



Thursday, October 15, 2009 at 10 am CST
Membership Meeting
Southside Baptist Church, Birmingham

Marcie Porter, Chair

LIHCA Board Members in Attendance: Marcie Porter, Pam Dorr, Paul Carruthers, Rusty Bennett, Rayanthnee Patterson, Mary Jones, Karen McCauley, Jim Fenstermaker, Gary Edwards

LIHCA Board members Absent: Acquanetta Knight, Randy Russell, Ron Gilbert (Proxy: Marcie Porter), Bill Tilly, Jennifer Clarke, Greg Carlson

LIHCA Members in Attendance: Marion Johnson (Department of Mental Health); Deisha Rosser (Pathways); Patricia Burch (Greater Birmingham Habitat for Humanity); Renee Goodwin (Family Sunshine Center); Dave Park (AIDS Alabama); Amanda Shipp (AIDS Alabama); Mande Ellison-Weed (Unity Wellness Center); Deborah Everson (First Light); Sherry Webb (First Light); Sharon Tolbert (City of Auburn); Sharon Fenstermaker (CSI); Kristina Scott (Alabama Poverty Project); Laura Jones (Bridge Ministries); Dan Kessler (Independent Living Resources); Kitty Chance (Wet Stone, LLC); Lila Hackett (Fair Housing Center); Myrtle Hawkins (Housing Authority of Birmingham District); Lynn McKinley Smith (Jefferson County Community Development); LaTarshe Billingsley, Kim Billingsley; Graham Sisson (Governor's Office on Disability)

CSI Staff present: Becky Blalock, Ashley Kerr

Interested Parties: Mel Ann Sullivan, First United Security Bank

Guest: Vann McCloud, USDA Rural Development

Marcie called the meeting to order at 10:05 am and welcome everyone to the meeting. After those present introduced themselves, everyone was invited to offer comments/edits to the minutes from the May 7 Membership meeting.

Motion to Approve Minutes from May 7, 2009 Membership Meeting:

1st: Marion Johnson

2nd: Rayanthnee Patterson

Yes: All

No/Abstention: 0

Marcie presented the 2010 quarterly meeting schedule:

February 18, May 20, July 15, October 21

Motion to Approve 2010 Quarterly Meeting Schedule:

1st: Paul Carruthers

2nd: Karen McCauley

Yes: All

No/Abstention: 0

Marcie solicited ideas from members regarding future educational components to LIHCA meetings. Federal Home Loan Bank's Affordable Housing Program was suggested. Marcie asked members to continue sending LIHCA suggestions for speakers as well as free locations where LIHCA could have meetings.

Policy Committee

Rusty Bennett, Chair, offered the report for the Policy Committee. The committee met recently, and Representative Patricia Todd (D- Birmingham) was on the call to offer an update on the legislation for the Housing Trust Fund. Rep. Todd shared that since 2010 is an election year, past experience tells us that during an election year, representatives and senators are reluctant to support a bill that is revenue-generating. Because of this, the bill will create enabling legislation which authorizes the formation of a Housing Trust Fund, but does not have any funding attached to it. Rep. Todd will be the sole sponsor of the bill.

Rep. Todd is planning a meeting between Alabama Arise, LIHCA, and the Alabama Association of Habitat Affiliates to plan strategy for supporting this legislation during the 2010 legislative session, which begins January 12.

Dan Kessler from Independent Living Resources encouraged the Policy Committee to consider encouraging the use of universal design to the legislation. He added that Section 504, which is the federal law protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education, and the Fair Housing Act fall short in caring for those with disabilities.

The HTF Bill (HB726) is still on LIHCA's website for everyone to review.

LIHCA will be creating talking points for all LIHCA members to use as they talk to their colleagues about the legislation.

The creation of a housing trust fund was also approved as one of Alabama Arise's legislative priorities at their annual meeting.

Rusty, Ron Gilbert, Gary Edwards, Greg Carlson and Becky Blalock will be traveling next week to Jackson to meet with other advocates from southeastern states who are working for housing trust funds in their own states. This meeting is convened by the Center for Community Change, and funded by The Home Depot Foundation.

2010 Policy Priorities

In the past, LIHCA members have been given the opportunity to endorse the policy priorities as established by the Policy Committee and Board of Directors.

- 1) Housing Trust Fund
- 2) Need Assessment

Rusty discussed the need for LIHCA to conduct a statewide needs assessment, but the importance of not tying it to the housing trust fund conversation. (Note: It would be difficult to advocate for a HTF if there is a perception that we don't have the documented proof of need.) LIHCA members will be sent a survey regarding needs that they have seen among their clients to help the policy committee shape the needs assessment. The needs assessment will take a lesser priority until after the legislative session.

- 3) Review access to federal funding
 - a. Federal Home Loan Bank – Affordable Housing Program
 - b. HOME
 - c. CHDO

These funding sources are difficult for nonprofits to access, and makes meeting the housing needs of very low income folks even more challenging. A review of these sources will reveal what changes could be made to make it easier for nonprofits to access these funds. (Currently, HOME funds are married to Low Income Housing Tax Credits, which limits the ability of developers to create smaller developments and still make a profit.)

LIHCA will develop a position paper on this issue to determine in which direction the state needs to move.

Motion to Approve Policy Priorities as Presented:

1st: Karen McCauley

2nd: Paul Carruthers

Yes: All

No/Abstention: 0

Alabama Housing Finance Authority (AHFA) Comment Letter

The Alabama Housing Finance Authority has written its 2010 Action Plans for the HOME program and the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program. The public is allowed to comment on these Action Plans and can do so in writing by Thursday, October 29. LIHCA will write one and will send a draft template to all LIHCA members for them to modify & send on behalf of their own organizations. Even if they don't make the changes requested, the opinions are on the record. Submitted letters are sent to HUD, and if they receive enough letters on a certain topic, they have the ability to request that AHFA address the concerns.

Membership Committee

Jim Fenstermaker, Chair, reported that the membership committee sent out 1100 letters at the beginning of September. As of 10/15, LIHCA has received 20 renewals and 7 new members. If

any LIHCA members have colleagues who might be interested in joining LIHCA, they are encouraged to send their name to Jim Fenstermaker or Becky Blalock.

Currently, LIHCA relies on membership dues to survive. LIHCA has submitted several grant applications, but has not received any yet. LIHCA is currently strengthening its relationships with like-minded advocacy groups, including Greater Birmingham Ministries and Alabama Arise, and will host a meeting in November with Continuum of Care group representatives.

Jim reminded members that organizations can join LIHCA as well as individuals. The more members we have, the stronger our advocacy efforts will be.

Other Business

There was no other business from the Board of Directors or the LIHCA membership.

Motion to Adjourn

1st: Kristina Scott

2nd: Jim Fenstermaker

Yes: All

No/Abstention: 0