



## Whatcom County Housing Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

**Meeting Date/Time/Location:** August 12, 2021 8:30 AM to 10:00 AM – Virtual Meeting

**WCHAC Members Present:** Karen Burke, Hadrian Starr, Brien Thane, Deanna Wildermuth, Teri Bryant, Kyle Christensen, Samya Lutz, Erika Lautenbach, Ashley Thomasson, Marc Walker

**WCHAC Members Absent:** Michael Jones, Dean Fearing, Tara Sundin, Diana Phair, Satpal Sidhu

**Whatcom Co. Health Dept. Staff/Guests:** Chris D’Onofrio, Barbara Johnson-Vinna, Ann Beck, Ashley Geleyense, Adrienne Solenberger, Max Benson

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action/Who
<b>A. Call to order, introductions</b>	Introductions commenced and quorum present.	<b>Brien</b>
<b>B. Minutes Approval</b> June 2021 Minutes Approval	Samya moved that the minutes from the June meeting be approved. Deanna seconded the motion. The committee voted and the motion passed. Erika was not present for the vote.	<b>Ayes: 9 Abstain: 0 Motion Passed</b>
<b>C. Agenda Review</b>	Chris asked Samya to give an overview of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) process as an addition to the first agenda item.	<b>Brien</b>
<b>D. Reports/Discussion</b>  1. Forest & Laurel Senior Housing Project	Adrienne Solenberger of Opportunity Council presented an overview of the Forest & Laurel Senior Housing and Childcare/Early Learning Facility development project. When completed, there will be approximately 58 units of affordable housing for people 55 and up. They are planning for half of the units to be affordable for households earning 30% Area Median Income (AMI) and below, and the other half at 50% AMI or below. They additionally plan for 10% of units set aside for people who are exiting homelessness, 8 aging and long-term support units, and 20% of units for people with disabilities. A provider has not yet been chosen to manage the childcare program. Max Benson of Community Frameworks described the funds awarded, and funds that will be requested for this development project. Adrienne and Max answered questions from the committee.  Samya reviewed the LIHTC process with the committee. The WA State Housing Finance Commission approved a pilot program related to the 5-county (Whatcom Snohomish, Pierce, Clark, and Spokane) Metro Pool 9% LIHTC	<b>Adrienne Solenberger</b>  <b>Max Benson</b>  <b>Samya</b>



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	<p>allocation. As part of that adopted process, each of the 5 Metro Pool counties must select one priority project per year, which is submitted to the Commission. In Whatcom County, a subcommittee called the Affordable Housing Planning Group (AHPG) meets regularly to collaborate on the pipeline of projects. The AHPG has identified The Forest &amp; Laurel Senior Housing Project as this years' priority project to recommend to this committee. Samya reviewed additional changes to the process that this committee recommended to the Commission.</p> <p>Samya moved that the committee designate the Laurel &amp; Forest project forward as the 2022 Whatcom 9% LIHTC priority project. Karen seconded the motion. The committee voted and the motion passed. Teri abstained.</p>	<p><b>Ayes: 9 Abstain: 1 Motion Passed</b></p>
2. 1590, 1406, and Affordable Housing Development Updates	Chris gave an update on 1406 and 1590 affordable housing funds. The County is working with the AHPG made up of housing developers and services providers so there is as much transparency as possible about upcoming projects. Chris will send out framework for prioritization of local affordable housing funding to committee members to review and provide feedback as it was not included in the meeting packet.	Chris
3. Funding Overview Charts	<p>To follow up on a request from committee members in June, Chris put together a simple overview of how County housing program funds are being distributed among five main categories: case management, interim housing (includes emergency, transitional, night by night, special population shelters), rental assistance, permanent supportive housing, and system support, a miscellaneous category including the Whatcom Homeless Service Center operations. Emergency rental assistance was not included in this overview.</p> <p>The County will be applying for new grant under the Consolidated Homeless Grant totaling \$1.2M which can be used for non-congregate emergency shelter (motel rooms), and rapid rehousing and associated services. Chris answered questions and clarified how has funding changed over the last few years.</p>	Chris
4. Eviction Prevention Efforts	Ann provided an update about eviction prevention efforts. There is a significant amount of money available to pay arrears and current/future rent. There will be a press release once eviction prevention partners have all the information surrounding Senate Bill 5160. Opportunity Council, Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center, and LAW Advocates are partners providing eviction prevention assistance.	Ann

**WHATCOM COUNTY**  
Health Department



**Erika Lautenbach, Director**  
**Greg Stern, M.D., Health Officer**

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5. Winter Shelter Conversations	Ann is in conversations with facilities/partners in the community regarding smaller specialty shelters and family spaces for the winter. There are no contracts in place as of yet. The COVID surge is concerning when looking at whether organizations will want to participate.	<b>Ann</b>
6. City of Bellingham Update	Gardenview tiny house village, located at 1399 Woburn St, is on track to open in October. Additionally, Samya shared that Anne Deacon was asked to present the Homeless Strategies Workgroup recommendations progress one more time in early September before she retires.	<b>Samya</b>
7. Whatcom Homeless Service Center Update	The Point-In-Time Count Report was published in July. More individuals and households were counted compared to last year; it is concerning this was the case during an eviction moratorium.	<b>Teri</b>
<b>E. Public Comment</b>	<p>Samya shared that Lydia Place Heart House and Mercy Housing's Barkley Family Housing will be hosting ground breaking celebrations as development is starting.</p> <p>Erika shared that the COVID Community Health Impact Assessment will be presented throughout the county and at all city councils.</p>	<p><b>Samya</b></p> <p><b>Erika</b></p>
<b>F. ADJOURN</b>	Meeting was adjourned at 9:35.	<b>Brien</b>
<b>NEXT MEETING</b>	<p><b>Next regular meeting October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021, 8:30 – 10:00 a.m.</b></p> <p><b><u>VIRTUAL</u></b></p>	