

Orange County Affordable Housing Advisory Board Minutes

Tuesday, January 11, 2021 at 6:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

Members Present: Jenn Sykes (Chair), Allison Mahaley, Arthur Sprinczeles, Jim Eichel, Dion Graham, Mae McLendon, Olivia Fisher, Paul Voss, Saru Salvi

Members Absent: Holly Meschko, Keith Cook, Tim Woody

Staff Present: Corey Root (Housing Director), Erika Brandt (Community Development Manager), Maria Dewees (Community Development Specialist),

I. Call to Order/Introductions:

Chair Sykes called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM.

II. Approval of the November 9, 2021 and December 14, 2021 AHAB Meeting Minutes

The board unanimously approved the minutes from [November](#) and [December](#).

III. Board Member Updates:

Chair Sykes announced that there were reports of four Housing Choice Voucher holders in Hillsborough receiving eviction notices on Christmas. She also noted that the Town of Hillsborough has revised an ordinance to allow for more multifamily housing units per acre of land and create a density bonus for affordable housing. She is unsure if any developments have been proposed under the new ordinance.

IV. Housing Department Updates

Ms. Root shared Housing Department updates. The Housing Helpline has started in-person hours on Tuesday and Thursdays in Chapel Hill. In 2021, the Housing Helpline served over 6,500 unique households.

The Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness (OCPEH) inherited a hotel isolation program for people experiencing homelessness who have Covid. Since OCPEH began coordinating in mid-December 2021, the program has served 17 people. IFC shelters, like other places in the County, have had cases of Covid, and cannot accept new clients. OCPEH is also running an emergency hoteling program. The annual [Point-in-Time Count](#) will take place at the end of January.

Ms. McLendon asked what more can be done to house people this winter and if government buildings could be used. Ms. Root replied that staff have been

discussing the possibility of using one of the community centers. Staff hope the hotel program will be very short term, but positive cases at the shelter continue.

The FY22-23 HOME Program application is open and applications are due in February. The HOME-ARP draft allocation plan is in progress and staff will bring a draft to the Board of Commissioners (BOCC) in the coming months. Staff propose combining the HOME-ARP application cycle with the HOME FY23-24 application. There will be opportunities for further feedback from community members and service providers on the plan this spring.

The State HOPE Program closed in December. The Orange County Emergency Housing Assistance Program continues to serve county residents in need.

The Longtime Homeowner Assistance Program closed in December. The program served 91 households and distributed over \$16,000 in assistance. Staff are recommending the BOCC modify the program design, if the Board chooses to continue the program.

The Orange County Housing Authority currently has 572 Housing Choice Vouchers under lease. Another 51 vouchers have been issued, with voucher holders currently in the housing search stage.

The Eviction Diversion Program has moved to the Housing Department. The program has two staff positions: an attorney and an expeditor.

Mr. Voss asked Ms. Root to clarify how the SOHRAD program works. Ms. Root explained that SOHRAD staff connect directly with community members who are unsheltered, and also facilitate deflection from the criminal justice system. The program has served 250 people from its start in October 2020 through December 2021. Ms. McClendon requested SOHRAD contact cards. Ms. Mahaley asked if the AHAB could collect supplies for SOHRAD. Ms. Root will share a list of needed items. SOHRAD partners with the Chapel Hill Crisis Unit, who has more storage space.

Ms. Sykes asked if AHAB members could help with the Point-in-Time Count. Ms. Root replied that volunteers have helped in the past; however, last year and this year, due to Covid, volunteers are not involved.

Ms. Mahaley asked if the Department could host a workshop for property owners to encourage them to lease to voucher holders. Ms. Root replied that the Department held a landlord briefing recently and hopes to host more of these events semi-annually or quarterly. Ms. Salvi suggested inviting landlords to share their positive experiences with one another during the events.

V. Finalization and Approval of the 2022 Annual Work Plan:

Ms. Sykes shared the Annual Work Plan and requested feedback. Ms. McLendon asked to add a section stating the AHAB will invite community partner agencies to attend meetings to provide updates on work they do with County funds.

Ms. Salvi supports keeping the goals broad. She suggested eliminating the December meeting and not meeting if quorum is not met. Ms. Sykes noted that this

board struggles with meeting quorum; as long as voting matters are moved to a later meeting with quorum, meeting without quorum should continue.

Mr. Voss asked the AHAB to consider focusing on specific issues, such as manufactured home park closure. He would like to contribute to this initiative and to connect with ROC USA. Ms. Sykes noted that in years past, there was a mobile home work group dedicated to this issue. Ms. Root noted that staff works with the Orange County Affordable Housing Coalition Mobile Home Committee.

The AHAB unanimously approved the Annual Work Plan.

VI. FY21-22 Outside Agency Updates:

Ms. Dewees updated members on FY21-22 Outside Agency performance reports for Quarters 1 and 2 (due January 10). Each year, nonprofit organizations delivering vital programs/services apply for funding from Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and Orange County. Advisory boards review applications. In FY21-22, the County funded:

- Center for Community Self Help: \$50,000
- Community Empowerment Fund: \$23,824
- Community Home Trust: \$211,912
- EmPOWERment: \$40,000
- Habitat for Humanity: \$76,133
- Rebuilding Together: \$15,000

Ms. Mahaley asked staff to upload FY22-23 applications to Google Drive. Mr. Graham asked if the County's racial equity tool would be used to review applications. Ms. Dewees was unsure, but staff are very interested in using the tool once it is available.

VII. Board Vacancy and Recruitment Update

Ms. Dewees reported that Housing staff have reached out about recruitment through OCPEH's network, to Orange County Justice United, and to nonprofit affordable housing owners and developers. Many have included information about the board vacancies in announcements to their members and residents. Staff request AHAB members' support recruiting new members, as there have been no new applications. Ms. McLendon requested a blurb about the AHAB to share with potential members. Ms. Malahey requested a flyer to distribute. Ms. McLendon asked if staff have confirmed all current applicants are still interested. Ms. Dewees replied that the clerk's office recently contacted each applicant to confirm their continued interest.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:04 PM.