

REAL ESTATE & HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, June 16, 2021

3:30 p.m.

Zoom Meeting

Call to Order

Antoinne Wright, subcommittee co-chair, called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m. Tiffany David, of the City of West Palm Beach Mayor's Office, took attendance of participants for the meeting record. Kayla Elson, of Justice & Sustainability Associates, reviewed the meeting agenda.

May 26th Meeting Minutes

No comments were made about the May 26th meeting minutes; the meeting minutes were unanimously approved as distributed.

June 12th Action Summit Outcomes

Kayla Elson reviewed a presentation containing June 12 Action Summit outcomes and results. Specifically, she reviewed community feedback about the real estate and housing subcommittee priorities and ideas. Overall, feedback from the Action Summit indicated that the subcommittee seems to be on target.

Discussion: Strategies Towards Initial Priorities

Antoinne Wright was excited to hear that the subcommittee is on target. He asked Tiffany David about finding out who owns the vacant lots. Tiffany David responded that there are certain parameters. She added that once a property is sold a developer have a certain timeframe to complete the property-type they said they would build; there is friction around the length of time to do so, especially with COVID-19. Ontario Davis Johnson commented on the leans and Antoinne Wright asked about leans and fining.

Ontario Davis Johnson asked if someone from the legal staff could come in and speak to the group about the process, and Tiffany David said she would follow up. Parisa Hamzesh, subcommittee member talked about the city potentially working with the Legal Aid Society. Tiffany David supported the idea.

Maricela Torres, subcommittee member, commented that the subcommittee talks about their views on problems the communities face, but asked how the subcommittee will move forward tangibly. She stated that more education is needed, especially needed to reach the vulnerable community members who face barriers to coming forward about substandard housing conditions. Tiffany David said she looked at Tenants Rights



Mayor's Task Force for Racial & Ethnic Equality

groups for more information, and Parisa Hamzesh recommended making certain information mandatory to read and distribute. Maricela Torres commented that not all those are tenants are under registered landlords.

Subcommittee members then discussed the subcommittee's overall goals and main target audiences. Maricela Torres believed it was help individuals who do not have a voice or awareness of current dynamics and to come up with solutions for people on the ground. Parisa Hamzesh believed the goals were government-oriented, to address the political inequities that exist that the government put in place (i.e., policies) and to come up with solutions to address them. Ontario Davis Johnson agreed, stating that the intent is related to what the government controls and what they can do within that control to trickle down and help improve other aspects and accountability. Kayla Elson encouraged subcommittee members to address what is in the local government control and to be creative with solution-building. AJ Wright said not all issues can be addressed but the subcommittee should come up with the top two or three, make suggestions, and then revisit the list with other ideas.

Kayla Elson reviewed the current idea list and highlighted the new ideas added. Parisa Hamzesh asked how many suggestions they subcommittee is giving to the mayor. Kayla Elson suggested three to five policies without indicating a minimum or maximum.

Ontario Davis Johnson wants to look back at the education piece that "went missing" and reassess what education looks like and what is needed. Parisa Hamzesh asked for clarification on what the government could provide related to education of residents. Maricela Torres mentioned a few non-profit organizations that could be potential partners.

Public Comment

Gurunam Khalsa commented about seniors staying in their homes. Gurunam Khalsa also commented that there could be a "trustee" that helps pay for housing repairs if the owner is inaccessible or unable. Suzanne Cabrera stated that the focus should be on properties that are not owner occupied (e.g., determined by Homestead Exemption). Gurunam Khalsa then said tenants should be able to withhold rent, pay for any needed repairs, and give the landlord the paid invoice as rent.

Next steps

Subcommittee members will re-review the ideas list and drill down the top areas to focus on. They will get specific around who is implementing and who it impacts. The list will be sent to the subcommittee members.

Adjournment

Antoinne Wright, subcommittee co-chair, adjourned the meeting at 5:01 p.m. The next meeting will be on July 21st, 2021, at 3:30 p.m. on Zoom.



Mayor's Task Force for Racial & Ethnic Equality

ATTENDANCE

Present:

Antoinne Wright, Subcommittee Co-Chair

Ontario Davis Johnson, Subcommittee Member

Parisa Hamzetash, Subcommittee Member

Maricela Torres, Subcommittee Member

Tiffany David, City of West Palm Beach Mayor's Office

Kayla Elson, Justice & Sustainability Associates

Emma Lipsky, Justice & Sustainability Associates

Public Attendees:

Gurunam Khalsa

Suzanne Cabrera – Housing Leadership Council

Absent:

Danita Nias, Subcommittee Co-Chair

Michael Odum, Subcommittee member

Ezra Gene Saffold, Subcommittee Member