

Meeting minutes

Meeting: Metro Housing Oversight
Committee Meeting

Date/time: Wednesday, July 1, 2020, 9 AM – 12 PM

Place: Zoom Virtual Meeting

Purpose: Share an update on the Supportive Housing Services measure, review and receive feedback on evaluating racial equity outcomes, follow up on interim finance report

Attendees

Dr. Steven Holt, Mitch Hornecker, Jenny Lee, Ed McNamara, Steve Rudman, Bandana Shrestha, Andrew Tull, Tia Vonil

Absent

Manuel Castaneda, Serena Cruz, Melissa Erlbaum, Meshia Jones

Metro

Ash Elverfeld, Jes Larson, Valeria McWilliams, Megan Gibb, Elissa Gertler, Brian Kennedy, Patrick Dennis

Facilitators

Allison Brown, Hannah Mills

Note: The meeting was recorded via Zoom and therefore details will be focused mainly on the discussion, with less detail in regards to the presentations.

Welcome and Agenda

Co-chairs Steve Rudman and Jenny Lee welcomed the group and acknowledged the uncertainty of current events. May 6, 2020 minutes were approved.

Public Comment

Allison Brown, facilitator with JLA Public Involvement, opened the floor for public comment. No members of the public submitted comment.

Group Check-In

The co-chairs explained that they would be asking the group to do a round-robin check in related to the current climate and events in Portland and how they relate to the Committee's goals and values. Jenny noted that committee member Dr. Steven Holt volunteered to help guide and facilitate the discussion.

Dr. Holt began by sharing his experiences, past and present, as a Black man and in response to the death of George Floyd. Additionally, he noted that the importance of intentionality of equity is now current in our society with the elevation of the Black Lives Matter movement, including the need to adopt policies, practices, and action that fully addresses the historic injustices of the Black community. Dr. Holt ended his statement by telling a personal story about seeking housing in Oregon and the bias, racist response he received that assumed he was looking for low income housing without more than a single sentence uttered between him and the property manager.

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To introduce the discussion, Dr. Holt shared his optimism for what can be done through the committee and the bond, and asked others to share their thoughts and feelings, as well as the impact the current events have had on them as it relates to their role on the committee. Below is a summary of the responses.

- There was concern about whether the focus on MWESB contractors is beneficial to racial equity goals due to dishonest ownership claims to gain certification.
- Many shared similar experiences as Dr. Holt and the need for checking in on meeting the Committee's racial equity goals.
- Many expressed appreciation for Dr. Holt's comments and the understanding that this is a time to listen to the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities.
- A committee member noted that there seemed to be a shift in the general public toward understanding the existence of systemic injustice.
- A committee member noted the importance of continued advocacy for prevailing wage to address systemic injustice and oppression.
- A committee member shared the experiences he learned from his Black friends since the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests, including the efforts that they go to protect themselves from potential racial bias violence.
- It was noted that the committee needs to consider how systemic injustice prevails in many institutions and how each needs to recognize their connection to address the issue.
- A committee member noted the importance of making tangible changes to address systemic injustice.

Dr. Holt closed the discussion by expressing his appreciation for each of the members leaning into the issue and the need to work on this in a way that considers generational impact.

Supportive Housing Services Measure

Elissa Gertler and Jes Larson, Metro, gave a presentation on the Supportive Housing Measure. The presentation included figures relating to homelessness and racial disparities, the Here Together Coalition framework, and a description of the Supportive Housing Measure. Of the Supportive Housing Measure, the group was informed on:

- Focus on distribution of resources, governance, revenue, distribution of housing, and implementation
- Stakeholder advisory process and engagement opportunities
- Local and regional representation on the future Oversight Committee
- Development of Local Implementation Plans in the fall

The group was given the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. Below is a summary of the discussion.

- It would be potentially beneficial to open implementation partnership to other jurisdictions
- Tying these two measures together might complicate the process for housing production. If these are going to be tied together there needs to be a streamlined approach to make both bonds go further.

Evaluating Racial Equity Outcomes

Valeria McWilliams, Metro, provided context for the conversation on racial equity outcomes, highlighting the main changes: equitable construction contracting and prevailing wage metrics. The group was given the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. Below is a summary of the discussion.

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- It would be helpful if there was an intuitive way to look at the data for workforce and prevailing wage.
- Many jurisdictions are interested in supporting prevailing wage but are unsure of how to achieve it. It would be helpful to explore ways of helping jurisdictions accomplish prevailing wage goals and allowing them to participate while they learn, without letting them off the hook.
 - Valeria responded: *Beaverton developed an internal system to track workforce participation on a project basis, but it requires staff capacity. Beaverton is unable to share the software they developed, but have expressed that they are happy to show the software to other jurisdictions and provide the best practices for implementing a similar system.*
- It's important to have occupancy metrics to ensure multi-room units are not occupied by single individuals.
- To ensure resident diversity, it needs to be considerate of the demographics of the immediate area as well as the region.
- Consider the length of tenancy of different demographics to determine the root cause and help provide opportunities for increased income and mobility out of affordable housing toward homeownership.

Valeria encouraged the group to email her with any further comments and noted that this would not be the last opportunity for them to provide feedback on the racial equity outcomes.

Interim Finance Report

Steve introduced Brian Kennedy and Patrick Dennis, Metro, and explained that they would be available to answer any remaining questions about the Interim Finance Report. Below is a summary of the conversation.

- Considering that interest rates have dropped, is this long term with a fixed rate, or have they changed?
 - Brian responded: *It varies to ensure the safety of the deposited funds.*
- What is the difference between the three categories of expense?
 - Patrick responded: *Site acquisition is related to achieving projects, program administration is higher level (budgeting, etc.) and is not directly related to a project, and Metro oversight is about the meetings related to projects and programs.*
- What are the forecasts for 2021 given COVID-19?
 - Brian responded: *Covid-19 is impacting Metro as a whole with around 70% of the employees being laid off (mainly at visitor venues). At this point we are forecasting that this will continue to impact us until there is an effective treatment. Our other revenue collectors have been impacted, but not as much. We're not allowed to invest funding in anything that loses value so these bonds are protected, and we are saving funds to protect against future uncertainties.*

Committee Business

Valeria gave a brief update on the second quarterly report, highlighting:

- Updated dashboard to reflect approved concept endorsements since the last meeting in May
- Closure of the competitive solicitations for projects

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Additionally, she encouraged committee members to participate in the next review of project concept endorsements in late Summer.

Valeria also noted that Dr. Holt was supposed to disclose a potential conflict of interest at the beginning of the meeting due to his firm being hired by Home Forward on the Dekum Court project but since he left the meeting early, this agenda item will be postponed for the next meeting

Next Steps and Close

Allison noted that the next meeting would take place on November 4, 2020. The co-chairs thanked the Committee. The meeting was adjourned.