

Rhode Island Housing Resources Commission  
Minutes of December 10, 2010  
Quarterly Meeting



Commissioners & Designees:

Cola, Jeanne – Chair

Aaronson, Roberta Hazen  
Bodington, Susan  
Botts, Christopher  
DeLuca, William  
Dennehy, Peter  
Fenton, William  
Hammarstrom, David  
Hannifan, Chris  
Kiesel, Marilyn  
Novas, Ana  
Raymond, Joseph

Reed, James  
Rodrigues, Melody (Rep. Corrine Russo)  
Ryczek, James  
Sekeres, Bonnie  
Stenning, Craig  
Tierney, Terence  
Valliere, Albert  
Vanderslice, Robert (Rep. Ana Novais)  
Zaslow, Carrie

Staff:

Tondra, Michael  
De Los Santos, Doris  
Frumerie, Caitlin  
Kue, Simon

Marshall, Karen  
Neirinckx, Ray  
Price, Darlene  
Vittorioso, Dawn

## 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Jeanne Cola, Chair at 8:33 a.m.

## 2. Approval of September 17, 2010 Minutes

Michael Tondra noted a correction to the date of the last meeting minutes. Mike said that the meeting minutes should state approval from September 17, 2010, should be approval of the May 21, 2010 meeting minutes. James Reed moved acceptance as amended. Craig Stenning seconded. Minutes approved.

## 3. Report of Chair

### **Introduction:**

We have a new representative on the Housing Resources Commission. Jim Reed will be replacing Steve O'Rourke as the representative for Public Housing Association of Rhode Island (President of the Rhode Island Association of Executive Directors for Housing). Jim has been elected PHARI's new President. The HRC would like to thank Mr. O'Rourke for his years of service and dedication to the mission of the HRC.

Joe Raymond (Local Building Official) and Al Valliere (RIBA), who first joined the HRC at the September meeting, were greeted once again.

### **BHRI/NOP:**

The HRC, working in conjunction with Rhode Island Housing, has issued a joint Request for Proposals for this final round of Housing Bond funding. Implementing this combined/joint application improves coordination of funds and makes the application process much less burdensome for applicants. Applications are due mid-January and award recommendations should be available at a subsequent Quarterly meeting of the HRC.

### **Meeting Schedule:**

The tentative meeting schedule for the remainder of FY'11 is as follows:

Friday, March 18, 2011

Friday, May 20, 2011

Generally, all meetings will take place in Conference Room A of the Department of Administration, One Capitol Hill – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Providence, R.I.

#### 4. Budget and Program Report

Michael Tondra began the report by explaining that State agencies were required to submit a proposed budget with significant reductions. At the previous quarterly meeting, this was referenced by Kevin Flynn. The HRC was instructed to account for approximately \$500,000 in cuts. To meet this targeted reduction, the office preliminary proposed a reduction of the State lead funding. The State does have a pending HUD Lead program application. If funded, State resources may be necessary to meet federal matching requirements. The impact of all reductions was summarized in the DOA transition report. When possible, the OHCD will meet with the new administration to assess whether these reductions will be implemented.

An overview of other programs administered by the OHCD was then provided:

**HPRP** - The program has continued to operate, serving over 2,600 persons to date. We hope to continue the relationship established with the "Entitlement" communities in implementation of HEARTH Act funding for HPRP-type activities.

**CDBG** - Contracts have been signed and programs are underway relative to the PY'2010 CDBG. The State is holding a public hearing relative to its PY'2011 Action Plan, which describes the Method of Distribution for CPD funding, on December 15th at 3:30pm in the DOA building.

**CDBG-Disaster Recovery** - A new employee, Andrew Kostrzewa, transferred from the State Energy office, has been working on a draft plan for the distribution of approximately \$9M allocated to the State for Disaster Recovery. Communities have submitted general lists of activities needed for disaster recovery. These submissions have been cumulated in developing the State's overall plan. This plan will be posted for public comment mid-December and will then be submitted to HUD by the end of the year.

**NSP** - NSP1 activities continue. The State has begun drafting its NSP3 program design. The allocation of \$5M, which is much less than allocated in NSP1 (\$20M) and program regulations are more explicit in many areas. The draft distribution plan will be available for comment next week. Applications will be submitted as part of the "joint application" mentioned by Jeanne earlier.

**HEARTH** - The State is still awaiting HEARTH Act regulations to be published. OHCD participated in the national HEARTH conference and is working with many stakeholders in preliminary planning related to this homeless funding resource.

In Conclusion of the budget report, Mike said the agenda is light; therefore, the OHCD staff will provide a brief year-end summary of accomplishments and hot topics. At this time, Mike asked if anyone had any comments or questions. There being no comments or questions, Mike introduced Simon Kue.

## 5. Reports of the Offices

### *Office of Planning and Operations – Simon Kue*

#### *Policy and Planning*

Simon reported that he continues to assist the Division of Planning with the five-year Comprehensive Planning review updates that have been submitted by the cities and towns. The review is limited to the Housing Elements of the State Guide Plan.

Next, Simon explained his role in the Intergovernmental Review process. Simon assists the Division of Planning with proposed projects received from cities and towns seeking federal assistance to meet their Catalog of Domestic Federal Assistance (CDFA) intergovernmental review requirement. Staff review is limited to the Housing Elements of the State Guide Plan.

#### *Management and Budget*

Simon then explained that he provides grant management support for five programs (CHF, NOP, BHRI, HPRP, Lead) with total grant commitments over \$19.6M. He then summarized the grants as follows:

- **FY11 Consolidated Homeless Program** consisted of funding from HRC, Title XX and Emergency Shelter Grant Program. A total annual commitment of \$3M to support 27 homeless shelters and services throughout the State. As of December 9, 2010, \$658,874 (21%) of CHF funds has been paid to homeless providers.
- **Neighborhood Opportunities Program (NOP)** – \$1.5M is allocated for FY11.
- **Building Homes RI** – The FY11 \$12.45M affordable housing bond funds will be available in Spring 2011.
- **Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program** \$1.8M is available for FY11. OHCD awarded grants to 11 agencies, which will provide homeless prevention services and housing assistance for individuals and families.

At this time, Simon asked if anyone had any questions or comments. There being none, Jeanne thanked Simon for his report and introduced Ray Neirinckx. Ray then delivered the following:

### *Offices of Community Development and Technical Assistance and Homeownership – Ray Neirinckx*

#### *Office of Community Development and Technical Assistance:*

Ray reported that the Building Homes Rhode Island (BHRI) Bond Program year-three was successfully completed. Ray then said that year four is a joint RFP with RI Housing and the applications are due back by January 14, 2011; which is expected to be the last round of BHRI bond that was voted in 2006.

Ray said that Housing Works RI hired a consultant to write a report demonstrating the economic impact that BHRI has had on the State's economy. Ray noted that they did a phenomenal job with the report and then said he plans to use the report for future bonds.

Ray reported that he worked with Resident Owned Communities (ROC) USA and a certified technical assistance provider, Cooperative Development Institute (CDI), from Western Massachusetts, to facilitate discussions on mobile home park conversions. ROC will assist residents with business planning, resident support, and financing opportunities. The plan is to convert parks to resident ownership. Ray then said that there are 49 licensed mobile park homes (3,500 units) within the state; most are aging infrastructures.

Next, he reported that he continues to work with Making Connections (MC) in Providence. MC continues to work on Family Economic Success initiative in the City of Providence. This initiative looks at areas of asset building, workforce development and housing activity.

Ray also worked with United Way RI on their Financial Stability Program. This program provides funding for organizations looking at asset building strategies. This effort resulted in funding for groups that the OHCD supported in conjunction to neighborhood development activities. The strategy initiative is to encourage the public with financial literacy and asset building within low to moderate income communities throughout the state.

***Office of Homeownership:***

Ray explained that much of his time is spent with homeowners that are at risk of foreclosure and are looking to seek direct assistance. He then said he received five new cases in one day; statistics and data are not yet available for this year. Ray said he is confident that this year's statistics will exceed last year's statistics; 155 homeowners assisted in 2009. This number does not include tenant assistance within foreclosed properties. Ray said that he does not keep track of tenant assisted cases. Additionally, Ray said that he is in the process of trying to develop policy roles to address the foreclosure crisis within the state.

Next, Ray reported that he developed a partnership with National Community Stabilization Trust (NST). NST provides a list of foreclosed properties that can be made available to non-profit organizations. Once the report is received, it is then forwarded to Community Action Organizations throughout the state.

Ray said that he, recently, partnered with Chase Mortgage Company (CMC). Ray explained that CMC has an initiative which provides foreclosed homes that have been on the housing market for 90 days to a non-profit program. CMC designates one agency per year within the state. The designated agency then has the ability to provide substantial discounts on homes or they have the ability to donate the homes. Ray said that in 2010, Pawtucket Citizens Development Corporation RI acquired a multi-family property in Pawtucket at a discounted rate. He then said that Community Works RI also acquired a single-family home in the Elmwood section at a discounted rate. Ray then announced that with his continued efforts with CMC, a multi-family property was donated in Woonsocket to Neighborhoods Blackstone River Valley.

Ray continues to work with the Stabilizing Urban Neighborhoods (SUN) Program. Ray explained that this is a financing program that works with both existing owners with the intent to purchase the property at a discounted rate prior to foreclosure. This program stabilizes the family and prevents them from becoming homeless.

Lastly, Ray indicated that despite the 90-day Eviction Regulation that was passed in May, 2009, Realtors and Foreclosure Attorneys continue violate the law and evict homeowners prior to the 90<sup>th</sup> day. Ray reported that he has been working diligently with Fannie Mae to investigate this

issue. He then said that he asked Fannie Mae to send eviction regulation reminder letters to Realtors and Foreclosure Attorneys.

After Ray concluded his report, Jeanne asked Susan Bodington to take a moment to explain the Hardest Hit Funding that is open statewide. Susan explained that because of all the supporting documentation that is required to assist individuals, the process is slow. She then explained that programs are set up with local and national financial institutions that are performing loan modifications. Additional funding services are offered to individuals that are unemployed and are unable to make their mortgage payment. Less documentation is required for this process; therefore, the process proceeds quickly. Susan then said that there are over fifty counselors trained and certified that are taking the applications. She then noted that there are fewer people than originally anticipated that have asked for assistance.

At this time, Joe Raymond said that from time-to-time, he receives telephone calls from homeowners seeking assistance. He then asked Susan where he should direct the calls. Susan said that he can refer the callers to the Hardest Hit Fund website (<http://www.hhfri.org/>) which has information about their programs. Susan then said that the callers are usually told to seek assistance from their lenders prior to seeking the State's assistance. However, if the lender is a national lender, then the individual should seek assistance from a HUD agency.

Jim Reed asked Susan if the calls received were from individuals that are no longer receiving unemployment benefits. In response, Susan said it was too soon to determine. Jim then asked if the funding was exclusive to homeowners seeking assistance. In response, Susan said yes, at this time, it is for homeowners only.

Susan asked if anyone had any further questions. Joe Raymond asked Ray about the contents of the Building Homes RI report. Ray said that the annual report has been published on the Housing Works RI website (<http://www.housingworksri.org/>). Mike Tondra then said that the State Housing Funding group meets on a regular basis to discuss the challenges that the state faces with the expiration of the bond issuance and they are seeking alternate funding resources. Additionally, Mike said that the report also indicates the impacts that the bond issuance and expiration has had on the housing market, economy and employment. Jeanne Cola said that over 800 units were developed with the bond issuance in the State of RI. Mike mentioned that he has been communicating with the incoming Administration about funding for Housing.

Marilyn Kiesel told Ray that she would like to coordinate efforts to educate local Realtors about the 90-day Eviction Regulation. Ray thanked Marilyn and then advised her that this information was provided to RI Realtor website. Chris Hannifan said that she works with the RI Realtors Association and she will provide feedback to them during the spring classes.

There being no further questions, Jeanne thanked Ray for his report and introduced Doris De Los Santos. Doris then delivered the following:

- **Office of Healthy Housing – Doris De Los Santos**

Doris began by explaining that she is engaged in the following activities:

- Promote a healthy housing agenda by working with different stakeholders and initiatives.
- Participate in the National Dialogue on Green and Healthy Homes. Doris then explained that the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) and the National Academy of Public Administration are partnering on a new online dialogue to examine ideas and leading practices for integrating health, safety, energy efficiency and weatherization interventions in low-to-moderate income homes. Doris then said that the purpose of this dialogue is to identify ways to overcome the barriers that prevent children, families, and communities from having healthy, safe, and energy efficient housing.
- Participate in regional efforts sponsored by the Asthma Regional Council of New England to address healthy homes using a holistic, coordinated approach to promote healthier housing across New England. Doris said that the project includes goals such as conducting a regional needs assessment, the development and delivery of healthy homes training, and the creation of specialized working sub-groups.
- Collaborate with the RI Healthy Housing Collaborative initiative.
- Collaborate with the City of Providence and the RI Foundation in the development and implementation of the Providence Green and Healthy Homes.
- Provide technical assistance to the Building Commission to ensure inclusion of the LHM Standards in the RI Property Maintenance Code.
- Coordinate with the DOH and Childhood Lead Action Project meetings with the City of Providence to advise and recommend a proper mechanism to include the LHM compliance into the Minimum Housing Inspector's checklist.
- Collaborate with the DOH in the planning and development of the Annual RI Healthy Housing Conference.
- Collaborate with the Attorney General's office and the Healthy Kids Collaborative in the implementation of the programs created with the DUPONT funds.
- Provide technical support to the Healthy Kids Collaborative sub grantees to increase the public participation in their programs, including direct outreach and media outlets.
- Assist the Providence Schools Wellness Committee in developing a policy, goals and expectations relative to wellness, including nutrition guidelines and education for their student population.
- The OHH continues being responsive to issues related to quality control for all programmatic areas of the office such as inspection protocol and trainer certification.
- Receive and process Presumptive Compliance and Affidavits of Visual Inspection applications.
- Monitor the new filling requirements for lead inspectors.
- Provide technical assistance to Lead Inspectors
- The OHH continued distributing the booklets/fact sheets on the Lead Hazard Mitigation Act and other lead related information to landlords and tenants.

- In coordination with the DOH, continue the operations of the Lead Hotline 222 – LEAD (5323)
- Monitor and adjudicate the State Lead Hazard Reduction Program, which is administered by RI Housing. Doris said that since 1999 the office has provided a total of \$17,019,097 to the State Lead Hazard Reduction program administered through Rhode Island Housing to make 1,470 units lead safe.
- Doris explained that as of December 1, 2010, the OHH issued 5,114 Certificates of Conformance and approximately 1,500 Presumptive Compliance certifications. Since 2005, a total of 29,026 Presumptive Compliance certificates have been issued and 6,400 Presumptive Compliance certifications.
- Approximately 26,500 property owners have been trained in lead mitigation protocols and lead safe work practices through the Lead Hazard Awareness Seminar since 2005.

Doris concluded and asked if anyone had any questions or comments. Roberta Aaronson asked when she could expect the Public Hearing notice for changes to the Lead Hazard Mitigation regulations. In response, Doris said that she is working with Simon and they will be available in the near future. There being no further questions Jeanne thanked Doris for her report and introduced Darlene Price. Darlene then delivered the following:

- **Office of Homelessness – Darlene Price**

The Office of Homelessness accomplishes its planning and policy responsibilities through the newly organized Coordinating Committee, which is chaired by Susan Bodington. The Coordination Committee oversees the work of the following committees: Continuum of Care (assist Rhode Island Housing in drafting the Exhibit 1 of the McKinney Vento application that is requesting almost \$5M this year), Emergency Shelter Task Force (responsible for preparing the Winter Shelter Plan for submission to the Governor), Homeless Employment & Training, External Review Committee (intercedes on client and provider grievances), and two HMIS Committees; Steering Committee and the HMIS Quality Data and Evaluation. Additionally, our office is involved with Project Homeless Connect. The event is scheduled for January 2011. A Point in Time Count Survey, a requirement of HUD, will be conducted at the event.

Darlene also announced that she is involved with the following fund distribution committees: RI Housing Thresholds Program, RI Department of Education McKinney Vento Homeless Education, and United Way Emergency Food & Shelter Board. Darlene said that as a member, she reminds the committees the importance of funding shelter programs and she advises them of funding allocations, membership recruitment, nominations, and final determinations for funding.

Next, Darlene discussed the annual Fund Distribution Committee and Consolidated Homeless Fund allocations in which she continues to assist. FY2011, the committee allocated over \$3M to 27 agencies that represented a variety of services for the homeless. The following services were provided: 90-Day, meal sites, domestic violence, family shelter, apartments for couples and families, long-term shelter, social services, case management, unisex large shelters, monthly bus pass program and winter shelters. Darlene then said that Consolidated Homeless Funding (CHF)

receives a combination of federal and state resources; which include the Emergency Shelter Grant, Title XX Social Services Block Grant, and the HRC Homeless Program budget.

Lastly, Darlene said that portions of the CHF are allocated to winter shelter programs prior to the winter season. Due to budget restraints, this year four shelter sites were opened. However, the fund only represents a portion of the operating budget for the four shelters. Darlene then explained that the Emergency Shelter Task Force organizes and funds the annual Winter Shelter Plans. The Plans are then submitted to the Governor's office; which outlines the proposed number of winter shelter beds and the actual number of shelters that are opened. Additionally, the Plan includes a strategic plan and a forecast of the funds necessary to assist in the opening of additional sites to immediately house people for the winter. The Emergency Shelter Task Force meets monthly to monitor and assess shelter capacity and needs.

Jeanne thanked Darlene for her report and asked if anyone had any comments or questions. David Hammarstrom asked Darlene what will be done with the Point in Time Count Survey results. Darlene explained that the information will allow the state to plan for homeless shelters that will be needed during the winter months. Mike then said that the information will also indicate the shelters that are at or over capacity. Darlene also added the data will also be used as a comparison against other states.

There being no further questions, Jeanne asked Mike to deliver the next agenda item.

## 6. Executive/Coordinating Committee – Approval of HRC – RIH MOA

Approval of HRC - RIH Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) – The agencies have not had an opportunity to discuss the RI Housing and HRC MOA. The Commission was asked to defer this discussion to a subsequent quarterly meeting.

For the benefit of new Commissioners, Jeanne asked Mike to explain the MOA. Mike then said that the HRC established in legislation requires that a Housing Resources Agency, Coordinating Committee be established. The committee shall develop and implement a memorandum of agreement describe the relationship between the HRC and the RIH and shall define which programs of federal assistance will be applied for on behalf of the State by each party. Some federal regulations, such as HEARTH, are still pending; therefore, decisions cannot be made at this time.

## 7. Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

As there were no further comments, the meeting adjourned at 9:46 a.m. The next meeting will be on Friday, March 18, 2011 in conference room A.