grant awards. There is a lot of interest in the districts where they have been working with people already. Some projects will be ready to start in 2017. Requirements for this program are the applicants have to be 15% commenced in 12 months to keep your reservation and the entire project has to be finished in 3 years. No funds will be given until the project is finished.

In this round there will be 8 districts applying for about \$8 million in funding. The way the program is set up is there is a district set aside and a general pool and its established where each district gets at least one project and the remaining projects complete for the general pool.

Ms. Massey wanted to know the boundaries of district of Dover. Ms. Eliason stated the boundaries are approximately Mary Street to Hope Street to State Street to just on the other side of the rail road tracks. District in Dover was expanded to include the east side to State Street and south side of Water.

- DSHA will be working with the districts to develop new marketing strategies:
  - Window clings for vacant properties stating, “If interested in this building it’s eligible for the DDD grant” as well as, “Hey look at what I did and I got a DDD grant, ask me about it”.
  - DSHA will also be having one big orientation session for the 5 new districts to explain the DDD program, meet the DSHA staff members who they will be dealing with and offer private tutoring if they wish.

As of today, (8.10.16) \$14 million in state funding has been awarded and it has drawn in approximately \$200 million in private funding.

Mr. Peters wanted to know if a summary or some kind of metric on the DDDs for each district’s distribution of product size, residential versus commercial versus industrial can be created so we can look at what kind of effects there has been and what types of activities this has been generating?

Ms. Eliason responded by stating DSHA has multiple reports listing the reservation each district has received, the types of projects, how much they have reserved and total amount they have invested. Ms. Gibson stated some of the information was listed in the previous annual report of the first round but going forward more information will be gathered from the up and coming round and put into the current annual report.

Ms. Zumsteg wanted to know which of the DDDs has been more successful. Ms. Eliason responded that each DDD is different in its own success. She pointed out that Mayor Christensen stated Dover has reduced their renter rate in downtown Dover from 83% to 70% there by increasing their home ownership in Dover. The DDD of Wilmington is much more focused on commercial development. They have several large scale mixed use projects where the downstairs consist of commercial and the upstairs residential property.

Ms. Zumsteg wanted to know if any of the investors were influenced by the DDD to build and Ms. Eliason responded that while Buccini was already developing in Wilmington, the DDD funding was used as leverage in his financing. The developer looking to build in Seaford was much more influenced by what the DDD had to offer. With the new smaller districts, the DDD grants will be more attractive to developers. As with Harrington, one of the new designated district, knowing that there are development funds out there for this district will make developer more interested in doing projects in Harrington.

- **Governor's Conference** – September 8<sup>th</sup> at Dover Downs
  - Theme – “Anchoring Communities” with a focus on both housing and community development. There will be a DDD panel with a representative from each of the original districts and a developer from each of the original districts. They will be talking about their experience with the DDD.
  - Key note speaker will be the American Vice President for Habitat International

\*Yesterday was Matt Heckles last day with DSHA. He will be joining Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. Brian Rossello will be the acting Director of Housing Finance.

- 2016 Funding Round for the Tax Credit was announced with 9 applications being received. 8 applications were for 9% and 1 application was for 4% for the Rental Assistance Demonstration project at Liberty Court. This is a DSHA public housing site which will be rehabbed. Liberty Court will now go from being Public Housing to being owned by a DSHA subsidiary corporation to receive the tax credits. Under the RAD program at HUD it will also allow for the subsidy to be project based – the financing stream for Liberty Court will be more stable now.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

### **LOAN REVIEW**

Nothing to report.

### **HOUSING POLICY** – Mr. Leahy

- **2016 Annual Report Recommendation:** Collaboration across state agencies, levels of government, the business and nonprofit communities. Delaware Housing Needs Assessment.
  - Maintaining or increasing the base budget and Affordable Rental Housing Program (ARHP).
  - Encouraging and supporting HDF.
  - Increase funding and expand the pilot programs like SRAP and make more permanent.
  - Increase and strengthen the protections offered under Fair Housing Laws.
  - Reduce and end homelessness.
  - Economic development in the Strong Neighborhood program and the DDD program to create affordable housing.

- Restatement use of technology.

Mr. Leahy stated Ms. Sokolowski, along with other council members, would like a more explicit statement stating, “Council strongly supports the idea that funding for the HDF should be in the State’s general operational budget. Council would discourage the idea of housing needs within the state being funded through a series of one-offs, contingency or non-recurring sources.”

Mr. Leahy suggested incorporating the above statement in the 2016 Annual Report within item #1 and possibly also item #2.

Ms. Sokolowski stated with the base budget for HDF being pulled out of the general operating budget it’s worthy of a stand-alone recommendation that HDF and SRAP both be returned to the general operating budget.

Mr. Leahy will piece together with the assistance of Ms. Gibson and the communication committee any suggestions or comments from today’s meeting and put together a list of recommendations prior to the next COH meeting for final approval for the annual report.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Ms. Sokolowski

Ms. Sokolowski had nothing to report.

**OPERATIONS:**

- Nominations for Chair and Vice Chair.
  - Mr. White reported that the Operation Committee was nominating Mr. Leahy for Chair and Mr. White for Vice Chair. Mr. Peters asked for any additional nominations. There were no additional nominations. Mr. Peters declared the nomination as closed. The nominations were voted upon and passed unanimously.

**OLD / NEW BUSINESS:**

**Guest Speaker: Ms. Stucker, Homeless Planning Council**

- HPC vision:
  - Have communities where homelessness is rare or nonexistent.
  - Homelessness is not something that is recurring.
  - End homelessness.
- HPC Goal:
  - Ensure that homelessness is brief by identifying who they are, what their needs are and trying to end their homelessness as quickly as possible.
- What they do:
  - Planning based on data analysis.
  - Administrator the homelessness management information data base system for Delaware.
  - Create reports for agencies that request information.
  - Provide varies reports for local funders who fund shelters, traditional housing programs, and the rapid rehousing programs within the communities. These reports show what the funds are being used for and the impact it is having on the people who are homeless in Delaware.
  - Provide reports for the federal government. One of their primary responsibilities is related to the relationship between HUD and their Homeless Assistance program and the local communities in Delaware. A required reporting on the federal level for the government would be to show how and why Delaware is eligible for federal funds to help people who are homeless.
  - Coordinate the Annual Point in Time count of people who are homeless. This reports looks at the trends in homelessness. It covers who is experiencing homelessness, are they families with children, single adults, and the percentages of each category.

From year to year the Point in Time statistics does not change much.

Family Composition:

- 30% households with children
- 70% single adults

Age:

- 75% over 24 years of age
- 18% under 18 years of age
- 7% between 18 and 24 years of age

Point in Time 2016:

- 650 in emergency shelters
- 400 in transitional housing
- 50 unsheltered

Geography by County:

- 69% New Castle
- 20% Kent
- 11% Sussex

Mr. White questioned if the homeless people identify themselves by race and Ms. Stucker stated yes they self-identify themselves. Mr. White also wanted to know if the need to have information in other languages is needed and Ms. Stucker stated there is not much of a need for language assistance. HPC does have a language line (an online translator) where if anyone calls in who doesn't speak English can use but it is very rare. According to Ms. Stucker there are certain populations who do not reach out for help so there are outreach teams in Delaware who do go out to outreach to people who are experiencing homelessness. (This data while in their data system has not been studied). Mr. White requested from the chair if this information can be pulled and sent to Ms. Gibson for further analysis.

Mr. Peters want to know if HUD defines homelessness by reason and if HPC tracks these reasons. Ms. Stucker stated they do not. The data HPC is able to capture in the data system is where people are coming from. One of the questions people are asked is where the last place they stayed was and their response would be they were staying double-up with family or friends.

Ms. Sokolowski questioned the number of people she sees during the summer months that she believes are homeless. Is there any data which includes these groups of people like the homeless people who are accounted for during the Code Purple season? Ms. Stucker stated Delaware does have Day Center which will accommodate people in this situation but population is not published.

Ms. Zumsteg wanted to know if the geography area on the HPC pie chart is influenced by where facilities are available in each county. What share of the people are actual coming from Wilmington as oppose to if they are coming from Kent or Sussex county but seeking services in Wilmington? Ms. Stucker stated the people are asked where their last permanent place of residence was before they became homeless. Ms. Zumsteg suggested it would be helpful if HPC could also compile this specific information and break out Wilmington from New Castle County along with Mr. White suggestion of gathering information on the outreach to the non-English speaking population who are homeless.

Ms. Zumsteg also had a policy concern. Ms. Zumsteg commented on the focus on Housing First, a HUD priority and the impact on homeless families and traditional housing programs geared towards a comprehensive approach to homelessness for families with children. Ms. Stucker stated HUD on the Federal level has adopted a Housing First Policy with the expectation that programs which receive funding will implement "Housing First" in their programs. Communities throughout the country have been struggling to make sense of it and figure it out. It's very different from what has traditionally been done and it is a challenge. One of the benefits for Housing First is it is intended to be tailored to a specific need of a household so one of the primary tools which is being used throughout the country to service homeless households using the Housing First model is Rapid Re-Housing.

One of the main challenges HPC finds working with the Rapid-Re-housing providers who are working with the homeless families is identifying affordable rental units and landlords who are willing to rent to the households that are homeless.

**ADMINISTRATIVE:** (revised)

Mr. Leahy (newly elected chair) requested more focus on:

- Recommending HDF loans and grants
- Communications into Council from Developers, Nonprofits, and DSHA
- Communications from presenter, from statewide agencies
- Communications out from council to the newly governor elected, legislators and DSHA
- Revisit past strategic plan, COH organizational documents. Propose a planning retreat day sometime this fall focusing exclusively on COH strategic plan and the step COH needs to take to achieve them.
- Strive for a full complement on council

**SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 14, 2016, at Huling Cove, Lewes at 2:00 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Council, upon motion by Mr. Leahy, the meeting was adjourned at 3:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Shanná L. Alicea

Note: Copies of materials referenced as “attached” in these Minutes are available upon request.