

DURHAM HOMELESS SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, March 22, 2017

3:00 p.m.

**Durham County Human Services Building
414 E. Main Street – 2nd Floor Conference Room**

The Durham Homeless Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) met on the above date and time.

Committee Members Present: Chair Fred Stoppelkamp, Vice-Chair Angela Holmes, Secretary Charita McCollers, Linzie Atkins, Durham County Veteran Services Office, City Manager Thomas J. Bonfield, Dr. Angeloe Burch, Sr., Mayor Pro Tempore Cora Cole-McFadden, Meredith Daye, Development Director, Durham Housing Authority (DHA), Stan Harris, Durham County Sheriff's Department, Reverend Dr. Warren Herndon, Jennifer Jones, Office of Economic and Workforce Development, Pam Karriker, Christian Assembly, Emanuel Kearney, Melody Marshall, Durham Public Schools Homeless Liaison, Tracy Stone-Dino, Alliance Behavioral Healthcare, Vega Swepson, Resource Specialist, Durham Technical Community College, Ellecia M. Thompson, Durham VA Medical Center, Reverend Chris Tuttle, Westminster Presbyterian Church and Mayme Webb-Bledsoe, Duke University.

Excused Committee Members: Calleen Herbert, Interim Director Department of Academic Community Services Learning Program at North Carolina Central University.

Committee Members Absent: Drew Cummings, Chief of Staff, Durham County Manager's Office and Tony Tosh, Prosperity Recovery Services.

Staff Present: Director Reginald Johnson, Project Manager Lloyd Schmeidler, Administrative Analyst Keshia Barnette (Department of Community Development) and Senior Executive Assistant Sheila Bullock (Office of the City Clerk).

Also Present: Ryan Fehrman, Shana Carignan (Families Moving Forward); Jesse Gerstl (Citizen & Landlord); Janet Xiao (Community Empowerment Fund (CEF)); Olive Joyner, Rikki Gardner (Housing for New Hope); Sheldon Mitchell, Andre Horsh (Urban Ministries of Durham); Rafael Baptiste (Durham County); Marshall Downey, Karen Kennedy, Shannon Judd (City of Sanford); Psiyina Davis (Nehemiah Christian Center); Jonahian Crooms (Durham County USO); Michael Becketts, Director (Durham County Social Services); Miguel Hunter, Terry Munn (Triangle Empowerment Center (TEC)); Daniel Oladele (VOA – Maple Court); Denita Johnson, Elvert Dorsey (Durham Housing Authority (DHA)); Carolyn E. Hinton (Healing with CAARE); Allison DeMarco (Community Empowerment Fund (CEF/OC Partnership to End Homelessness) and LaVerne Allen (Citizen).

Subject: Call to Order/Welcome

Chair Stoppelkamp called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. He welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming.

Chair Stoppelkamp recognized former HSAC Member Shannon McLean who previously worked with the Durham Housing Authority (DHA) and is now the Director of the Sanford Housing Authority. He also acknowledged two of Ms. McLean's colleagues who accompanied her from the City of Sanford.

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Subject: Minutes Review & Approval – February 22, 2017 HSAC Minutes

Motion by Committee Herndon, seconded by Committee Member Karriker to approve the February 22, 2017 HSAC minutes was unanimously approved at 3:01 p.m.

Subject: Public Comment Period

Ms. LaVerne Allen shared her story concerning circumstances that she felt led to her being wrongly evicted by Leah Bergman, daughter of the late Lee Ray Bergman of Bergman Rentals. She referred to Ms. Bergman as a “slumlord” and is requesting that something be done to stop the unfair treatment of tenants by Ms. Bergman. Ms. Allen commented that she is currently homeless and she and her dog are living out of her car. She desperately seeks assistance from the HSAC or any other resources that may help her receive housing.

In comments addressed to the staff of Urban Ministries that were in attendance at the meeting, Mayor Pro Tempore Cole-McFadden pointed out that it is her understanding that Urban Ministries is always referring people to Bergman and she would assume that Urban Ministries is not referring people to sub-standard housing. Mayor Pro Tempore Cole-McFadden called Ms. Allen’s experience a testimony and added she is concerned now more than ever about how Rapid Re-housing money is being spent. She is going to request an audit to make sure that Urban Ministries is not just sending people out. Mayor Pro Tempore Cole-McFadden also noted that diversity and racial equity training is needed because she is convinced that they are not doing right by the people they serve. She stated that she did not need a response from staff because she has received several complaints and is going to ask for an investigation.

Ms. Allen added that there are homeless people living in tents on Holloway Street near the Food Lion grocery store.

Chair Stoppelkamp thanked Ms. Allen for sharing her story with the HSAC and assured her that her concerns would be taken seriously.

Olive Joyner, Director of Housing for New Hope (HFNH), acknowledged that HFNH will try and support Ms. Allen in any way they can regarding her situation. She pointed out that HFNH has very healthy working relationships with approximately thirty-five Durham landlords and they nurture these relationships. Case management is provided to make sure situations such as Ms. Allen’s do not occur.

Ms. Joyner spoke briefly about the Risk Mitigation Fund which will assist people who have been displaced, secure other housing. She noted that this item would be coming up on the agenda later in the meeting.

Durham landlord Jesse Gerstl thanked the HSAC for all they are doing. He spoke in support of the Risk Mitigation Fund explaining that he has been doing work with non-profit partners to try and convince landlords to participate in the voucher programs and why this fund could really help. Mr. Gerstl noted that one of the pros concerning this fund is that it is very easy to convince landlords that getting guaranteed rent on the 3rd of the month is great. However, one issue surrounding the fund, outside of procedural issues that DHA has had, is the negative idea that comes with accepting voucher holders. Mr. Gerstl noted being able to talk to a landlord and to add on the Risk Mitigation Fund which helps control some of the unknown with taking voucher holders would go a really long way. He hopes that the HSAC will take the fund under consideration.

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Committee Member Herndon reminded everyone that we live in a city that has a lot for the “Haves” but there are individuals that are struggling who are the “Have Nots.” He referenced a report that says if you live in East Durham versus out near South Point Mall, there could be a life expectancy of 11 years. Committee Member Herndon asked that staff check on this information. He also noted coming from a position of healthcare, he thinks this presents an opportunity to find ways to make sure the equality of life for all citizens in this community is shared.

Before moving forward with the agenda, Chair Stoppelkamp noted that if during the meeting, if a HSAC member wanted to receive some expertise or feedback they could chose a member in the audience. However, he noted that he would not be accepting questions from the audience and that only current members of the HSAC would be recognized.

Subject: HSAC Pending Vacancies

Chair Stoppelkamp announced the following HSAC Members’ terms will be expiring June 30, 2017:

- Chris Tuttle (Completed 2 terms – not eligible to reapply)
- Charita McCollers (Plans to reapply)
- Tony Tosh
- Angela Holmes (Plans to reapply)
- Durham Public Schools Board Member – Vacant
- Durham County Commissioner – Vacant
- Pam Karriker – (Plans to reapply)

In response to Chair Stoppelkamp’s question whether County Commissioner Reckhow would be joining the HSAC, Project Manager Lloyd Schmeidler, Department of Community Development, explained that Commissioner Reckhow was planning to represent the County Commissioners but she thought the HSAC regularly met on the 3rd Wednesday of the month rather than the 4th Wednesday. She has a conflict which prevents her from serving on the HSAC at this time. Mr. Schmeidler stated that staff is reaching out to the County Commissioners and the County Clerk to work on a re-appointment of a different Commissioner.

Subject: Homeless System Performance Monitoring

Mr. Schmeidler provided a review of the following performance indicators:

- HMIS License Utilization Compliance
- Exits to Permanent Housing Destination
- Average Length of Stay – Number of Days in Shelter or Transitional Housing
- Timeliness of Client Data Entry

Committee Member Karriker pointed out that her HSAC term is also expiring and she plans to reapply. Her name has been added to the previously mentioned list of pending HSAC vacancies.

Subject: DHA – Housing Choice Voucher Update

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Denita Johnson, Director of the Voucher Program for the Durham Housing Authority (DHA), acknowledged Ms. Allen and her testimony given earlier during the Public Comment Period. Ms. Johnson stated that hearing the testimony lets everyone know and appreciate why they are here and why they do what they do for the people that they do it for.

Ms. Johnson reminded everyone that the Voucher Program had allotted 225 vouchers for the homeless referrals and in January she sent an e-mail out informing that unfortunately DHA had to suspend the vouchers. She also announced the new administration is proposing to cut HUD's budget by 6.2 billion dollars. Per Ms. Johnson, based on a preliminary review that DHA has conducted, they believe that 6 million of that will affect the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program which is about 2% and equates to approximately 52 vouchers. She added that this is the budget for 2018. Unfortunately, they do not have a 2017 budget yet and are still operating on a continued resolution which means they should be funded in the same way they were funded in 2016. However as Ms. Johnson explained, this is not the case because funds have also been cut for 2017. DHA's Housing Assistance payment was reduced to 95% from 100% and the administrative fees went from 80% to 78%. DHA does not know what's going to happen after July. Ms. Johnson stated assistance is needed from everyone and is asking that people write all the Representatives in Washington to let them know all the good things that DHA is doing but they are unable to assist those that they need to assist.

City Manager Bonfield wanted to know the status of several hundred thousands of dollars that the City provided to DHA last fall to eliminate the back log of housing vouchers. He also asked about the impact the decision to suspend the vouchers would have on the money that was funded.

Ms. Johnson stated that the money was not provided to issue new vouchers; it was added to assist processing the vouchers.

Ms. Johnson explained that at the February 2017 meeting she reported for December there were 236 individuals who had a voucher and were searching for a house. In February the number decreased to 110 leaving a difference of 126 vouchers. After a review of the numbers Ms. Johnson stated that their records showed 34% or about 80 families of the 236 actually used their voucher and were housed. The term of the voucher is 90 days and the average lease up time is approximately 77 days. Ms. Johnson commented that unfortunately the vouchers have expired for 68 of those families or about 29% which means the families no longer are able to use the voucher. 40% of the families never submitted the Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA) which is the form that initiates the process. 30% did submit the RFTA but for some reason it never resulted in a contract. 88 of the families still have an active voucher and are searching for a unit.

City Manager Bonfield made comments about there not being enough inspectors to speed up the approval process. Therefore several of the people who were trying to get into housing, had housing but because they could not get the housing inspected fast enough they lost the opportunity because the landlord decided to rent to someone else who was ready to pay.

Ms. Johnson stated that a third-party vendor was hired who provided the inspection services to DHA. The contract ended the middle of February; however they have a RFP out.

Committee Member Herndon asked in regards to the 62 vouchers, if the budget shortfall materializes, is there any grant or public-private opportunities available that may offset the affected individuals? Ms. Johnson responded she was not aware of any.

Subject: 2017-18 City ESG Funding Recommendations

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Mr. Schmeidler provided some background information and reviewed a memo addressed to the HSAC dated March 17, 2017 regarding City of Durham 2017-18 Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Funding Recommendations. He noted that applications were reviewed and scored by the Department of Community Development and the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). The following organizations were recommended for funding:

- Families Moving Forward (funding for Emergency Shelter for families)
- Housing for New Hope (funding to provide Rapid Rehousing services)
- Urban Ministries (funding to provide Rapid Rehousing Services)

In response to Mayor Pro Tempore Cole-McFadden's question about whether CAARE, Inc. applied for funds, Director Reginald Johnson, Department of Community Development, explained that CAARE did apply for funds during the funding cycle but he could not recall if it was in the category of ESG or CDBG. However, CAARE was not funded.

Mayor Pro Tempore Cole-McFadden commented to Mr. Johnson that at some point he may want to update the entire Committee on what the President's budget looks like as it relates to CDBG, homelessness and things of that nature. She added that the President is planning to wipe out everything that he can. Mayor Pro Tempore Cole-McFadden advises those organizations that are used to receiving funding through this source that they start a fundraising campaign for their individual agencies because there is no way that the City will be able to fund everything that the federal government decides to do away with. Mayor Pro Tempore Cole-McFadden informed the group that she was in Washington recently along with other elected officials from all over the country and they are all concerned; especially those officials from poorer cities such as Durham.

Motion by Committee Member Burch, seconded by Vice-Chair Holmes to approve staff's 2017-18 City ESG Funding Recommendations was approved unanimously at 3:44 p.m.

Subject: Nehemiah Day Center Update

Psiyina Davis, Nehemiah Christian Center, provided background information concerning the Nehemiah Christian Day Center. She explained the Nehemiah Christian Day Center is a partnership with Durham County which provides community members access to the internet through donated computers. The Center is open Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. and also offers a place for individuals to sit and read during the day. Ms. Davis noted that currently the Center is in partnership with the City to develop a board to help figure out a short and long term plan for the use of their space. Ms. Davis added that there is a significant amount of space that could be used for providers who are already involved in the community and doing affective work.

Rafael Baptiste, Durham County Manager's Office, talked about logistics and the impact that the closing and renovations of the Durham County Main Library has had on the Center. Mr. Baptiste noted that the current contract between Nehemiah and Durham County runs through July 1, 2017. The commitment of Durham County has been to provide funding at some level for some form of Day Center through the completion of the renovations for the library. However, he added at this point the County has not committed to locating funding beyond this time but they are committed to working with the community and other stakeholders. Mr. Baptiste mentioned that not only did the main library provide space for individuals but it also provided library services. The computers at the Day Center assisted with job searches for people and the libraries have stepped up by increasing hours at all of the branches. He

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pointed out that library services are also available at the Criminal Justice Resource Center in the 1st floor multi-purpose room. Attendance has increased at the Nehemiah Day Center and they are averaging about 15 people a week. Mr. Baptiste stated that they will be coming back to the HSAC and other groups as they move forward to work on a long-term strategy to develop day services. The plan is to bring all the services together to one facility where it is easy for people to access.

Secretary McCollers wanted to know what the HSAC could do to support Nehemiah in continuing. In response, Ms. Davis stated they wanted to explore what the best options would be for providers. She added that many of the people that have been coming to the Center are actually actively looking for jobs and have gone on interviews. She stated they are trying to connect them with the right resources to get them employed.

Secretary McCollers commented that she doesn't want the HSAC to wait until the last minute to give their support to Durham County, Ms. Davis and the Day Center. Ms. Davis stated they have met with some community stakeholders who provided feedback on the kinds of services they would like to receive. Ideas have been taken under consideration and according to Ms. Davis; they are trying to see what can be offered immediately versus a longer term solution. They are trying to create a comprehensive plan.

Mayor Pro Tempore Cole-McFadden thanked the Nehemiah Christian Center for opening their doors and she wished that all pastors throughout Durham would do likewise. In response to Mayor Pro Tempore Cole-McFadden's question why people can't be in the Urban Ministries of Durham facilities during the day, Sheldon Mitchell, Executive Director stated that they can at different times throughout the day. However, they do not have the space needed to accommodate people because of the workforce training programs offered throughout the day. Mr. Mitchell added that several of the rooms are being used as classrooms during the day.

Additional discussion followed concerning the use of space at Urban Ministries of Durham.

Chair Stoppelkamp also thanked the Nehemiah Christian Center for opening their doors. He pointed out that this was an excellent example of the church working with the community.

Subject: Risk Mitigation Fund

Ryan Fehrman, Families Moving Forward and Janet Xiao, Community Empowerment Fund (CEF) has been working with the HSAC's Housing Results Team and the Unlocking Doors Initiative Core Planning Group to address the Risk Mitigation Fund. The fund would be made available to local landlords who accept HCVs to pay for damages to their units done by voucher holders beyond the value of a security deposit. A power point presentation was given highlighting details about the Risk Mitigation Fund.

Mr. Fehrman emphasized the fact that given what they know about the President's budget, Durham will have to do more in the community to be successful in ending homelessness. He added that the Risk Mitigation Fund is a best practice that is being used in other communities and it is helping to get households into permanent housing. The funds to be used for this pilot would be coming from the Triangle Community Foundation Fund that was created in 2010 and has been sitting since that time. Mr. Fehrman closed the presentation with a plea to HSAC members to approve the use of the \$10,000 that is in the Triangle Community Foundation Fund for the Risk Mitigation Fund.

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Secretary McCollers noted that she supports the fund and stated that the state has a similar program with \$2,500 set aside.

Mayor Pro Tempore Cole-McFadden asked how and who would implement the fund for free so that all of the money would go directly for the tenant and not the administration. In response, Ms. Xiao stated that the non-profit providers that would be supporting the tenants in moving towards housing would be implementing the fund.

Mayor Pro Tempore Cole-McFadden expressed her concerns about “isms.” She commented that there is a need to have landlords who are willing to go through racial equity training or whatever training needed to put an end to the stereo-typing of poor people. She also wanted to know about how the process would work as it relates to making sure the units are inspected and found to be safe, decent, sanitary and meeting housing code.

Ms. Xiao informed the HSAC that there is a “working” draft plan available for the implementation of the Risk Mitigation Fund which covers the processes. She stated she would share the document electronically with any of the HSAC members. The draft includes information on topics such as the inspection of units by DHA and she added that the plan was birthed to address the “isms.”

Committee Member Karriker applauded Ms. Xiao and the work she has done. She emphasized that they all have to get past adversary relationships between landlords, DHA, non-profits and tenants. Committee Member Karriker stated she would like to see everybody working together and she asked that everyone encourage the faith community to contribute to this program.

Committee Member Jones wanted to know will the Risk Mitigation Fund be marketed to the Community or has the landlords already been engaged because marketing to the community might support the negative perception. In response, Ms. Xiao stated they will take Committee Member Jones’ comments under consideration.

Committee Member Burch pointed out that in one of the meetings held, there were landlords that have said if the Risk Mitigation Fund is approved then they will talk to other landlords to persuade them to take the vouchers.

City Manager Bonfield asked Ms. Xiao if she was saying that the DHA is prepared to manage this system and if a claim was made it would be filed with DHA who would send a DHA inspector out to see what the claim is and then there would be a settlement process. Ms. Xiao stated the property would be inspected by DHA inspectors but the management of the project will remain with the HSAC Results Team and the Unlocking Doors Initiative Core Planning Group. City Manager Bonfield also asked if the \$2,000 was just for damages or missed rent to which Ms. Xiao responded just for damages.

Additional discussion took place concerning who is the fiduciary for the \$10,000. Director Reginald Johnson, Department of Community Development explained that the Triangle Community Foundation is holding \$10,000 in an account which is the \$10,000 that was raised by the predecessor to the HSAC. The lead agency and administrator for the HSAC along with the members of the HSAC Executive Team receive financial statements on the money. The Triangle Community Foundation only holds the money and do not make transactions to other institutions. There would need to be another organization that would run the program and not the Triangle Community Foundation. They would disperse the money at the direction, to another entity.

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Vice-Chair Holmes asked what landlords would be used for the program and could a list be made available to the HSAC. Ms. Xiao commented that currently the list of landlords has not been released publicly. The initiative is set to start July 1st and they have not been able to approach landlords to say that the program is in place. However, there a few landlords that have signed on to participate. Ms. Xiao stated that hopefully a list of landlords that they will be working with will be generated after the fund is set up.

Vice-Chair Holmes expressed her concern over who would be conducting the unit inspections. She wanted to be sure that only DHA would be handling this process. She stated there are too many “slum” landlords that are in violation of the housing code and N.C. General Statutes. Ms. Xiao noted that the units would be held to DHA’s housing quality standards.

In response to Vice-Chair Holmes’ question as to whether the money in the fund would be used for anything else, Ms. Xiao stated no and added that the funds would be used solely for reimbursement that passes through the claims process.

Mr. Johnson wanted it made clear that the money would need to move from one legal entity to another. However, he added that he is not clear where the money should land. Mr. Fehrman stated that all of the money from the fund would go to the fiscal agent which will be another non-profit agency.

Mr. Johnson also stated that as the Administrator, he has to be sensitive as to where the money lands and who that it is in terms of the viability of that organization. In terms of the motion, Mr. Johnson recommended that the HSAC agree to bring the item back before the Committee after staff has done some analysis and recommendations can be made to the HSAC on how to implement the fund.

Ms. Xiao pointed out that the funding does not need to be transferred in ownership. It would be given on a reimbursement basis. However, the funding would stay in the Ten-Year Plan Agreement with the same structure so that the fiscal agent/non-profit would spend the money as approved by the Claims Committee and then be reimbursed by the Ten-Year Plan Fund.

Motion by Committee Member Burch, seconded by Secretary McCollers for the HSAC to approve the Risk Mitigation Fund and that this item comes back before the HSAC for further approval as to who will handle the funds and the disbursement was approved unanimously at 4:35 p.m.

Subject: Draft HSAC Interlocal Agreement Amendment

Mr. Schmeidler directed Committee Members’ attention to a memo included in their packets dated March 21, 2017 and referencing the HSAC Interlocal Agreement. He explained that the memo is requesting that the HSAC consider the recommendation from the COC lead agency to petition the Durham City Council and the Durham County Board of Commissioners to amend the Interlocal Agreement so the CoC can be more fully in compliance.

Committee Member Karriker representing the HSAC Structure Committee, stated that HUD has been advocating to make part of the COC application, seats on the HSAC Board that are not currently in place. Because the HSAC has outgrown the number of people that can serve on the Committee as specified by the Interlocal Agreement passed in 2012, Committee Member Karriker stated that the Committee can either not have the seats they need per the HUD CoC Agreement or they can expand the board.

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Chair Stoppelkamp noted that the HSAC Interlocal Agreement Amendment item would be on the agenda for the HSAC's April 2017 meeting.

Mr. Schmeidler stated that the proposed amendment involves expanding the maximum number of voting members to 29, with the exact number being determined by the HSAC. Also, another amendment includes expanding the number of appointed seats by a majority vote of the HSAC from 5 members to 10 members to maintain the 65% requirement of non-profit representation. Staff will be working with the City and County Attorneys on these amendments before presenting them to the HSAC.

Subject: HUD Coordinated Entry Webinar

Mr. Schmeidler invited HSAC members as well as the community to view a HUD Coordinated Entry Webinar on Tuesday, March 28, 2017. The Webinar will be held in the Department of Community Development located at 807 E. Main Street, Suite 200 from 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Subject: Projected Timeline – 2017 Continuum of Care Application Process

Mr. Schmeidler announced that HUD is hoping to release the 2017 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the CoC homeless grants competition by the end of June 2017. It is the hope that the deadline for submission of the Collaborative Application and associated budget applications be back to HUD by the end of August. Staff is working to begin a process to use the Zoom Grants website to solicit qualifications from the non-profit sector, DHA and other qualified organizations who may be interested in applying for CoC funds in this cycle. Mr. Schmeidler stated that an introductory workshop, to start the process, is scheduled for April 11, 2017 to open the Zoom Grants website so that organizations can upload qualifying documents by April 15, 2017 and give organizations until May 15, 2017.

Subject: Reminders

The next HSAC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 26, 2017 at 3:00 p.m. at the Durham County Human Services Building, 2nd floor conference room.

Subject: Adjourn

Motion by Committee Member Herndon, seconded by Vice-Chair Holmes to adjourn the meeting was unanimously approved.

With no further business to come before the body, Chair Stoppelkamp adjourned the meeting at 4.45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Sheila Bullock
Office of the City Clerk