

COUNCIL ON HOUSING
Public Session via Conference Call
October 13, 2021

Motions

- August 11, 2021 Minutes
- Resolution #623 – The Flats IV, additional funding
- Resolution #624 – Foster Commons, additional funding

Dianne Casey, Chair, called to order the public session of the Council on Housing meeting at 2:05 pm, October 13, 2021. In addition to Ms. Casey, the following Council members were present:

Francis Julian
Amy Walls

Lillian Harrison
Vincent White

Doug Motley

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

Garrett Grier
Norma Zumsteg

Connie Harrington

Donna Mitchell

Francis Julian was present in person at DSHA's offices in the Carvel State Building, Wilmington, which served as the anchor location for the meeting. All other members of Council appeared via video.

Also attending:

Eugene Young, DSHA
Susan Eliason, DSHA
Marlena Gibson, DSHA

Guests:

Valeria Coverdale
Ava
Wes Stefanik

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Julian moved and Mr. White seconded that the Minutes of the August 11, 2021 meeting be approved as submitted. The motion was passed.

DSHA REPORT – Mr. Young

- Budget – Budget process will be starting soon; DSHA’s OMB public hearing is Nov. 9 at 12:30.
- Legislative – There remains a great deal of interest among legislators in a variety of housing topics, most currently evictions. We are in touch with many frequently and have done some briefings for them.
- Rental assistance via DEHAP continues to be a primary focus. Application volume is up significantly, and we’ve needed to spend quite a bit of time completing processing on previous applications from before our portal transition.
 - We have several strategies underway or in the works:
 - Added call center to manage applicant communications
 - Adding internal capacity & new positions
 - Adding additional external review capacity, both “surge” capacity for backlog and long-term
- We are working more closely with JP Court on specific cases again as well, to ensure applications with active eviction filings do not fall through any cracks and that, wherever funds can avoid an eviction, we can assist.
- Two other things in the works:
 - Additional legal services capacity – at the end of 2020 DSHA allocated funding to legal services through CDBG & ESG. Federal ERA funding also allows for “Housing Stability Services” which can include legal services, and CLASI and partners (working together as the Eviction Defense Project) have been putting together an expansive plan to increase legal services capacity. We are in the final stages of working through that proposal with them.
 - Additional community navigation/support services – we will be putting out a large NOFA in the next couple of weeks for additional Housing Stability Services to help facilitate access to DEHAP and support households who are unstably housed or experiencing homelessness.
- There also has been a lot of media coverage about reallocation of ERA funding by Treasury. We are monitoring this closely, of course. It is likely Delaware will be subject to some amount of reallocation – this is not a surprise and many small states which received the minimum allocation are similarly facing this issue. The small state allocation was not tied to population or need. Urban Institute study recently estimated that ratio of allocation to need for Delaware was 10:1. Any reallocation will not impact DEHAP and our ability to continue offering rental and utility assistance. We have adequate ERA 1 funding and there is a second bucket of funding, ERA2, that DE has not begun spending and goes through Sept. 2025.
- We have been following Cinnaire's efforts in assisting the displaced residents of Claymont Street Apartments, which was affected by the flooding of the Brandywine following Hurricane Ida. Cinnaire has been working with the residents by:
 - A property manager was made available as a central point of contact for all residents to immediately address concerns or questions seven days a week.
 - Hotel lodging has been provided for residents from 9/8/21 and will continue through 10/15/21.
 - Moving supplies and four months' rental of storage units have been made

available to all residents to store salvaged items from their apartments at Claymont Street.

- Daily hot meals were delivered to residents and clothing, toiletries and blankets have been provided.
- Since the renovation of the property may take up to 12 months, residents have been released from lease commitments and security deposits are being refunded. Cinnaire is also offering each household financial assistance to use toward security deposits and rent for permanent housing.
- DSHA will continue to work with Cinnaire as they manage this process.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

OPERATIONS: Ms. Walls

- Ms. Walls asked if there were any more questions on the revisions to the bylaws that were introduced at the August meeting. There were none.
- Mr. Motley moved and Ms. Casey seconded a motion to approve the revisions. The motion passed.
- An updated version of the bylaws will be provided to each member in the packet for the November meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS: Ms. Casey

- The draft of the Annual Report should be ready for Council review and approval at the November meeting.

HOUSING POLICY: Mr. White

- Ms. Casey announced that Ms. Harrison has joined the Policy Committee
- The committee is working on its statement of policy goals for the Annual Report.

LOAN REVIEW: Mr. Julian

The committee met October 5 and reviewed one HDF request and one HOME program income request. After due discussion, Loan Review made the following recommendations to the Council:

- The Flats, Phase IV – **Resolution #623** that the HOME financing be approved. Mr. Julian moved and Ms. Casey seconded the resolution be approved. The motion passed unanimously, with Mr. White not voting.
- Foster Commons – **Resolution #624** that the HDF financing be approved. Mr. Julian moved and Mr. Motley seconded the resolution be approved. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD / NEW BUSINESS:

- There was general discussion among the members that COH should include a recommendation to the Governor that funding sources directed towards affordable housing be coordinated on a more global basis.

- Ms. Casey provided Council with an update on the October 28 panel to review and recommend funding for the 2022 Home4Good applications.
- Ms. Harrison provided each member with a quick guide on Roberts’ Rules of Order for future meetings.

ADMINISTRATIVE:

- None

SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING

- The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 10, 2021 at 2:00 pm. Information on the anchor location and the video connection will be provided.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 3:33pm

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Eliason

Susan Eliason

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