CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE
"To be One Community Filled with Opportunity."
Housing Advisory Committee

Housing Advisory Committee (HAC) Minutes
Wednesday, February 21, 2024
12:00 p.m.

Attendees:
- Sunshine Mathon (SM)
- Phil d'Oronzio (PdO)
- Joy Johnson (JJ)
- John Sales (JS)
- Heather Griffith (HG)
- Michael Payne (MP)

Staff Attendees:
- Madelyn Metzler (MM)
- Antoine Williams (AW)
- Alex Ikefuna (AI)

Other Attendees:
- Luis Oyola (LO)

JJ calls the meeting to order at 12:09 pm

1. **Attendance and introductions**
2. **Approval of Minutes**
   MM- There was one correction made to attendees list, HG was omitted in error.
   SM moves to approve, PdO seconds. All are in favor, none are opposed.
3. **Elect a Secretary**
   JJ- This item will be tabled until there are additional committee members to fill vacant seats.
   SM- MM will continue taking minutes in the interim.
4. **Land Bank discussion**
   AW provided a summary of notes (attached to minutes) from the land bank work group and reviewed the timeline of previous land bank efforts from 2017-2023.

   PdO- Thought it would be helpful for newer members of HAC to understand overview of current land bank discussion, then plan to go over work group and city manager expectations, then discuss how to organize the planning and setting up of the land bank.

   HG- How will this vary from what the city already does?

   PdO- This would be a separate entity, but city's ownership or title status will depend on what council approves.

   SM- Who are HAC members and PC members on working group?

   PdO- City staff in working group is City Attorney, Jacob Stroman (JS); City Manager, Sam Sanders (SS); and AW. Planning Commission member is Lyle Solla-Yates and the HAC member is PdO. The group was put into place in January 2024 to get this discussion moved froward and ensure we stay focused and keep momentum. This effort has stalled and been disorganized in the past, the hope is that this time it moves forward coherently.

   JJ- Can you remind us of what got in the middle of moving this forward before?

SM- In my perspective, there was language drafted that was perceived as the city being able to undermine CRHA's redevelopment efforts. That's how it ended up being handed off to HAC. There were differing opinions between Staff and HAC on how it should be written and administered, and City Council did not want to come in the middle. Then there were staff shortages and COVID that impacted the ability to move forward.

PdO- We did come to agreements on some of those points, but the conversation has changed as has the ordinance.

JJ- Is it possible to get meeting minutes from that time?

SM- AW did pull together those minutes, so we can share again.

SM- I understand the point of the working group is to ensure there is a sense of urgency and that it doesn't fall through the cracks, but it feels a bit disjointed to have only one HAC member in the group. Could it become a working group of HAC and invite the other members to attend?

PdO- That was not really the conception. The group should be focused more on internal processes and provide gut checks. Maybe working group is a misnomer. SS made clear that all land bank matter decision making should come from HAC.

JJ- And the gut checks are?

PdO- The City Attorney will be involved throughout to make sure we don't get to far down the road with any concepts that aren't workable from a legal standpoint. Ultimately the attorney will write the ordinance, but HAC will determine what should go into it. SS is there to ensure that any staff involvement that needs to occur will happen. The working group is there for speed and to expedite anything that is needed from city staff. SS's expectation is to have something together by summer, at least some tentative conclusions. One decision is whether the Land Bank will be and independent entity or a subsidiary of the city for both control purposes and making it a dynamic. JS wanted to make sure it's clear what the lines are between PHA and Land Trust and the City.

AW- I did not walk away with that conclusion. My understanding was the point was to ensure there is forward momentum and, for the public's benefit, SS will be responsible for reporting out from the working group.

MP- I think we should remain open as to whether it is a fully separate entity or an arm of the city.

PdO- Right, these are the types of decision HAC will need to discuss.

JJ- Can we get a date for what SS means by the summer? We need a date to be able to plan for.

AW- My interpretation is that he is looking for OCS staff to engage HAC on policy and pick up where the draft left off and that HAC's recommendations will also help determine the timeline.

JJ- Ok then we need to be sure that we determine some dates so that we can make this deadline.

SM- We have a document that we can dust off that is 80 to 90 percent there. In looking at the questions in AW's document, these are key for us to discuss to make our recommendations. I'm trying to wrap my head around a path forward. Should this go to the policy subcommittee of HAC as it has in the past? We will need to go through these questions substantively. Should we try to tackle one or two per meeting?

AW- I think that's what we need to get back to City Manager with to determine a timeline.

JJ- We are working with a small group; how often can we meet without spreading ourselves thin?

HG- Is this a nonprofit?

PdO- That is part of the discussion that needs to be had.

AW- The working group I think can also help funnel different discussions going on around the city to HAC. Looking at these 7 questions, I created this list, it is not definitive, and there could be more. Perhaps we split those up and divide among members.

PdO- Number 1 (legal framework) is not a huge time sink, number 2 (mission and objectives) is a bigger discussion that will drive remainder of what we do.

MP- I think our mission for Charlottesville is quite narrow unlike some other jurisdictions with land banks.

PdO- I think first meeting should cover numbers 1 (legal framework), 2 (mission and objectives), and 3 (governance structure).

AW- Let's take a straw poll. I like the approach of dividing things up into major and minor categories.

JJ- Number 1 (legal framework) we will need the attorney to answer for us, right?

MP- I'm not sure I fully understand what the legal particularities are.

PdO- The presentation describes this very well, so that should be reviewed by everyone.

JJ- The legal framework needs to be discussed first and then mission and objectives.

SM- I think 3 (governance structure) and 6 (community engagement) are priority after that, they are interwoven.

JJ- I think 7 (partnerships and collaboration) could be in that discussion, too.

JS- And 5 (property acquisition and disposition).

JJ- I think 4 (funding and resources) and 5 (property acquisition and disposition) should go together.

SM- Community engagement should also determine what 4 (funding and resources) and 5 (property acquisition and disposition) look like.

PdO- We can set priorities for the land bank, but we can't tell them how to do things. The land bank board needs to have authority to make those decisions over time.

JS- I think both 5 (property acquisition and disposition) and 6 (community engagement) have a level of complexity. When the sales happen, you often can't have a big public meeting. We want community engagement, but we don't want to hamstring the organization from moving swiftly.

AW- I see 6 (community engagement) as more relating to setting the land bank up.

JS- But 5 (property acquisition and disposition) is us telling the land bank how to buy property, that will have to change over time.

PdO- I think that one needs to wait.

JJ- 1 (legal framework) and 2 (mission and objectives) need to come first.

AW- We can set a date and invite the city attorney.

JJ- that's what I suggest. Mission can take a while. 4 (funding and resources) and 5 (property acquisition and disposition) I'm not sure how long those will take. 6 (community engagement) and 7 (partnerships and collaboration) could be another meeting. Maybe 3 (governance structure) should not go with 6 (community engagement).

AW- I think community engagement needs to be a part of all discussions, not a separate meeting.

SM- Maybe we need to clarify what we mean by community engagement. I read it as what level of the community engagement happens when land bank makes decisions, not about engagement in setting it up. What I've heard from other land banks is some have robust community engagement panel, and it slows the process, whereas others have almost no engagement and there's little transparency. I think we need to understand what the appropriate balance is. Real estate transactions move quickly, and public discussion can impact the sale of a property. There is interlink between governance and community engagement, I'm just not sure yet what that is. I suggest we do 1 (legal framework) & 2 (mission and objectives) in a single meeting and bring together the working group and HAC for that meeting. We don't want to go down a path that, ultimately, the city manager does not support. Then we could end up with a general mission that we all agree on and that can inform our next discussions.

JJ- Is that to help with speed? I think HAC needs to be taking the lead on what the objectives are.

HG- I think being on the same page will streamline the process.

JJ- I just think that HAC should discuss and agree on the mission and objectives and then have SS come in, but I will go with what the group's consensus is.

PdO- I want to avoid a situation where SS is developing a concept in his head and we are developing a concept and that there is no coordination. And neither me nor AW want to be in a position of speaking for SS to HAC or speaking for HAC to the working group.

SM- And I only suggest that because SS has already called for the working group.

JJ- Ok, question about 2 (mission and objectives)- It seems like we are creating another entity just based on these questions, but we haven't decided that's what we want to do.

AW- Was there a consensus on this in the past?

SM- No, we left it open to either operating by staff with the board being HAC, a stood up separate entity but is city operated with a separate board, or being a totally separate third party.

AW- So the three options available to the city are to designate a nonprofit, create legal authority, or to create a new entity. In the five examples we have, there are separate authorities, designated entities, and a designated entity with a land trust partnership.

PdO- Maybe number 2 (mission and objectives) should go before number 1 (legal framework), because what we want to do will determine how it should be formed.

AW- At this meeting to discuss 1 (legal framework) and 2 (mission and objectives), do you want to vote and move forward?

PdO- I think we need the objectives before we can determine the structure.

AW- Information can be provided about legal structure before that meeting.

PdO- Previous discussions talked about furthering affordable housing.

AI- I think the city manager is expecting recommendations from HAC. I'm not sure that he needs to be part of discussion.

JJ- I think legal needs to be involved because that is not our expertise and then HAC can discuss the objectives.

AW- To the extent that the Affordable Housing Plan brings up land banks, it does not prescribe a governance structure, but it does discuss possible objectives that land bank should include. It's very broad and we need to tighten it. There are several other groups preparing recommendations as well.

PdO- But SS also made clear those recommendations should be routed to HAC.

AW- That's correct.

SM- I propose that in March we focus on 1 (legal framework) and 2 (mission and objectives); in April we discuss 6 (community engagement), 3 (governance structure), and 7 (partnerships and collaboration); in May 4 (funding and resources) and 5 (property acquisition and disposition); and then in June we can make final recommendations and tie up any loose ends.

PdO- We should acknowledge 4 (funding and resources) and 5 (property acquisition and disposition) will start answering themselves.

SM- There will inevitably be overlap between all of these. My thought is there will need to be subcommittee meetings, so there would be meetings roughly every two weeks.

AW- Consider then that HAC meets the third Wednesdays and these meetings could happen the first Wednesdays.

MP- Subcommittees can meet over zoom, right?

AW- If it's a work session with no voting, I think so. But bylaws state if there is anticipated action it must be in person.

MP- The subcommittee could put together a recommendation and then have HAC approve it at the full meeting.

SM- I move that we relegate the discussions to the policy subcommittee and that the subcommittee meets monthly between March and June to make preliminary recommendations to bring to HAC for consensus.

HG seconds

JJ- Is there any further discussion?

PdO- At the regular HAC meetings will we also discuss land bank?

SM- The motion does not preclude that.

JS- And I just warn that what we create nothing so detailed that it will hamstring the future organization, which should have a board that can make some of these decisions.

PdO- That was my concern in past discussions.

AW- To be fair, other land banks did decide to be that prescriptive. What the ordinance can and cannot stipulate will depend on decisions about the legal framework.

JJ- Ok, all in favor?

All are in favor, none are opposed.

JJ- Who is on the policy subcommittee?

SM- Any members of HAC can participate, but the designated members are me, Dan Rosensweig (DR), and PdO. But again, any HAC members are welcome to join meetings.

AW- Who is the chair?

SM- DR. He did say he was ok with assignment of any tasks.

JJ- Is there anything else?

SM- Looking at the calendar, can we check if first Wednesdays of month work? March 6 works, April 3 conflicts with spring break but Tuesday April 9 seems to work, May 1 works, and June 5 works if we need it.

PdO- can we get JS and SS in here March 6?

AW- I will find out and get back to you. If there is a conflict, I will have them propose alternate dates.

JS- What if we just propose the regular HAC meeting as the alternate date?

AW- Ok.

SM- I don't know if it's too much work, but in each section could we go through last version of the ordinance and highlight the relative sections?

AW- Yes, I can do that. The last version will be what went before council in May 2018, and I will bring that. If there have been edits since then, I am unaware of them.

PdO- I think there's a more recent version.

AW- Then please send to me and I can circulate it.

PdO- I can create a google drive for documents.

AW- Please send me any related documents and I can attach them to meetings.

5. Public Comment

LO, Director of Piedmont Community Land Trust- I appreciate the discussion and have done some research and outreach with the Maggie Walker Community Land Trust. It operates as the land bank in three localities, Richmond, Henrico County, and Chesterfield County. They are happy to discuss with us about their experience. They did start first and have been through a lot. It took them a long time to develop procedures and really become operating. In that time, they did miss out on multiple property acquisition opportunities. They have a public panel in Richmond that decides on use of properties, and she did caution that it slows the process down. That public panel does not exist in Henrico or Chesterfield and they have been able to acquire more properties. There is a balance to be found between transparency and public engagement. There is a lot of administrative work involved and if they could re-do it, they would have at least one of their staff people be a city employee, which would make things go more smoothly. She also stressed it is important for there to be political and staff commitment, with turnover that can be challenging over time.

SM moves to adjourn the meeting at 1:22, JS seconds this motion. All are in favor, none are opposed.