

MINUTES

Housing and Human Services Advisory Board (HHSAB)
January 9, 2025 from 6:30 PM-8:30 PM

Members will meet **in-person** at: 200 N. Main Street, Ann Arbor, Lower Level, Large Conference Room.
Interested public may attend **in-person OR virtually** using the Zoom link below.

Zoom link: <https://washtenawcounty.zoom.us/j/81080472041>

Webinar ID: 810 8047 2041

Members Present: Amanda Carlisle, Brenna McMahon, Ellen Rabinowitz, Faith Redwine-Otieno, James Downing, Jean Leverich, Karen Wanza, Peter Slutzker, Rob Boley, CM Chris Watson (non-voting/City Council liaison), CM Jen Eyer (non-voting/City Council liaison).

Members Absent: Anna Erickson, James Daniel

Staff Present: Derek Delacourt (City of Ann Arbor), Tara Cohen (County OCED)

Guests: Jennifer Hall (Ann Arbor Housing Commission)

- I. **Convene Meeting** (Brenna McMahon, Chair)
Brenna convened the meeting at 6:35pm and took a roll call.
- II. **Welcome/Announcements** - Introductions were made around the room. Staff and Chair welcomed Derek Delacourt, Ann Arbor's Community Services Area Administrator, and Councilmember Jen Eyer to her first HHSAB meeting as liaison.
- III. **Public Comment** – None.
- IV. **Approval of Agenda (ACTION)**
Motion by Amanda Carlisle; Seconded by Ellen Rabinowitz. Motion carried.
- V. **Approval of Minutes from July 11, 2024 (ACTION)**
Motion by James Downing; Seconded by Rob Boley. Motion carried.

Business

- a. Discussion to Consider Recommendation to Dissolve the HHSAB (Derek Delacourt, Ann Arbor)
 - Mr. Delacourt presented the key point of his memo to HHSAB members, outlining the thinking behind this recommendation for members' consideration and discussion.
 - Mr. Delacourt and Ms. Cohen then opened the floor for members to provide feedback on the recommendation, ask questions, and discuss next steps.
 - Ellen noted her past involvement with the Housing Policy Board decades back and commented that she sees the value of a body like the HHSAB to be citizen input and greater transparency; she also mentioned she can understand from both perspectives -- as a former government employee she understands the need to consider efficiencies.
 - CM Watson mentioned the numerous bodies he participates in – i.e. Community Action Board, New Human Services Partnership leadership, Urban County Executive

Committee – noting that similar data and presentations are shared at the meetings for many of those groups.

- CM Eyer commented that the City (and City Council) is pro-housing.
- Brenna raised the question of what guardrails or bumpers would we have in place without the HHSAB in the case that we see political shifts (i.e. less supportive of affordable housing development) on Council in the future.
- James Downing shared that the staff memo as currently written felt slightly disjointed to him; if more funds are soon coming into the AA Affordable Housing Fund, and if administering those funds is a function of the HHSAB, would that not be a reason to keep the HHSAB in place.
- Jennifer Hall (AAHC) stated that from her perspective the underwriting and decision making protocols are more of a concern at this point, as opposed to policymaking, since the HHSAB made significant revisions to the AAHF policies that have since been approved by Council. She noted the central importance of the underwriting process when funding development projects, emphasizing the specialized technical skills required for strong underwriting process.
- Faith spoke about being a concerned citizen and underscored the difficulty she has experienced when trying to get home improvements to manufactured homes in Lodi Township. She shared that she has previously reached out to the CEO of MSHDA along with City Council members and others about her concerns around housing issues in the Ann Arbor area.
- Tara noted that County OCED runs home improvement programs, and while there are some regulatory limitations when it comes to serving manufactured homes, she noted their programs have certainly served manufactured homes in the past and encouraged Faith to contact OCED for more information.
- Tara noted the reduced burden on staff and developers if the AAHF were to be administered by the AA Housing Commission, since they are already responsible for administering the affordable housing millage funds. This would streamline all the City's affordable housing funds into a single competitive bid process, rather than 2 parallel RFP processes.
- CM Watson made the point that if HHSAB continued to help administer the AAHF dollars while the AA Housing Commission is administering the Affordable housing millage dollars, how would it be handled if the 2 bodies have conflicting award recommendations for the same project.
- Someone raised a question about transparency of funding availability for interested developers. Tara responded that both AAHC/AAHDC and Washtenaw County Purchasing division post all competitive RFPs on a public website for anyone to submit a proposal.
- Jennifer Hall added another advantage that if the AAHF dollars were to come under her agency's roof, based on capacity issues, legal review would likely be quicker through the Housing Commission legal counsel than if going through the City Attorney office.
- James Downing commented that the function of a citizen board like HHSAB is to create more democratic processes, whereas the staff memo seemed to mostly focus on efficiencies. He noted he would like the memo to incorporate verbiage about the role HHSAB plays as a space for citizen input, and to note other existing local avenues for providing this input on issues of affordable housing and human services in Ann Arbor should the HHSAB no longer exist.

- Jennifer Hall noted her AAHDC nonprofit board (the Commission) will have an opening coming up this spring.
- Amanda commented that if HHSAB is dissolved, she plans to put more of her energy into attending Urban County and CAB meetings (in addition to her continued involvement with the Continuum of Care).

Mr. Delacourt left after this discussion and stated the group should continue meeting until they hear otherwise. No action was called, however at the point that the conversation was wrapping up, the general sentiment from the group was that they were fairly comfortable with the suggestion to dissolve the HHSAB, but more so if information were to be provided on other existing opportunities for citizen input and any upcoming seats that might be available for formal participation on other bodies doing related work.

- b. HHSAB Representative for City of Ann Arbor Focus Group on Affordable Housing (Tara Cohen, OCED)
- See more information about the Ann Arbor Comprehensive Plan on their [Project Information & Engagement Hub](#).
 - Both Amanda and Brenna noted that they had already participated in focus groups as part of the City's Comprehensive planning process.
 - Tara noted that she hadn't been sure whether those focus groups had occurred already; in this case, nothing is needed on this item.

The Chair Brenna McMahon suggested the group skip the next set of action items on the agenda, given the prior discussion and the remaining time available to meet. The group agreed to move directly to Updates.

- c. Adoption of 2025 Workplan (**ACTION**) – No action taken.
- d. Adoption of 2025 HHSAB Meeting Calendar (**ACTION**) - No action taken.
- e. Elections (**ACTION**) - No action taken.

Updates

- f. Ann Arbor Affordable Housing Millage (Jennifer Hall, AAHC)
- Jennifer provided updates on the recent RFP issued to award available millage dollars for rental development.
 - She underscored to the group that the largest share of affordable housing gets developed by private developers.
 - She also explained that a policy decision was made that only nonprofit entities are eligible for millage fund grants (structured as repayable loans with 30 year affordability commitment)
 - She gave an overview of the 3 awards resulting from the RFP, and which have since received City Council approval on the awards:
 - Grant to Avalon Housing/Hickory Way III development - \$500k to fill project funding gap
 - Loan to The Annex Group/Union at A2 development - \$3m loan, shared cash flow with MSHDA, all the city millage funds will eventually come back to the millage fund to support future projects.

- Loan to Lockwood/3695 State St) – project is still in early concept phase. Providing low-interest loan similar to the terms for the Annex.
- g. Ann Arbor Affordable Housing Fund (Tara Cohen, OCED)
- Tara noted that from June 2023 to June 2024, a total of \$18.4 million were approved by City Council for incoming payments in-lieu of affordable units on 3 projects (732 Packard, 711 Church, 721 S Forest)
 - RFP and Application materials – pending operationalizing of the recently approved policy revisions.
- h. [Washtenaw County Opportunity Index](#)
- Tara stated that the County is seeking input from those who have ever used the Opportunity Index, prior to investing additional resources for a potential update of the tool
 - Jean thought that visually it was useful for showing disparities (but she hasn't used it). She also mentioned she had once seen it used for artistic purposes.
 - Peter noted that he knows the County Health Department utilizes the site.
 - Amanda mentioned that a lot of folks use the Opportunity Index for writing grants.
- i. County Winter Warming Centers – Tara referenced the information on the warming centers in the meeting packet and asked Amanda if she had specific updates to share from her involvement on the task force.

Amanda shared that Alpha House has served 30 families through their Winter Amnesty program, and that they've expanded their regular (year-round) shelter capacity for families by converting some former office space into residential areas. It was clarified that their administrative offices are now housed downtown Ann Arbor in a former dental clinic space.

- **Program Duration:** Warming centers operate from November 11, 2024, to April 13, 2025, contingent on weather needs.
 - **Daytime Warming Centers:** County office lobbies during business hours and designated sites in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti will provide weekday shelter, rotating locations as scheduled to maximize coverage.
 - **Overnight Shelter:** Delonis Center offers overnight warming every night starting at 7 pm. Referrals are needed from Housing Access of Washtenaw County (HAWC) during the day, with on-site assistance available after 5 pm.
 - **Extreme Weather Provisions:** Weather havens will activate at select locations if temperatures, including wind chill, drop to 20°F or below, for short-term relief from the cold during agencies' regular business hours. **See Weather Haven handout in your packet.**
 - **Regular Updates and Accessibility:** Locations and hours may change; updates will be posted online on OCED website [here](#). Key contacts for coordination include HAWC at (734) 961-1999 and the Delonis Center at (734) 662-2829.
 - The SAWC Winter Programs Information Sheet (draft as of 11/5/24) is included in your meeting packet.
- j. Renters' Commission Update (**ACTION**) (Tara Cohen, OCED)
- Tara thanked Faith Redwine-Otieno for volunteering to serve as HHSAB liaison to the Renters' Commission. Tara stated that the Renters Commission staff has requested HHSAB to take action formally designating Ms. Redwine-Otieno for this liaison role.

Motion by Ellen Rabinowitz; Seconded by Amanda Carlisle. Motion carried.

VI. City Council (Council Member Update)

CM Watson shared:

- Renters Commission advocated for a ban on “junk fees” – these are pre-tenancy fees other than a \$50 application fee, which would also be refundable if applicant does not get the unit. Sponsored by CM Radina and CM Harrison, approved by Council.
- City contributed \$150k in general funds to the County’s shelter system.

CM Eyer shared:

- City is overhauling its Comprehensive Land Use Plan; Council is figuring out how to digest the change from collapsing 34 zoning designations down to around 4 zoning designations

VII. General Updates -

- Amanda shared that the Source of Income protections recently passed at the State. This will apply now to the entire Washtenaw County, not just City of Ann Arbor and City of Ypsilanti where this protection is already in place. She noted the new legislation will take effect in 90 days.
- Amanda also noted the WEMU recently did a short spot on WHA and the 100-day Challenge.
- Jennifer Hall announced the film screening of Letter to the West Side, on history of the black community on west side of Ann Arbor, and featuring the Dunbar Tower development now under construction. Free to the public but RSVPs are needed. Michigan Theater, Saturday Feb. 8th. AAHC is the event sponsor.

VIII. Public Comment – None.

IX. Adjournment (ACTION)

Motion by Amanda Carlisle; Seconded by James Downing. Motion carried.

Adjourned at 8:10pm.