

Interagency Council on Affordable Housing

Tuesday, September 25, 2012

10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Lyceum

227 Lawrence Street

Hartford, Connecticut

Members Present: Anne Foley (Chair), Barbara Geller (DMHAS), Howard Rifkin (Partnership for Strong Communities), Eric Chatman (Connecticut Housing Finance Authority), Joseph Martel (Council Appointee), Rebecca Flemming (DOC), Nick Lundgren (DECD) Kim Somaroo-Rodriquez (DCF), Claudette Beaulieu (DSS), Daisy Franklin (Council Appointee), Pat Spring (Connecticut Housing Coalition), Carol Walter (Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness).

Additional Attendees: Neil Griffin (Conn-NAHRO), Peg Fitzgerald (CHFA), John Dunne (CSH) and Kate Robinson (Betty Gallo and Co.), Steve Dilella (DMHAS), Mike Hanley (Partnership for Strong Communities), Cathy Stebbins (CONN-NAHRO), Geoffe Sager (Metro Realty), Hilary Felton-Reid (Robinson and Cole), Peter Palermino (DSS), David Guttchen (OPM), Pam Trotman (OPM), David Krause (OPM).

I. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was convened at 10:10 a.m. by the Chair, Anne Foley. The Chair welcomed members and asked them to introduce themselves.

She explained that this meeting was the 2nd part of two meetings to have housing experts from inside and outside of the state to discuss the vision for the new Department of Housing.

The Chair entertained a motion to accept the minutes from the August 14th and September 7th Council Meetings. Howard Rifkin made a motion to accept and the minutes were passed unanimously by voice vote.

The Chair went on to introduce each of four panelists addressing the Council at that day's meeting.

II. Presentations

The Chair reminded the Council that the purpose of the presentations was to receive input on a vision for the new department of housing, including its purpose, principles, goals, population served and a framework for services to be provided by the new department.

The following presentations were made to the Council:

A. Neil Griffin, President

Conn-NAHRO

Key points:

- DOH should be charged with creating a comprehensive statewide housing policy that includes the input of all stakeholders. The policy needs to carefully allocate the limited resources available by prioritizing needs to meet a state wide housing plan that produces a balance of sustainable housing options.
- DOH should be the Singular Agency Charged with Oversight and Reporting of State Housing Programs - The agency should be charged with program oversight and ultimately receive the reporting requirements of the various affordable housing programs.
- Facilitate the Preservation of Existing Affordable Housing and Support the Effective Creation of New Housing - provide technical assistance, education, regular communication, advocacy and transparent processes which are inclusive of its affordable housing industry partners and allow partners to understand the environment in which they operate.
- The new Department must also have the following components: (1) Flexible to meet varying needs; (2) Sustainable options; (3) Quantifiable objectives, goals and measurables; (4) Effective oversight and reporting with the ability to analyze trends; (5) Advocate for housing.

B. Sarah Gallagher, Director

Corporation for Supportive Housing

Key Points:

- Establish FTE Supportive Housing Director position within DOH.

- Capital programs now housed at DECD move to DOH.
- CHFA continue to administer existing programs (Tax Credit and other bond financed initiatives).
- Section 8 and RAP administration move to DOH.
- Services funding remains at population specific agency (DMHAS, DCF, DDS).
- Institutionalizes SH within DOH.
- Facilitates a shared vision and priorities between agencies (populations, housing types, service models).
- Commits specific resources to achieve priorities.
- Coordinate programs and resources (federal, state, local, bonds, grants, subsidies, etc) related to SH.
- Ensures access to housing for most vulnerable and poorest populations.
- Reduces overlap, reduces costs while maximizing impact.

C. Geoff Sager, President
Metro Realty Group, Ltd

Key points:

- Must be cost effective. CHFA's Qualified Assistance Program needs to be altered to assist in this.
- Fewer resources means doing more with less.
- Senior Housing is critical as population ages. Nursing homes are the highest proportion of Medicaid spending. Keeping people in their homes makes sense for budget reasons and personal investment.
- The state should not invest money in aging projects, policy should reflect this.

D. Joan Carty, President & CEO

Housing Development Fund

- Network of intermediaries (CDFIs, nonprofit agencies) to allow a predictable, ongoing flow of resources to meet affordable housing needs.
- Leverage safe and sound debt financing to allow precious subsidy resources to stretch as far as possible.
- Consider investing in people as well as places.
- Support consumer choices.
- Ongoing resources mean meeting people where they are: Down payment assistance, home improvement, weatherization, security deposit assistance, rental assistance.
- Consider population trends in Connecticut: senior population, immigrant population, dynamics among Millennials, young professionals, city-dwellers.
- Senior population: aging in place, flexibility for intergenerational living (accessory apartments), routine weatherization of all dwellings as cost saver, upgrade of housing stock.
- City-Dwellers: incentives to live near transit, HDF's existing Live Where You Work program has received 7 years of funding through the CHFA HTCC program.

V. Discussion of the Vision for the new Department

- Utilize flexible funding mechanisms and eliminate bureaucratic hurdles.
- Enhance predictability.
- Provide transparency in processes and decision-making.
- Leverage opportunities.
- Promote accountability by creating and measuring objectives – across all housing agencies and systems.

- Development officers should know what other funds are available, e.g. energy funding, mental health funding.
- Use an experimental model for a state personnel pilot in hiring and evaluation.
- Promote and encourage mixed income housing development.

VI. Next Steps

A. The Chair noted that at the October meeting the Council will review the information relating to the vision for the new department and discuss the criteria for programs to be transferred to the department, changes to the state's housing delivery systems, prioritization of housing resources, enhanced coordination among and across housing systems, and timelines for implementation. In addition she noted that they will review and update comments on information on the effectiveness of existing state housing programs in meeting the needs of low income individuals and families.

B. Next meeting will be held Tuesday, October 9th 2012
from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.