

Affordable Housing Trust Fund Advisory Committee

The role of Affordable Housing Trust Fund Advisory Committee is to advise City of Eugene staff on: the development of goals and programs related to the use of Affordable Housing Trust Fund resources, the allocation of Affordable Housing Trust Fund resources, and review of specific project proposals to be supported by the Affordable Housing Trust Fund resources.

Agenda

July 14, 2020, 9:00 am – 11:00 am

To join from a computer, tablet or smartphone:

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U.S.A. (Toll Free): 1-877-568-4106, Access Code: 567-761-821

I.	Welcome and Introductions	Information	5 minutes
II.	Public Comment	Information	10 minutes
III.	Minutes Approval (May 19, 2020)	Discussion	5 minutes
IV.	Facilitated Discussion Update/Focus of the AHTF	Discussion	45 minutes
V.	Draft FY 21 AHTF Allocation Recommendation	Discussion/Action	45 minutes
VI.	Communication to city staff and council	Discussion	10 minutes

Affordable Housing Trust Fund Advisory Committee Members :

Sarah Pishioneri (Co-Chair) · Scott Rogers (Co-Chair) · John Barofsky · Dane Butler · Paula Farquhar-Stout · Isaac Judd · Pete Knox · Kaarin Knudson · Carmel Snyder

Affordable Housing Trust Fund Advisory Committee Staff:

Michael Kinnison, City of Eugene • 541-682-5500 • MKinnison@eugene-or.gov

Teresa Kennedy, City of Eugene • 541-682-5767 • TKennedy@eugene-or.gov

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For information about minutes, agendas, or materials, please contact Teresa Kennedy at TKennedy@eugene-or.gov or 541-682-5567. Mail inquiries can be directed to City of Eugene Planning and Development Department, 99 W. 10th, Eugene, OR 97401.

NAME OF MEETING: City of Eugene Affordable Housing Trust Fund Advisory Committee

DATE OF MEETING: May 19, 2020

TO: Teresa Kennedy

RECORDED BY: Lydia Dysart

ROUTING INFORMATION

(06/02/2019 lld)
(Date and initials)

DRAFT

Draft Minutes
Affordable Housing Trust Fund Advisory Committee
Tuesday, May 19, 2020 – 9:00 am – 11:00 am
Conference Call via GoToMeeting

Affordable Housing Trust Fund Advisory Committee Members

Members

John Barofsky, Dane Butler, Paula Farquhar-Stout, Isaac Judd, Pete Knox, Kaarin Knudson, Sarah Pishioneri; co-chair, Scott Rogers; co-chair, Carmel Snyder.

City of Eugene Staff

Stephanie Jennings, City of Eugene

Teresa Kennedy, City of Eugene

PRESENT

John Barofsky

Sarah Pishioneri

Pete Knox

Scott Rogers

Dane Butler

Teresa Kennedy

Paula Farquhar-Stout

Isaac Judd

Kaarin Knudson

Carmel Snyder

Stephanie Jennings

Others:

Odette Oppe

Norton Cabell

Michael Kinnison

Lynn Porter

Amy Cabbage

Jackie Low

Craig Patterson

Laurie Hauber

Karen Saxe

ABSENT

None

I. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Rogers called the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Advisory Committee (AHTF AC) meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. Everyone present introduced themselves.

II. Public Comment

Laurie Hauber, a staff attorney at Lane County Legal Aid, thanked the Committee for all their hard work. She was there on behalf of the Springfield-Eugene Tenant Association (SETA). They worked to educate and advocate for tenants. Ms. Hauber shared that their tenant hotline was their main program. Without any advertising they received 315 calls in ten months. She mentioned that their call volume had doubled since the COVID-19 crisis started. The main topics for the crisis had been tenants wanting to break their lease and late rent information. SETA's goal was to help tenants recover money and stay in their housing. Ms. Hauber stated that they were seeking funding so they could hire more staff.

Dane Butler arrived at 9:15 a.m.

Craig Patterson stated that he had been doing construction since 1971 and had worked as a contractor and a housing development specialist for the State. He emphasized that it was important to recognize trends that are going on concerning housing. He said that homelessness in Lane County had increased by 50% in the last three years. One problem with the issue is that they were not applying the correct solutions. Mr. Patterson noted that Lane County had been creating expensive homes and apartments, which was not helpful. He hoped that the committee would try to create different types of housing. Mr. Patterson voiced that he would be willing to help if they wanted him to.

Mr. Rogers said that Karen Saxe from DevNW had sent in a statement for the Committee to read.

III. Minutes Approval

MOTION: Mr. Barofsky moved, seconded by Mr. Judd, to approve the February 25, 2020, AHTF AC minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Review Proposed Allocation and Recommendation

Mr. Kinnison, the Director of Community Development for the City of Eugene, hoped to have more of a presence at AHTF AC meetings moving forward. He noted that they had a hard task in front of them, made even harder by the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Kinnison stated that the Construction Excise Tax (CET) was very flexible which was helpful in this time of high community need. He emphasized that their funds would continue to accumulate, so they did not have to get all needs met right away.

Mr. Kinnison mentioned that he heard from the group that they felt their work was not done and they needed more time. They paused the meetings and told City Council that more time was needed to complete the task. However, they had to be reasonable and get back to City Council as soon as they can. He informed them that staff would be present to help them.

Ms. Jennings said that they had a lot of information coming to them from the community, City Council, and the committee itself. To help clear things up they would go over all those points. Their original plan was to go in front of City Council in March, but that was pushed back to April because of the pandemic. City Council was still eager to hear their thoughts, so staff went to them with a draft allocation on April 15, 2020.

Ms. Jennings brought up the presentation that was given to City Council. They gave a progress update on CET implementation, AHTF AC activity, and resources dedicated to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. She noted that the fund received \$500,000 from City Council from the general fund and \$300,000 from

CET revenue. They also gave an update on the changing landscape of housing needs based on COVID-19 impacts for renters, homeowners, non-homeless special needs populations, and people experiencing homelessness. Shifts for renters and homeowners included a need for counseling, support accessing benefits, and rent/foreclosure assistance. The special needs populations (including seniors, people with disabilities, and other with underlying health conditions) needed support to protect themselves. Lastly, the homeless population needed access to non-congregate shelter and resources so they may shelter in place safely.

Ms. Jennings shared some potential uses of the AHTF AC resources that could help groups in need. For renter assistance they could provide flexible resources to pay for outreach, counseling, benefit applications, and direct short-term renter assistance. For homeowner assistance they could provide flexible resources to pay for foreclosure prevention counseling, benefit applications, and direct short-term assistance. For both they could work through area nonprofits and award through an RFP. To support residents of existing affordable housing they could provide project-based assistance for rent gaps and help maintain resident housing stability. Ms. Jennings stated that since some residents of affordable housing were unable to pay rents organizations and projects could be destabilized.

Mr. Judd stated that they needed to keep in mind what this committee was originally formed to do. They were tasked with creating permanent programs and structures that would continue to help the community. With that in mind, he felt like they needed to keep ongoing issues at the front of their mind. Mr. Judd was unsure if the AHTF AC was the best place for some of the issues that were brought up. Ms. Jennings agreed that in the beginning the focus of CET was on production. However, one of the benefits of CET was that it was flexible and could be used to respond to community need quickly.

Ms. Knudson thanked staff for all their hard work and keeping the committee updated. She wanted them to stay realistic about what the funds could do and how they could spread them out the best. Ms. Knudson thought it was critical that City Council gave them funding from the general fund for two years. It clarified the money as a trust fund with sustainability. She stated that the City Council funds, and CET gave them stability moving forward with their work. Ms. Knudson believed that they should help organizations that were offering services to those in need. If organizations came to them during the RFP but they were not able to give them money, she hoped they would direct them towards other possible funding. She stated that they needed to prioritize making resources available to the community. Ms. Jennings stated that at a staff level whenever City Council made a formal motion their instructions were very clear. City Council had been clear that the vast majority of the AHTF AC funding should go towards renter and homeowner assistance. However, City Council was interested in the feedback and community need. The AHTF AC was tasked with how to best follow their guidelines and community needs. There were some federal funds that could help with that (HOME, Community Development Block Grant [CDBG]) but neither of them were flexible. Since gaps were left with those funding sources, CET became the answer to those problems. Mr. Kinnison stated that staff took City Council motions seriously and passed that information down to their committees. He said that if this committee felt strongly about something and were all in agreement then it might be okay to go against City Council guidelines. Mr. Kinnison emphasized that they should not ignore what City Council said blatantly.

Ms. Pishioneri was confused on what they needed their committee needed to do. Staff and Mayor Vinis had emphasized that the funds should be used to keep people housed. She believed that they needed to stabilize those experiencing homelessness. It was a huge community concern and something that they could do with CET. Ms. Pishioneri noted that City Council passed CET, but it was AHTF AC's job to represent the community.

Mr. Barofsky noted that they were in uncharted territory and that staff was putting forward their best effort in balancing both City Council and the community. He said that emerging community need went to City Council and that the committee's job was to look at long term need. The committee had heard from both staff and other communities that the CET fund could bring long term success and future funding. Mr. Barofsky hoped that they could get more flexibility from City Council moving forward. He was concerned about giving one-time funds to organizations because that would not be sustainable. Ms. Pishioneri voiced that while the crisis itself was short term, the impact of it was indicative of the issues that they were already trying to solve. She noted that there was no hotline for tenants outside of SETA and that they could work on fixing that.

Ms. Knudson stated that they should aim for their work and opportunities to clarify their list of values and expectations. She did not think that they should talk about the requirements they had for the requests for proposals (RFP) that would come in front of them. Ms. Knudson believed that anything that would be brought to them would be worthy of being funded. They needed to focus on if an application was the best use of their funds, and if not then they should connect them with other funding. She thought that they needed to look back at their first meeting when they talked about the best and worst outcomes of the committee. Ms. Knudson wanted to know more about potential funding sources that they could send agencies to if they did not get funded through their RFP.

Ms. Snyder stated that they needed to remember why the CET was created: to produce more affordable housing for people. She said that the COVID-19 crisis would be better if people had a home to stay in. They needed to ensure the thoughtfulness of the money they had been allotted and think long term. Ms. Snyder said that they should not zone in on the crisis because it would end at some point.

Mr. Judd clarified that long-term housing did not mean that they needed to be traditional housing. He thought they should create homes for all income levels, similar to what Craig Patterson mentioned earlier. By creating female campsites, smaller housing, and other similar structures, they would be opening doors for more people.

Ms. Farquhar-Stout thanked the City for their quick response to the crisis. She had noticed portable sinks, and toilets around the Eugene area. Ms. Farquhar-Stout voiced that they needed to help people get into better housing. She said that the shelters they had were not meeting the guidelines for the COVID-19 crisis. She emphasized that if the unhoused population grew, they would have a new issue to deal with.

Mr. Knox noted that the current situation would take a while to fix. Data showed that those at the bottom of the community were being impacted the most. He stated that the CET was a small amount of money and could only help a finite amount of people at the time. Mr. Knox emphasized that the fund was supposed to create long term support in the community. He stated that they should keep that in mind when addressing current issues.

Mr. Rogers agreed that the fund was supposed to set up long term programs but thought they should be flexible with it since they were entering a tough time. He said that they should go to City Council with an emergency recommendation. Mr. Rogers believed that staff knew what was best and that they should follow their lead.

Ms. Jennings said that in the past they had had resources available to develop housing, but the gaps were in providing assistance. Eugene was made up of 50% renters, so they needed to have supports for that group. She mentioned that in terms of leverage they had many resources coming in but that it was hard to fit them together, which is something that CET could help with. Ms. Jennings said that providing rent assistance was not an immediate reaction to COVID-19, since the Renters Protection Committee (RPC)

had brought that recommendation to them months earlier. She emphasized that it was possible to do both assistance and development with CET. As the fund grew over the years, they would be able to develop more housing, so it might be good to focus on rent assistance.

Ms. Snyder disagreed with what Ms. Jennings had said about the purpose of CET. She said that the 2020 Consolidated Plan underlined the need to create more housing. Ms. Jennings told her that as staff they had to bring community and City Council ideas to the AHTF AC, so all sides were being seen. Mr. Kinnison did not hear a consensus from the group on what direction they wanted to go. They would have to get on the same page before they were able to move forward.

Mr. Barofsky said that staff had done an amazing job developing housing and they had to go in front of City Council to report since AHTF AC was no longer meeting. He thought it might be a good idea to recognize the current need for rent assistance and change the amount of money they would give close to a fifty-fifty split between assistance and development. Mr. Barofsky said that they needed to put the best uses of the money first. He also thought that they had not had time to reflect as a group on the information that had been given to them by other communities and organizations. Ms. Knudson agreed that it would be nice to have time to talk amongst each other about what they had learned. She also said that they had not even had any proposals brought to them to not agree on and thought they should get started on that before deciding they cannot agree. Ms. Pishioneri said that they needed to at least create a decision process for the RFP that worked for everyone.

V. Next Steps

Mr. Kinnison wanted to know what people thought would be helpful to them moving forward. He said that staff could arrange for a facilitated discussion to help move the committee forward and get them on the same page.

Ms. Farquhar-Stout thought it would be good to pause at that time since Oregon was on track. She thought they should spend some of the funds and hold on the rest. They needed to watch out for people that were being pushed out of housing as working to get people into housing.

Mr. Rogers thought that a facilitated discussion would be helpful. He noted that they should also recommend an emergency allocation. Ms. Snyder agreed that a facilitated discussion was needed. She wanted to move on to discuss proposals and information they had received.

Mr. Judd thought they would benefit from creating a loose framework that everyone agreed upon regarding proposals. Currently he felt that they were all over the place and that creating criteria would bring them together.

Mr. Kinnison thought it would be a good idea to identify a sub-committee for staff to work with on structuring that criteria and process. Ms. Knudson, Mr. Judd, Mr. Knox, and Ms. Farquhar-Stout volunteered to be on that sub-committee. Mr. Kinnison asked when the next AHTF AC was. Ms. Kennedy said it was on June 18, 2020. Mr. Kinnison voiced that they should have the sub-committee up and running before that meeting if possible. Mr. Barofsky asked when City Council wanted to hear from them. Mr. Kinnison replied that they would give an update to City Council after this meeting and keep them updated as they moved forward. He believed that they would be understanding.

Ms. Knudson asked if members of the committee could get calendar invites with meeting materials attached so it is easier to remember and get into the virtual meeting. Ms. Kennedy told her that they could do that, but they had had issues with the event getting cancelled by members when they declined meetings in the past.

Ms. Jennings reminded everyone that the individual perspectives people bring to the committee are important. Mr. Barofsky had served on a couple other committees, boards, and commissions in the City, so it might be good to have him talk about what it will be like. She noted that making an allocation did not mean that all the money given had to be spent in the RFP. It was just a general outline so that they could get to the RFP.

VI. Adjournment

Mr. Rogers adjourned the meeting at 10:51 a.m.

(Minutes recorded by Lydia Dysart)

DRAFT