

Interagency Council on Affordable Housing

Tuesday, January 8, 2013

2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Lyceum

227 Lawrence Street

Hartford, Connecticut

Members Present: Anne Foley (Chair), Claudette Beaulieu (DSS) for Commissioner Roderick Bremby, Barbara Geller (DMHAS), Commissioner Catherine Smith (DECD), Howard Rifkin (Partnership for Strong Communities), Betsy Crum (Connecticut Housing Coalition), Lisa Sementilli, (Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness), Rebecca Fleming (DOC), Eric Chatman (Connecticut Housing Finance Authority), Joseph Martel (Council Appointee) Daisy Franklin (Council Appointee) and Sarah Ratchford (Council Appointee).

I. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair made opening remarks on the passing of Carol Walter and noted her passionate advocacy on behalf of the homeless population. She opened up comments from the group who addressed the tragic loss and followed with a moment of silence.

II. Approval of the December 11th Meeting Minutes

Howard Rifkin moved and Claudette Beaulieu seconded the motion to approve the December 11th meeting minutes. The motion was approved on a voice vote with one amendment, to add Daisy Franklin to the list of attendees.

III. Review and Approve Council Report

The Chair reviewed changes made by Council members to the draft report to be submitted January 15th. The Chair agreed to prepare and include an executive summary with the final report. The report was approved on a voice vote with the following changes:

The recommended changes include:

Introduction: “In January 2012, the Reaching Home Campaign’s Opening Doors CT blueprint to end homelessness was launched by the convening of a steering committee which included Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman and many state government officials.”

The bolded section was added to Page 8:

The lack of affordable housing has many deleterious effects. First, for Connecticut's lowest income households, it means a greater risk of becoming homeless. As measured in Connecticut's 2012 Point in Time (PIT) Count, 3,524 individuals in 2,689 households **were counted living in Connecticut's homeless shelters and transitional housing programs on a single night in 2012. While no unsheltered count was taken in 2012, the 2011 PIT counted 695 individuals and 671 households experiencing homelessness in unsheltered conditions.** Episodes of homelessness put tremendous pressure on social and familial networks, disrupt families, and interfere with access to health care services, education and employment.

The bolded section was added to page 10:

The lack of sufficient affordable housing may also be attributed in part to NIMBY-ism, **the lack of public facilities and infrastructure necessary to support multi-family housing (e.g. water and sewer service)**, the historic deference to the state's municipalities to implement zoning policies (including in ways that prohibit or discourage affordable multi-family developments), high construction costs due to the proximity of the New York City and Boston markets for construction services, the incremental cost of providing support services for very low-income residents, the added costs associated with constructing housing appropriate for low-income elderly and disabled residents, and historically sub-optimal state policies and procedures with respect to promoting and funding affordable housing construction.

The following two changes in bold were made to page 16:

Additionally, for policy makers, the lack of available, timely, comprehensive and accurate data regarding housing need within the state significantly impedes the ability of policy makers to develop appropriate housing and development policies, to make appropriate resource allocations and to target investments to maximize impact.

Inflexible processes. While progress streamlining processes has been made, addition improvements are necessary to root out unnecessarily costly and time-consuming processes, duplicative processes and policies that inhibit creative solutions and prevent speedy, flexible decision-making. Greater flexibility is also needed to encourage projects that are relatively uncommon but well-suited to specific niche settings, including, for example, small developments, homeownership projects, projects in rural areas, historic mill conversions **and mixed use/mixed income projects (projects that combine mixed income housing with commercial or retail space, community amenities such as day care or community centers, and transportation amenities).**

The following bolded remarks were added on page 17:

Ongoing engagement with both public and private resources, as well as an innovative spirit of problem-solving and outcome orientation, are needed to break down the existing barriers to the housing delivery systems. Transparency in policy and requirements, as well as consistency across housing programs, will enable the state's housing system to receive more effective input on programmatic and technical changes. This ongoing communication and constant evaluation of the system will allow it to be truly responsive to community needs. **The model of public-private partnerships embodied in the Reaching Home Campaign's implementation of "Opening Doors CT" is a clear example of enhancing communication, collaborative planning, transparency, and shared goals and benchmarks in fulfilling part of the new department's mission to prevent and end homelessness.**

The following bolded information was added on page 20:

Roles: Perform research and planning. Based on **data and** input from consumers and various stakeholders, identify housing and community needs, gaps and duplications in service, and develop short- and long-term plans of action.

The following bolded information was added on page 20:

Improve the effectiveness of the previous state housing structure by:

- o Utilizing flexible funding mechanisms and eliminating bureaucratic hurdles;
- o Enhancing predictability;
- o Providing transparency in processes and decision-making;
- o Leveraging opportunities; and
- o Promoting accountability by **using data to** create and measure objectives – across all housing agencies and systems.

The following bolded information was added to page 21:

Programs that should NOT be transferred:

Clinical services provided by state agencies with expertise working with sub-populations, such as individuals with mental illness, developmental disabilities, criminal offenders, etc. Low Income Housing Tax Credits; and **Administrative oversight of the statutory and regulatory compliance of the properties in the state-sponsored housing portfolio.**

The following bolded information was added to page 34/35:

Consider establishing a Research and Innovation position. The role of this position will be to work with the Commissioner, the Interagency Committee and other stakeholders in order to define data and research needs, establish and monitor progress of measurable goals and outcomes for the department, encourage and support innovation and the implementation and replication of best practices, and work with philanthropy and other funders to pilot new innovations and bring existing programs to scale.

IV. Next Steps

The Council discussed a proposed work plan. The Chair asked if there were comments or suggestions. Eric Chapman suggested a meeting be held in mid- February to review the Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP). The Council concluded this would be a good use of time. The Chair noted that staff would get back to the Council with a time, date and location for the February meeting. She thanked the Council for their work and adjourned the meeting.