

REAL ESTATE & HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, August 4, 2021

3:30 p.m.

Zoom Meeting

Call to Order

Danita Nias, subcommittee co-chair, called the meeting to order at 3:34 p.m. and reviewed the meeting agenda. Kayla Elson, of Justice & Sustainability Associates, took attendance of participants for the meeting record.

This meeting is an additional meeting prior to the normally scheduled subcommittee meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to give subcommittee members more time to discuss their second priority ideas and housing for immigrant communities.

Discussion: Priority Two Recommended Ideas

Subcommittee members discussed their top ideas from priority two. The objective is to narrow down the ideas that rose to the top and draft them into actionable language that the City Commissioner and the Mayor can move forward with. The subcommittee reviewed their first idea, which focuses on enhancing communications and information-sharing about avenues to homeownership. There was a lot of discussion around what specific information to share and methods to share it. Subcommittee members raised ideas such as utilizing the city's network/resources, or having the city provide additional funding to grassroots organizations that can help share information.

They then reviewed their second idea, which focuses on prioritizing greater investments in programs that can help purchase homes. Parisa Hamzetash, subcommittee member, suggested creating tax abatement program and to potentially host educational workshops (around buying a home, loans, etc.) online or have them pre-recorded. Maricela Torres, subcommittee member, suggested in-person workshops (which some non-profit organizations in the city do now) to support establishment of a trust-based, in-person relationship. Ontario Davis Johnson, subcommittee member, agreed and said that non-profits need city support and funding so that non-profits can continue doing this work and programming. AJ Wright, subcommittee co-chair, transitioned the group to discuss housing for immigrant communities.

Discussion: Housing for Immigrant Communities

Subcommittee members began discussing ways to address the poor living conditions and lack of decent housing requirements for city residents who are immigrants or undocumented Latinx residents due to their status. Kayla Elson framed the discussion



Mayor's Task Force for Racial & Ethnic Equality

base on prior subcommittee discussion about the discrimination against people in these communities lacking the requirements to properly rent housing or having unregistered landlords illegally renting substandard units. Parisa Hamzetash asked if communities were using the resources (e.g., code enforcement) available, and if the local law should be changed to address these issues. She also stated that adding a legally mandatory disclosure on a lease stating tenants' rights might help. There was then discussion of ideas from previous meetings, including collaborating with local people who are working on the ground, non-profits, and grassroots organizations. Danita Nias suggested having representatives from these organizations (Neighborhood Renaissance and Legal Aid Society) speak to the subcommittee to get some ideas on solutions.

Next steps

Another meeting will be scheduled sometime in the next week for subcommittee members to take a deeper dive into the housing for immigrant communities discussion. Maricela Torres will invitee representatives from Neighborhood Renaissance and Legal Aid Society to provide guidance and answers to subcommittee questions.

Adjournment

Danita Nias adjourned the meeting at 5:17 p.m. An additional meeting will be on August 11th, 2021, at 3:00 p.m. on Zoom. The regularly scheduled subcommittee meeting will take place on August 18th, 2021, at 3:30 p.m. on Zoom.

ATTENDANCE

Present:

Antoinne Wright, Subcommittee Co-Chair
Danita Nias, Subcommittee Co-Chair

Ontario Davis Johnson, Subcommittee Member
Parisa Hamzetash, Subcommittee Member
Maricela Torres, Subcommittee Member

Kayla Elson, Justice & Sustainability Associates
Milena Almetica, Justice & Sustainability Associates
Emma Lipsky, Justice & Sustainability Associates

Absent:

Tiffany David, City of West Palm Beach Mayor's Office
Ezra Gene Saffold, Subcommittee Member
Michael Odum, Subcommittee member