

COUNCIL ON HOUSING
Public Session at the Grey Fox Grille & Public House
Dover, DE
December 11, 2023

Connie Harrington, Vice-Chair, called to order the public session of the Council on Housing (COH) meeting at 3:17pm, Wednesday, December 11, 2023. In addition to Connie Harrington, the following Council members were present:

Barbara Cool	Francis Julian	Dianne Casey
Lillian Harris	Vincent White	

The in-person meeting was held at The Grey Fox Grille & Public House in Dover, DE and all present Council members attended in person. The following council members were absent from the meeting:

Doug Motley Amy Walls

Also attending (in person):

Eugene Young, DSHA	Melissa Ziegler, DSHA	Elana Davis, DSHA
Stephanie Griffin, DSHA	Candace Collins, DSHA	Susan Eliason
Javier Horstmann, DSHA	Tara Rogers, DSHA	
Alice Davis, DSHA	Kim Edwards, DSHA	
Dawn Favors-Jopp, DSHA	Tunisha Royal-Scott, DSHA	

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. White moved, and Ms. Casey and Mr. Julian seconded that the Minutes of the September 11, 2023 meeting be approved as submitted. The motion passed.

DSHA REPORT – Director Young

Budget and Legislative Updates

- **Budget** – DSHA is working with OMB and the Governor’s office on DSHA annual allocation of funding for programs like SRAP, ARHP, DDD, HDF, and SNHF. The agency’s budget remains consistent with previous years, except for the requested DDD increase to maintain the \$2.5 million large project minimum. Although not a part of the official budget submission, DSHA has communicated with OMB the request for a \$2 million increase in SRAP vouchers for a total of \$6 million request.
- **Legislative** – DSHA staff presented HNA data before the Senate Housing & Land Use and House Housing Joint Committee hearing on Wednesday. The presentation focused on the needs identified in the report. Presentations were also provided by DPH, Dr. Metraux from UD, and Housing Alliance Delaware. Both Dr. Metraux and Housing Alliance advocated for a task force to address housing. Legislators seemed interested in this idea.

Program Updates

Homeowner Assistance Fund (DMRP)

- To date, we have provided \$35,080,026 in assistance to 2,869 households with an average of \$12,227. In addition to the assistance paid, we have allocated \$775,485 for applicants receiving future monthly assistance payments.

Home4Good

- DSHA recently issued FY24 grant award notifications for the FY24 cycle of the Home4Good program! DSHA administers this program in partnership with the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh to assist the people of Delaware that are actively or imminently experiencing homelessness. This year, ten (10) non-profit agencies received grant awards totaling \$1,075,000 to administer homelessness prevention initiatives under the categories of Homelessness Prevention & Diversion, Innovation (which includes Re-Entry efforts and Street Outreach), and Rapid Rehousing.

Housing Needs Assessment

- Root Policy Research has completed the data dashboard that will accompany the HNA; DSHA staff are reviewing. The dashboard will be posted to our website.

ARPA Programs

- Catalyst Fund: The Catalyst Fund commitments are limited by the availability of construction loan funds, which is why that percentage is lower. However, we have a pipeline of approximately \$9MM in requests that are in the preliminary review stages and will be committed upon turnover of the first tranche of commitments.
- Rent Reporting Pilot - We currently have 161 tenants participating in the program, including 23 DSHA clients. Over half (57.5%) of participants have had a positive score change since enrollment; of those whose scores have increased, the average increase is 46 points. We continue to promote the program via various channels.
- DSHA officially launched the Mixed Income Market Fund (formerly known as the Market Rate Accelerator Fund), a program funded through DSHA's allocation of State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF). The Mixed Income Market Fund is a \$7MM fund designed to accelerate the production of affordable rental units to households with incomes at or below 65% AMI by providing favorable financing terms to create affordable units in planned market rate rental developments. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis starting on November 6, 2023 until September 30, 2024 or as long as funds are available.

LIHTC Special 4% Round

- The Special 4% LIHTC round closed on October 13, 2023. DSHA received four (4) applications requesting more than \$10MM in ARPA funding in support of 367 units, with more than 260 newly constructed units proposed. Staff is currently reviewing and scoring applications for compliance with all threshold requirements as outlined in the QAP with the goal of issuing preliminary allocation letters by early December.

Downtown Development Districts (DDD)

- DSHA officially launched the Fall 2023 application and funding round for the DDD Program – the 16th funding round of this program. Approximately \$5.5 million in rebate funding is currently available to qualified investors, with \$3.5 million set aside for Large Projects and \$2 million set aside for Small Projects. Applications for a Large Project Reservation (qualified investments greater than \$350,000) are due to DSHA by February 27, 2024. Once the application window closes, DSHA will review and rank applications for preliminary reservation awards. Small Project applications (qualified investments between \$25,000 and \$350,000) may apply on a rolling basis as long as funding is available.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **Operations:** Nothing to Report
- **Communications:** Nothing to Report
- **Policy:**
 - Annual report was presented to be adopted.
 - Mr. Julian moved and Ms. Harrison seconded to accept the Annual Report to be approved as submitted. The motion passed.

- Mr. White asked about meeting with the Governor to discuss, DSHA staff confirmed that is the next step and will arrange.
- **Loan Review:** Nothing to Report

OTHER BUSINESS

- Mr. White asked if the COH was invited to the JFC hearing where DSHA presented on the Housing Needs Assessment (HNA). DSHA staff explained that DSHA was invited, we did not initiate the presentation, and that it was a public meeting. DSHA staff will share the meeting recording link.
- Mr. White shared that things seem disjointed and would like to know more about things such as the barriers to housing, details about what is going on with DSHA programming and funding, and an “almanac” of items being undertaken. DSHA staff explained that we have been transparent in what is happening and the actions DSHA has taken such as new programming and HNA, and the increased focus on affordable housing by Legislators and the Governor has created more instances where DSHA is responding to requests for information and action. Mr. White emphasized that we have been discussing the lack of affordable housing for over 14 years and that DSHA should be the leaders in the room on this discussion.
- DSHA staff provided an update on the Strategic Planning process. Staff is working on securing a facilitator for a strategic planning retreat, anticipated to be in March.
- DSHA staff provided an update on COH vacancies: There are currently three (3) vacancies, in discussions with OGOV to fill. Goal is to have them filled before the strategic planning starts. If you have candidate recommendations, please encourage them to apply.
- DSHA staff will be circulating the 2024 COH calendar and will send by the following week.
- Mr White asked DSHA staff what is needed from COH and if there something we can do differently to better utilize all of this talent.
- Ms. Harrington asked about committee assignments. DSHA staff explained that would be part of the strategic planning process.

SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING

- The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 10, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. via conference call with the anchor location will be the offices of the Delaware State Housing Authority, the conference room of 18 The Green, Dover DE.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, Diane Casey moved and Lillian Harrison seconded that the meeting be adjourned. Meeting was adjourned at 3:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Candace Collins

Candace Collins

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