



MEETING MINUTES

HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF WASHINGTON COUNTY

February 22, 2024 - 9:00 a.m.

Hybrid Meeting In-Person & Via Zoom

<u>COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT</u>	<u>STAFF PRESENT</u>
Bruce Dickinson	Molly Rogers
Deena Feldes (Castrejon)	Melissa Sonsalla
Hayley Purdy	Bianetth Valdez
John Epstein	Jacob Boyett
Melinda Bell	Andrew Crampton
Fernando Lira	Katherine Galian
Nina Stafford	Liz Morris
Renee Brouse	Nicole Stingh
Ryan Cain	Fahad Kazi
Nina Sparr	Michael Clark
	Will Seals
<u>ABSENT</u>	Tatiana Gammett
Carine Arendes	Hameed Evenson
Eric Schmidt	
Narendar Sahgal	<u>GUESTS</u>
Gena Briggs	Jacquilyn Saito
Dave Bachman	

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER – 9:03 a.m. A quorum was present.

II. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Due to a change in the meeting agenda order, Molly provided the Executive Director’s Update at the top of the meeting. She started by discussing the recent budget work being done by the department for the coming fiscal year, and all the meetings happening currently to prepare for the June budget approval deadline. As part of the work being done to look at the annual budget, the department has also been looking to update it’s annual workplan and value statement; and we plan to be able to share highlights from these with the committee in the future.

On a sad note, Molly announced that the departments Asset Manager, Will Seals, will be leaving the department on March 1st, 2024, after having served Washington County for over 20 years. After



Will's departure, there will be a staff member taking over Will's role in an interim position, which will be followed up by a strong recruitment effort. Following the news about Will's departure, Molly announced again that we have hired a new Assistant Director for the Housing Authority of Washington County, Jill Chen. Jill previously was in her 7th year serving at the Portland Housing Bureau as the Housing Investments & Portfolio Preservation Manager, and is highly regarded as an expert with an international development background, and has been doing residential and commercial real estate for the last 10+ years.

Moving on from staffing updates, Molly provided the committee with information on the recent Safe Rest Village that opened up in Aloha on February 2nd. Similar to the Safe Rest Village in Hillsboro, the Aloha location utilizes the new pallet shelter structures and the site will offer immediate shelter to 30 individuals; with heating and colling installed to help protect shelter guests from the elements. This information tied into the last item Molly updated the committee members on, which was that Washington County exceeded all goals for Governor Kotek's Executive Order 23-02. Staff have spent the last year developing and expanding housing solutions for people experiencing homelessness while integrating the Executive Order work seamlessly with other long-term housing programs primarily funded through the regional Supportive Housing Services measure.

The floor was opened for questions or comments for Molly:

John Epstein asked for clarification on what pallet houses are and what benefit they have over other temporary shelter solutions. Nicole Stingh provided information on the construction of the pallet houses and how their base (which is built with the same principles as a pallet) allows for easier transportation if they need to be moved to another location.

Melinda Bell asked about what kind of security, if any, was available/provided at the Safe Rest Village. Nicole Stingh answered that we have partnered with Open Door to monitor the property, and they communicate any elevated issues to the police.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS – ATTENDEES (INCLUDING ONLINE GUESTS)

None.

IV. DISCUSSION – ORAL COMMUNICATIONS and MEMBER UPDATES

None.

V. ACTION – APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The committee voted to approve the January 25, 2024 meeting minutes.

Motion: Melinda Bell

Second: John Epstein

Vote: All in favor



VII. RESOLUTIONS / ACTION ITEMS

None

VII. ONGOING BUSINESS

None

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Legislative Update

Nicole Stingham presented information on the current short session in progress and various items being reviewed and discussed in Salem:

- There are two types of yearly legislative sessions conducted in the state of Oregon, the long session and the short session. The long session occurs on odd numbered years and covers budget making over a 6 month period; the short session occurs over 35 days and tries to cover the same level/scope of work conducted during the long session.
- The current session began on February 5th and has to “adjourn without a day” by March 10th.
- Currently still on the docket are 56 different Housing related bills; down from approximately 70 at the start of the session
- There is a bill to write System Development Charge (SDC) referral programs, to defer when system development charges are occurred or must be paid to after the occupancy permit, which many market rate developers have said will help build homes faster.
- Other efforts include increasing infrastructure spending, like site infrastructure spending that could benefit rural areas.
- Nicole moved on to speak about the main package being discussed in the session is Senate Bill 1537, which is the Governor’s package that includes several items like:
 - \$3 million for local housing infrastructure planning and capacity planning
 - \$5 million local planning and technical assistance program from the Department of Land Conservation and Development
 - A \$75 million investment for a moderate income financing plan (Tax Increment Financing) where localities would allow taxes to be withheld. This would allow up front tax relief for developers, which would be paid to localities by the state, and then the developers would pay back the state over time.
 - A one-time urban growth boundary expansion item
- Other items that the Governor is calling for that are not included in Bill 1537 include \$65 million for shelter operations. None of the shelters that would receive resources from this item are in Washington County.
- On top of all these items, a priority from Senate Housing Chair (Sen. Jama) includes an item for \$45 million for eviction prevention programs through Community Action Programs.
- A big effort from the Oregon Housing Alliance include a \$35 million item to increase affordable housing preservation



Bruce Dickinson asked for clarification on the original asked amount for the Governor's bill 1537. Nicole stated that the original asked amount for the bill was \$500,000.00

John Epstein asked who leads the lobbying efforts for these kinds of items for Washington County, and does the Housing Advisory Committee play a role in any of those efforts. Nicole Stingh provided that there are multiple entities that support that work. Washington County is part of the two largest organizations (Housing Oregon & The Oregon Housing Alliance). Molly Rogers added that the Housing Authority arm of the department is a member of the Oregon Housing Authority Association with the lobbying team from Northwest Public Affairs (with Ryan Fischer as the lead lobbyist), and as a County entity we have an office of Government Relations where Erin Doyle is working with us and legislators on Housing related items.

Andrew Crampton brought up that \$35 million for preservation funding is not going to enough, and it is a concern he has looking at the current legislative items. There are a lot of items for infrastructure and new development, which is important, but it seemed very concerning how much was being asked for preservation. Molly Rogers added that it is an overwhelming issue and she can see a role for this committee to be part of a letter that gets sent out regarding the concern for preservation efforts. Nicole Stingh added that the Governor does care about preservation, but she set a challenging production goal for development of new homes, and this meant that in order meet those goals other areas had to receive less focus.

B. Upcoming Events

Bianetth Valdez provided an update on some upcoming events that included an Open House on February 29th for Bridge to Home's new temporary shelter in Tigard, OR. An email with additional information was sent out to committee members and a link can be found in the February packet.

Another event coming up is Washington County's Annual Volunteer Appreciation event that will be held at the Wingspan Event Center on the evening of April 25th to honor all the members of the community who volunteer their time to support the County by participating on the various Boards and Committees that the County has. It will be a great opportunity to meet other individuals who participate in the County and to represent the Housing Advisory Committee.

C. Public Meeting Rules Overview

Staff provided an update to the committee members on the upcoming dates for annual training opportunities to learn more information on the rules and regulations of public meetings from County Counsel member Jacquilyn Saito. The meetings are not mandatory, but committee members are encouraged to join for a refresher.

Molly Rogers suggested that a shortened overview of the materials covered in those trainings be presented at a potential future Housing Advisory Committee meeting, if there was time.

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Housing Services Department

161 NW Adams Ave, Suite 2000, MS 63, Hillsboro, OR 97124-3398

phone: 503-846-3790 • fax: 503-846-4795 • TTY: 503-846-4898

website: www.washingtoncountyor.gov • email: HousingServices@washingtoncountyor.gov



Bianetth added that these scheduled trainings will also include members from the newly established Homeless Solutions Council.

IX. DEPARTMENT UPDATES

A. Section 18 Presentation

Will Seals, the Housing Department Asset Manager, provided a presentation updating the Section 18 Disposition; which was last brought to the committee in September 2023. Starting with a quick review of what Section 18, Will explained that it is a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) initiative that allows Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) to request permission to demolish or dispose of public housing property. In 2021 the Housing Authority had a capital needs assessment performed that found:

- Over the next 5 years there was a projected \$12 million in forecasted capital needs in our portfolio alone
- 46% of our portfolio are single family homes, with a median age of 44 years, the Housing Authority sought approval for disposition of 60 public housing units

The majority of the properties selected for disposition were the furthest from the Housing Authority's central office, and were either the most expensive for upkeep or unique in their challenges to the Housing Authority. In December of 2021 the Housing Authority submitted our application to HUD, and received approval for the disposition of the requested 60 units in December of 2023. Currently, the Housing Authority is in the beginning of planning for the sales of the properties, with a rough timeline of 2 year process for the complete disposition of all 60 units. During this disposition process, we will be providing tenant support to all the tenants through a variety of options like: Tenant Protection Vouchers, Financial Assistance, and individual consultation services. Information on this disposition has been provided to tenants and the community regarding the approval of the application and a contact that the public can use to reach out to the Housing Authority.

Bianetth Valdez continued the presentation by speaking to the goals of this project and how we are centering equity into our community engagement. These goals include:

- Maintaining consistent communication with residents
- Creating opportunities for homeownership in partnership with Bienestar; creating potential for generational wealth that is typically something that low-income minority individuals do not have access to.
- Considerately relocating the current residents through
 - Accessibility (through translation and other accommodations)
 - A trauma informed lens
 - Consistent and transparent communication



Will continued the presentation with a high level overview of the process of the sale of the homes approved for disposition and how the Housing Authority will prioritize the home sales to the current residents, and then follow a prioritization level moving to selling the homes in partnership with or community based organizations, and then lastly selling the homes at a market rate to members of the general community. The proceeds from these sales will be used to drive HAWC'S goals to increase the availability of affordable housing in Washington County, improve community quality of life, promote the self-sufficiency and asset development of families and individuals, and to ensure equal opportunity in housing for all. With everything in the presentation said, Will opened the floor up to questions and/comments from the committee members.

Bruce Dickinson asked for perspective on the 60 properties, what would their top line value would be what. Will explained that the soft appraisal from 2022 stated the value would be around \$23 million. Molly clarified that part of the planning phase includes figuring out what price change has occurred, what kind of discounts can we offer, and other questions.

Melida Bell asked for clarification on if the residents eligible for purchasing these homes, is it limited only to the family in the home or could other residents on assistance could be eligible to purchase the home if the current residents do not want to purchase. Molly stated that is one of the main questions we are tackling in this planning phase and what the best solution for all residents might be.

Andrew Crampton added that the Development team is currently applying for a grant through the EPA, for some building upgrades on the homes that could allow for energy efficiency funds paired with a sale to a CBO organization. That particular ask is about \$60,000 per unit, which would be a substantial opportunity in funding.

John Epstein asked for clarification on if the current residents for these homes receiving subsidies like Section 8, or is it just low rents? If there are public subsidies, what will happen to them after these homes are sold, will Washington County lose them? Will explained that currently, the public housing program operates similar to the Section 8 program where rent is based off the household income (roughly 30%). Molly added that the average tenant rent is \$425, and approximately three times that amount is their average income. Melissa Sonsalla explained that the 60 units, after they are sold, go back onto the Housing Authority's faircloth limit that can be reactivated at a later date and time. Many Housing Authority's are reactivating their faircloth limit properties by converting them into vouchers the can be used for other specific focuses.

B. Additional/Written Department Updates

Additional department updates can be found in the February 2024 HAC packet.

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X. MEMBER SUGGESTED FUTURE DISCUSSIONS

Ryan Cain: Attended an event the focused on the task force for the revitalization of downtown Portland, and the very first comment from that event was about have all the correct people in these conversations all been identified and have they all been in contact with one another. To that point, Ryan wanted to ensure that the Housing Authority and the Housing Advisory Committee has identified all the correct people for the projects discussed and that all those people are connecting with one another. Nina Stafford followed up with that comment by asking who all the partners the Housing Authority has connected with as part of the second priority recognized in the sale of the Section 18 homes. Melissa and Will identified some of the partner organizations in a regular meeting that the Housing Authority had before the approval from Hud, and Will stated that there will be future outreach to gauge the interest level from each partner and the availability to participate in this project.

John Epstein: What do the staff and Commissioners expect of the members of the Housing Advisory Committee? Melissa responded that this is a topic the staff have been discussing, and how the committee has changed drastically over the last couple years. The Housing Authority intends to come back at a future meeting to have a deliberate conversation about where the advisement from the committee comes in on specific items the Housing Authority works on.

Bruce Dickinson: Is there an organizational chart for the Housing Authority and financials that can be shared with the committee members? Melissa stated that we will provide the current organizational chart to the committee members, and the department's Assistant Director of the Finance, Michael Clark, stated that we just posted the financials for the last fiscal year were just posted and we can share with the committee members.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Melinda Bell

Second: Bruce Dickinson

Vote: All in favor

Meeting adjourned at 10:27 a.m.

Molly Rogers
Secretary / Executive Director