

DRAFT MINUTES

Housing and Human Services Advisory Board (HHSAB)

July 13, 2023 from 6:30 PM-8:30 PM

This will be a digital meeting. Members of the public may participate electronically in the meeting or by telephone.

Zoom link: <https://washtenawcounty.zoom.us/j/83784962121?pwd=VXpMWGgrdIV6ZU9wSEFNK1hMVGRaZz09>

Meeting ID: 837 8496 2121 | Passcode: 758842

Members Present: Amanda Carlisle, Ellen Rabinowitz, Peter Slutzker, Linh Song, James Downing, Brenna McMahon, James Daniel, Jean Leverich, Chris Watson, Karen Wanza.

Members Absent:, Paul Sher, Anna Erickson, Skylar Woodman

Staff Present: Tara Cohen

Members of the Public: Aubrey Patino (Avalon Housing)

I. Convene Meeting

Sky was not in attendance; Amanda Carlisle convened the meeting in his absence – at 6:35pm.

II. Welcome

Amanda led introductions combined with a roll call for members to state their location.

Amanda Carlisle – nonprofit representative, Washtenaw Housing Alliance. Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County.

Ellen Rabinowitz – Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County.

Brenna McMahon – joined the board about a year ago. Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County

Peter Slutzker - newly joined, at large seat. Ann Arbor (west side), Washtenaw County

Karen Wanza - joined the board about a year ago. Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County

Jean Leverich – joined a year ago at same time as Brenna and Karen, at large seat. Ann Arbor (west side), Washtenaw County

James Daniel – Ann Arbor (northside), Washtenaw County

Chris Watson – Council liaison to the board. Ward 2, Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County.

Linh Song – Council liaison to the board. Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County

Tara Cohen, Washtenaw County OCED

James Downing – joined the meeting mid-meeting (do not know location).

III. Public Comment_____ 6:40 pm

Audrey Patino, Executive Director of Avalon Housing, provided the following public comment about agenda item VI:

There was a significant shift from the March draft of County HOME ARP that proposed \$3.5 million for the development of affordable housing to the current draft that proposes \$0 for the development of affordable housing.

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We recognize the challenges of weighing emergency needs versus long term solutions, however, the type of one-time funding under the ARP can very effectively be used for capital/up front development costs. Using it for capital costs can ensure that although the funding is time-limited, it results in affordable and supportive housing that add to our local housing stock and remain a source of affordable housing well into the foreseeable future.

Housing developed with HOME ARP funds would be expected to incorporate long-term affordability requirements, thus codifying and ensuring on-going affordability.

Best practices to addressing homelessness focus on the creation of permanent affordable housing. This has also been reflected by other nearby recipients of HOME ARP funding, including MSHDA, who have recognized the unique opportunity these time-limited funds provide and have dedicated the bulk of this funding toward the development of affordable housing.

The development of supportive housing specifically requires significant leveraging of funding. The lack of sufficient gap financing can result in significant delays – which we don't need any more of -- in bringing new units on-line, reduce the number of units provided, or prevent new developments from coming on-line entirely. In addition, HOME-ARP was designed to work for supportive housing in a very specific way that conventional HOME funds don't; i.e. supportive housing services are an eligible expense; the per unit cap was dropped; reserves can be funded to guarantee affordability; reserves can be capitalized to cover the cost of, say, a services coordinator. As CSH writes: *"This means HOME-ARP can pay for up to the full capital costs for a unit, be used more effectively to fill gaps in projects, and cover other expenses such as operating and services to make projects viable."*

So, in conclusion, we suggest the County reconsider the current proposal of \$0 for affordable housing development and instead return to providing a significant amount of funding under the County ARP for affordable housing so the community can benefit from much-needed, long-lasting units. Thank you.

Ellen Rabinowitz asked if members can make comments. Amanda said they can.

Ellen: I just want to echo what Aubrey said. It's a real red flag for me that there is no money in this plan for developing permanent affordable housing. It's Always a challenge to balance emergency short term needs with long term needs. But we know from the affordability study that we are way behind on creating affordable units, and I would really encourage the county to change out this formula that they're requesting and put in significant dollars for permanent affordable housing.

IV. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Jean Leverich. Support by Brenna McMahon. Motion passed unanimously.

V. Approval of Minutes from June 8, 2023

Moved by Ellen Rabinowitz. Support by Peter Slutzker. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion occurred prior to a vote to approve the minutes:

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Ellen raised concerns about OCED's response to the question reflected in the June minutes regarding whether the most recent Point-in-Time homeless count included those being sheltered in hotels. She noted that Morghan Boydston's response – as relayed by Tara via email to the group – was that those in hotels were not counted in the Point-in-Time. Because of this, she does not think the numbers in the Point-in-Time are a true reflection of who was homeless at that point in time, so if those numbers are used as a dataset to inform programming, HOME-ARP funding, we need to be clear that this is very much a gross undercount.

Amanda agreed with Ellen, noting her surprise that the County didn't include those people. She stated that anyone who is in a hotel paid for by non-profit, charitable organization, or government entity is supposed to be included in the Point-in-Time count. It also goes beyond accuracy of data – it also jeopardizes our federal funding if we're not accurately reporting our PIT count data – and under-reporting, as in this case we are. If we had an opportunity to obtain new funding or additional funding, showing an increase is probably necessary. So concerned about that response as well that we didn't include the people in hotels and hope that the data can be corrected by the County, or will absolutely include them in the next PIT count and correct the error.

VI. Business/updates

a. Public Hearing: Substantial Amendment to the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan

- A copy of the June 29th public notice is included in your meeting packet.
- The proposed Substantial Amendment is available online starting July 5th for duration of 30-day comment period. Visit here: www.washtenaw.org/urbancounty then click on *HOME-ARP Funding Allocation Plan* from menu on left-hand side of the page

Tara Cohen presented slides on the proposed substantial amendment and the citizen participation process. These slides were included in the amended meeting packet. At conclusion of her presentation, Amanda opened the public hearing.

Comments

Jean: I missed the last meeting, but after listening to Tara's presentation and hearing Aubrey's comments earlier, I don't understand why they switched the strategy. I'm seeing a lot of nodding.

Brenna: I'd also like it to be recorded that there were confused looks and shrugs from not only staff but Council members and members of the HHSAB about why the shift in strategy occurred.

Amanda: I'll share the Washtenaw Housing Alliance, which is a coalition of nonprofit and government partners, we are working on our working on our public comment. We're doing a survey of our member organizations and that survey closes July 17th. So we'll share those comments hopefully at the Continuum of Care Board meeting. But the new proposed allocation is substantially different than we saw, than what was approved, so we have concerns about the why and the shift from permanent housing development, adding units, to these more temporary situations and projects. So we're very much in favor of using as much of the money possible for the development of permanent housing because we know that's what ends homelessness. We'll continue to look at this, but I speculate that this proposal is an immediate reaction to the immediate needs that we're seeing within the continuum of care, but that's putting a temporary bandaid on a deep wound that we have around affordability in the community and creating more units of affordable housing gets us to not having

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that issue as much. So really hoping that that can be switched, and also just raising concern about the County proposing the increase to planning and admin. We understand there's a need to make sure the work is done and done well, but I worry that takes away resources that could be used for development and related services that could be offered for folks.

Chris Watson: I offered public comment at the Urban County, so that's been recorded, but I wanted to ask a question of OCED staff. The money for eviction prevention and rapid rehousing – if we sum all that money up and think about the spenddown phase through 2030 – would it be fair to think of these as recurring funds used per year for that 7 year period, i.e. dividing the 3.8 million out by 7 years to say we're going to spend \$550k a year at the same percentages? Is it fair to think of it that way or are we anticipating we use it as need arises and not fitting it to resemble a recurring expenditure?

Staff Response: It probably won't be a very satisfying answer, but I guess the best response I can give to that is that it would depend primarily on whatever is proposed by whatever agencies submit proposals – how they want to administer the funds and what staff capacity to be able to do that. But it's a good question, a very fair question.

Chris Watson: That makes a lot of sense, and no, I appreciate that actually to think about it from the RFP end.

Linh Song: I appreciate the extended period so County Commissioners can take a bit of time and give the community some time to reflect on the impact of what withdrawing this funding would look like. It's unfortunate because we all just came out of the budget process, we all just entered a new fiscal year. Same with agencies, they all have the same calendar too. July 1 is the beginning of the fiscal year which means agencies and municipalities are planning out operations, hiring, responsiveness, and on our end it's planning out warming centers – before Thanksgiving we put out a schedule of where people can go to warming shelters. So, I understand there's this need to figure out emergency and temporary shelter, but it's not the same as permanent housing. And I feel like we've gotten off track from what the City in Arbor, in particular, has come to expect of us. We approved the affordable housing millage by a wide margin, so I think we have the support, the demand, to invest in affordable housing. That was in 2020, here we are in 2023, and something like this to happen at this fiscal year means it determines what will happen over the next decade. It takes a while to develop affordable housing, so that investment now and how it's used and matched several times over is really meaningful. I'm disappointed, and I'd like to see us be more responsive and reflect on how that demand in 2020, the plan came out in 2015. We recognized the crisis in 2015. I don't want to spend several decades for what has happened decades before. \$3.5 million is a lot. A million is a lot. Zero is tragic. So, I have strong feelings.

Updates

- b. Planning Update on Ann Arbor's Parking Day, Sept. 15th (Ad hoc subcommittee)
- Members of the ad hoc planning team will provide any updates and solicit input if needed
 - Members include: Amanda Carlisle, Skylar Woodman, Anna Erickson, Ellen Rabinowitz, Linh Song

Amanda noted that she and Ellen met to put together a plan for Parking Day, and Anna and Sky had reviewed their plan. The plan includes HHSAB working in collaboration with other agencies

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that work on housing and social services. Proposed theme is “House people not cars.” We will educate people on the 2020 affordable housing millage. What that looks like and what units are in the pipeline. AAHC and Avalon confirmed they will participate.

Amanda reminder the group that HHSAB typically doesn’t meet in August, so the idea was to do some type of community engagement. Technically this falls in September but still a good opportunity to engage.

Ellen emphasized – it’s 12 hours of staffing a table. Will need a lot of volunteers. Perhaps WHA, HHSAB, OCED staff all participate, it won’t be too daunting.

Amanda noted that some groups do extensive designs/decorating for their space, but the idea is to keep ours casual. Put out chairs and rug – like the feeling of hanging out in someone’s yard.

1-2 volunteers for each 1-hour slot. Talking points/info will be prepared and made available in advance to all volunteers. There are also materials that might be useful from AAHC’s public engagement process they did in 2019 around city-owned lots for housing development.

Linh shared that she has had a good experience at Parking Day in the past. Her kids played chess with people, played guitar. Essentially their space extended the sidewalk space by Sweetwaters. They appreciated it too. Brought giant chess set from the library. My daughter can bring her ukelele. We can talk about housing in creative ways.

Jean mentioned the Neighbors for more Neighbors in Minneapolis that did a Lego zoning game. Could maybe not do a competition but instead have a general goal of how many units can you build in a certain amount of space using legos. Something free form. She could share some of her family’s Lego collection for the event. Could we bring the book – Paved Paradise – and auction it off?

Amanda – we could even do a lending library. She has several copies of Evicted so would be happy to bring some. We should all read Paved Paradise: How Parking Explains the World and then discuss it at a future HHSAB meeting.

Another book mentioned was The High Cost of Free Parking.

Brenna asked Amanda what she’s envisioning for the administrative lift – and how can it be shared equitably?

Amanda said people should volunteer for whatever they can.

There was some discussion about portable furniture and using Sign Up Genius to make sure everything is covered. Include 2 volunteer slots per hour.

Folding table / poster stands / display boards?

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Chris Watson noted there's one site already approved for future development (at corner of Main and Ann St), but nothing has happened there yet. There might be a space near there where we could be set up for Parking Day.

Linh stated she has plenty of folding tables/chairs/benches/giant water jugs, so don't worry about the infrastructure for the space. Maybe others can focus more on the books and activities.

Snacks were suggested. Tara volunteered to send out a Sign Up Genius soon.

Amanda suggested everyone assign themselves one of the mentioned books to read so we can all discuss.

c. Recruitment for Youth Seat

- Ella Hall has officially resigned from the HHSAB youth seat; recruitment can move forward
- Members who know of potential candidates please reach out to them.

Tara asked Ellen to remind her of the ideas she'd mentioned for recruiting. Ellen mentioned Neutral Zone, Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, and Corner Health, noting a lot of the youth involved at Corner Health won't live in Ann Arbor. Chris Watson said that wouldn't be an issue, and that Council makes these exceptions frequently for people to join city commissions.

Chris knows a senior at Pioneer HS involved with a mental health committee – he will reach out to assess interest.

Someone asked to confirm the required age bracket for the youth seat. Tara offered to check the bylaws and get back to the group to clarify.

Amanda noted that her organization, WHA, is getting ready to recruit for youth who have lived homelessness experience. They will be compensating those who participate on the committee, so this is yet another opportunity for interested youth.

d. Recruitment for a New Liaison to Renters' Commission (Tara Cohen)

- Core meetings occur on third Thursday each month at 7:30pm on Zoom
- Meetings typically last about 2 hours
- Per City staff, some potential interest from Renters Commission members in a shared role, maybe every other month meeting time commitment

Jean offered to attend on a rotating basis. Amanda stated she plans to make the next 1 or 2 meetings. Peter also plans to attend next month. Chris reminded the group that Travis Medina used to be the liaison for Renters Commission because he was also a Council liaison to HHSAB. Chris noted it's fine for people to rotate rather than it be just one specific HHSAB member attending; the point is just to inform each other of what these boards are working on.

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Peter, Jean, and Amanda will discuss offline a schedule for Renters Commission coverage for the next year's worth of meetings.

VII. City Council (Council Member Update)

Linh and Chris worked together to provide updates to the group.

Linh noted that at the last Council meeting, she and Cynthia Harris co-sponsored a resolution to limit how Ann Arbor police actively ticket people for offenses that aren't public safety issues (e.g. broken tail lights, tinted windows). The first hearing included a lot of black mothers who spoke. AAPS Board of Education's president, Jacinda Townsend Gides was there. Some people spoke on the reality of having black children and driving. What would happen if your child is pulled over by police. This ordinance is a reflection of community wishes and EMU professor and Bureau of Justice Statistics showed black people are more than 2 times more likely to get pulled over than white people.

Police Chief Amy Metzger is in support of the resolution and said PD will follow Council's guidance. We'll see differences in traffic stops.

Independent Community Police Oversight commission (ICPOC) isn't meeting over summer but will come back in September and hear community responses.

At last Council meeting, Jennifer Hall (Ann Arbor Housing Commission) presented a report to Council on the use of the \$305k in eviction prevention funds, details on who received funds. Funds were allocated in March for April 1 slated evictions. Linh noted how quickly Jennifer Hall moved on this. Funding approved early March, then all money was spend down within the same month. Link to the report in Legistar is [here](#).

Chris mentioned that City Council finalized the recommendations that this group (HHSAB) blessed for allocating marijuana excise funds and outlined uses.

- \$250k for low-income youth services
- \$350k for eviction prevention
- \$400k for trauma-based services for families with vouchers impacted by criminal justice system.
- \$325k to support Catherine St site – first floor community space. As noted at the recent public engagement Avalon Being considered for a fab lab and a community center
- \$150k to support Ann Arbor Housing Development Corporation's collaboration with the Community Leadership Council for planning the use of the first floor community space for 121 Catherine St

Chris noted his appreciation that this group (HHSAB) took initiative to talk about using the Marijuana excise in ways that give back to those negatively impacted by the justice system.

He mentioned the work of American Friends Committee to help people returning after serving a sentence, some as long as 50+ year sentences, in re-joining the community.

Sept 26 at 6pm (4th Tuesday) - The HRC is planning a joint meeting with ICPOC.

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Council meeting coming up on Monday. Chris is cosponsor on fundraiser for Garrett's Space. He gave public comment at a recent Superior Township meeting in support of their project (to build a residential facility for struggling young adults).

A lot of Superior Township residents are upset about rezoning a single family house (on very large piece of land – about the size of 6 football fields)

Will be another public hearing at Superior Township next Monday. It's important for the youth who are coming out to these meetings to hear positive comments made. Some adults have been fear mongering in their comments, for example someone saying they will have to go out and buy a gun to protect themselves if this facility gets built next to them. Some residents are threatening to sue the Township if they approve the rezoning.

Superior Charter Township Board of Trustees is voting on Monday at 7pm.

Amanda mentioned that for the \$400k of the marijuana excise tax is going to Housing Choice Voucher holders with involvement in criminal justice system, planning is already under way to assist these individuals in finding housing. Her organization, Washtenaw Housing Alliance, is involved with the planning. The organizations receiving these funds to deliver services are: SOS Community Services, A Brighter Way, Shelter Association of Washtenaw County, Catholic Charities - Offender Success program.

- VIII. General Updates** – Amanda directed people to the next HHSAB meeting shown at bottom of agenda – the next meeting is September 14th, and the next day will be Parking Day.
- IX. Public Comment** – None
- X. Adjournment** - Moved by Jean. Support by James Downing. Adjourned at 7:48pm.