

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF
THE BOARD MEMBERS OF
THE HARRIS COUNTY HOUSING POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

THE STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTY OF HARRIS

The Board Members of the Harris County Housing Policy Advisory Committee (the Committee) convened in their bimonthly session at 10:00 AM on the 24th day of June via Skype for Business, and roll was called at 10:04 AM of the duly constituted acting members of the Committee, to-wit:

Daphne Lemelle	Harris County Community Services Department
Allison Hay	Houston Habitat for Humanity
Lance Gilliam	Precinct 1
Mike Moody	Greater Houston Builder's Association
Mike Nichols	Coalition for the Homeless
Zoe Middleton	Texas Housers
Oudrey Hervey	United States Veterans Initiative
Chang Chiu	County Judge
Starla Turnbo	Houston Apartment Association
Mary Green	Harris County Children and Adult Protective Services
Tom McCasland	City of Houston Housing and Community Development
Quentin Wright	Lone Star College
Eric Heppen	Precinct 3
Horace Allison	Harris County Housing Authority
Mercedes Sanchez	Precinct 2
Assata Richards	Sankofa Research Institute
Dr. Umair Shah	Harris County Public Health
Loyd Smith	County Engineering
Paul Shanklin	Precinct 4
Jennifer Herring	Harris County Sheriff's Department
Wayne Young	Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD

And all of said members were present at the convening of such meeting, except Chang Chiu, Horace Allison, Jennifer Herring, Mike Moody, Oudrey Hervey, Paul Shanklin, Quentin Wright, and Wayne Young, thus constituting a quorum. Staci Lofton sat in place of Dr. Umair Shah and Mary Itz sat in place of Tom McCasland. The following persons also attended the meeting: Kyle Shelton, Alpa Patel, Rene Martinez, Richelle Henderson, and Andy Teas.

Ms. Turnbo motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Work Group Updates

Introductory Discussion

Ms. Lemelle began the substance of the meeting with a broad overview of the purposes of the four work groups that had met over the past month. She mentioned no work group leaders had been selected at these meetings. Notes for each work group were sent out to work group members. Work groups are to come up with recommendations for Commissioner Court action on the county level as well as for Harris County's (the County's) legislative agenda for the 2021 state legislative session. Ms. Lemelle recognized that recommendations for the legislative agenda would be made prior to completion of the study.

Opportunity and Accessibility Work Group

The Opportunity and Accessibility Work Group (O&A Work Group) met on June 4, 2020, at 10 AM. First, the O&A Work Group discussed the need for a public outreach and education effort regarding affordable housing and its benefits to the community. One member followed this idea up with the possibility of an incentive program for property owners to accept housing voucher holders or for developers to construct affordable housing. Another member highlighted the need to develop a pro-renter lens in communications and policymaking. Ms. Lemelle highlighted that renters are becoming a majority of households in Harris County which should be reflected in the County's work. Removing barriers for affordable housing development and access was also a key point introduced in the meeting. Ms. Richards mentioned that there needed to be consistent schedule developed for these work group meetings that involved input from the members. Ms. Lemelle agreed, stating that an effort to establish consistent working times for work groups would be made after this full committee meeting. Mr. Nichols wanted to add to the comments that financing issues must be considered when discussing accessibility to affordable housing.

Funding and Financing Work Group

The Funding and Financing Work Group (F&F Work Group) met on June 10, 2020, at 10 AM. Starting thoughts revolved around the need to better leverage resources so that dollars could be used most effectively toward affordable housing goals. Nontraditional sources of funding, such as from hospitals, should be considered by housing advocates and agencies. Having a comprehensive guide or toolbox on funding sources for funding and financing affordable housing would be key, said Ms. Lemelle. Ms. Lemelle pointed out that the County is moving forward with the development and implementation of a community land trust (CLT). The Community Services Department (CSD) is seeking approval for an operating agreement with the Harris County Housing Finance Corporation to serve as the trustee of the CLT. In that agreement, an advisory board for the CLT will be established in order to best guide how the CLT can be most effective in assisting with reaching affordable housing goals. Finally, Ms. Lemelle discussed that funding as dictated by the Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) needs to be utilized effectively and it will be the job of the work group to issue recommendations on how to best accomplish this task.

Land Use and Resiliency Work Group

The Land Use and Resiliency Work Group (LUR Work Group) met on June 11, 2020, at 10 AM. Ms. Lemelle briefly went over how the LUR Work Group touched on the different types of dwelling units available to developers, housing resiliency, accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in the County context, shared equity options for housing, as well as the possible need to downsize units to ensure affordability. Permitting standards, and how these standards can be changed to best incentivize affordable housing construction, was another important aspect of the meeting. Container living and modular technology were mentioned during the meeting. Mr. Martinez added

that mixed income and mixed use development was a piece of what the LUR Work Group expanded upon – such as Austin’s Miller development. Ms. Lemelle commented that the “affordable housing” label plays into accessibility of affordable housing in communities and should be considered.

Data Work Group

The Data Work Group met on June 18, 2020, at 10 AM. Ms. Lemelle the work group as one that interacts primarily with the Kinder Institute (the Institute) to review data and receive baseline information. Some of the data collected has been released through the Institute’s first topical brief; however, the brief has not been widely distributed as there are still details being refined between CSD and the Institute. Some of the initial data points came out of conversations with focus groups regarding housing concerns. The Data Work Group also highlighted the need to study households in mobile homes and related trends. An emphasis was placed on tying work group activities to the data collected in the study.

Chair and Co-Chair Selection

After the work group updates, chairs and co-chairs were selected for each work group. Allison Hay will be the chair of the LUR Work Group; Mike Nichols, chair of the F&F Work Group; and Assata Richards and Starla Turnbo, co-chairs of the O&A Work Group. Ms. Richards stressed the need for diversity in these work group chairs as housing is a policy area that intersects across race, class, and gender. Ms. Lemelle agreed. Ms. Hay pushed for real action once the full report is completed so that the work done during this time is not “left on a shelf.” Ms. Lemelle agreed and outlined that work group chairs would be expected to report back on work group activities during full committee meetings as well as providing input during the Data Work Group on information that is needed by work groups to fully develop their policy recommendations.

Contract Facilitator Update

Finally, Ms. Lemelle announced that a contract facilitator, whose task will be to assist with policy formulation in each work group, will be recruited within the next 30-45 days. Ms. Richards expressed that she was excited to have the extra resource available to the work groups as tangible results should be expected from this work.

Housing Study Update

Introduction

Mr. Shelton began with a high-level introduction of the topical briefs that the Institute is working on. The first topic brief was discussed earlier in the meeting. Once CSD and the Institute have conversations on the details of the brief, the brief will be released to the entire committee. The second topic brief will focus on risk and sustainability. The third topic brief will take the work of the work groups and attempt to focus on any further research or geographies desired by the work groups.

Engagement Strategy Overview

Mr. Shelton began discussing the engagement aspect of the study. A full engagement strategy was sent to each committee member for their review. Focus groups related to the strategy began meeting on June 23, 2020. A second focus group is expected soon. These focus groups contained or will contain either county representatives, municipality and utility district representatives, or

other to-be-decided agencies and/or housing advocates. Mass media has already begun on the My Home is Here campaign. The campaign's website, myhomeishere.org, is live and has processed 400 surveys so far. Engagement specific to the survey will begin in the coming days, per Mr. Shelton. Survey engagement will last for months. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, digital activations will be leaned on as a main tool for engaging the public. Scheduling for civic club engagement will be completed soon. Mr. Shelton mentioned a spreadsheet containing high-priority neighborhoods for the engagement team which consists of communities with certain target demographics, like a certain number of non-English speakers or those at high risk of gentrification.

Engagement Strategy Discussion

Mr. Heppen asked what the index score on the engagement spreadsheet represents as well as what defined gentrification risk. Mr. Shelton answered that the index score identifies the number of target characteristics a particular neighborhood has as defined by the Institute. Higher index scores represent a higher priority for engagement. In terms of gentrification risk, the Institute used market analysis and demographic trends to measure a neighborhood's gentrification risk. Ms. Middleton questioned whether displacement, for example, as a result of infrastructure projects, was considered in gentrification risk. Mr. Shelton explained that collecting information on specific causes for a household's move is difficult, impeding efforts to collect more individualized information related to displacement, but that the Institute was open to suggestions on how to best measure that factor. Ms. Richards expressed concerns with the exclusion of displacement as a part of gentrification risk, commenting that the Institute needs to use precise terminology. If there is not enough data to accurately depict a concept, the Institute needs to be transparent about what is lacking, Ms. Richards added. Mr. Shelton solicited input on how the Institute might better be able to capture displacement and gentrification risk. He also stressed that findings in the topical briefs are meant to begin discussions rather than be a document to directly develop recommendations. Ms. Lemelle suggested that collection of displacement data could be a recommendation to the Commissioner's Court. Finally, Mr. Heppen asked Mr. Shelton whether slight changes in the definitions of the target characteristics developed by the Institute would cause significant changes in what neighborhoods are prioritized. Mr. Shelton said he did not know the answer to the question but that the Institute is open to any suggestions from stakeholders on neighborhood engagement priority aside from the index created.

Topic Brief 1

Mr. Shelton mentioned that the Institute was including questions regarding COVID-19's impact in the housing study. According to the data analyzed in the first topic brief, renters appear to be experiencing further financial instability across the County, and COVID-19 is causing its own adverse effects on renters. More information that can be found in the first topic brief includes a projected market analysis of home and job demand in different parts of the County. Northwest Harris County and the northern section of Beltway 8 are set to have large increases of medium- to low-wage jobs in the future. Housing advocates should use this information as a guide for strategizing on how to most effectively distribute resources. The Institute describes its methodology for determining "affordability" in the topic brief. Mr. Shelton warned that input is welcomed for this as well. An extended discussion on whether to use metropolitan statistical area median income, County median income, or City of Houston median income provided context on why a precise definition for affordability is needed. Mr. Shelton closed this portion of the conversation by committing to turn goals into actionable items, including applying recommendations broadly and across subject areas where appropriate.

Mr. Shelton mentioned that focus group meetings are not recorded but summaries of work done in each group will be compiled by the Institute. Furthermore, Mr. Shelton solicited input on what groups should be activated in the engagement process.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Ms. Lemelle told the group that a fixed work group schedule will be developed in the coming days with input from work group members. Additionally, topic brief #1 is set to be distributed to the full committee after talks from CSD and the Institute are complete. Finally, Ms. Lemelle reminded the Committee about the facilitator being procured.

Adjournment and Next Meeting

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m. The Committee's next meeting will be held August 26, 2020.