Howard County Housing Committee

Meeting Minutes

January 19, 2023 3:30 PM - 5:00 PM via Zoom

**Present:** Dana Sohr, Dorothy Plantz, Tim Wiens, Lauren Silverstone, Terri Bradford, Sarah Hochbaum, Pat Sylvester, Bita Dayhoff, Pat Engel, Grace Morris, Paul Diggs, Andy Krauss, Erin Ashinghurst, Melissa Gibson, Mark Dunham, Diane Dressler, Margaret Gold, Guy Guzzone

1. Welcome
   1. Review of minutes from November 16, 2023
2. Review of Minutes and Updates
   1. The minutes were reviewed by Sharonda and no changes were necessary.

1. Updates on Rent Subsidy and Technology
   1. Still waiting for rent subsidy program to open. The MOU between Maryland Department of Health and DHCD still hasn’t been signed.
2. Housing Opportunity Trust Updates – Sharonda
3. Howard County Housing Affordability Coalition – Sharonda
   1. <https://www.hocohac.org>
   2. HoCo By Design <https://www.hocobydesign.com>
   3. Dana Sohr from Bridges to Housing Stability joined us from the coalition.
      1. Coalition was launched in 2018. Their goal is to create change in Howard County. They want to add more affordable housing through the general plan (HoCo by design). The plan was released at the end of 2022.
         1. The planners have documented the needs of the area. It estimates a 20,000 deficit in homes needed in the county by 2040. Due to the high paying jobs coming to this area, they estimate that there will be an additional 31,000 more homes needed beyond the original estimate.
         2. Coalition’s concerns: the plan falls short in recommendation for housing growth. It is putting a cap at 1,400 homes per year which will not be enough to support growth.
         3. Current policies have choked off the housing supply. Housing scarcity creates a crisis of affordability.
         4. Comment on the [HoCo by Design Public Draft plan](https://www.hocobydesign.com/public-draft) by 1/31/23 at <https://www.hocobydesign.com/public-draft> (On question 3 you could talk about affordable housing being important, equity, accessibility, high rents, etc. You could also mention supporting the Howard County Housing Affordability Coalition if you do)
         5. Lack of public water and sewer was brought up as an issue in the western 2/3 of the county.
            1. This issue could be addressed after the zoning gets changed (whether it’s adding water/sewer paid for by the county or developers or finding different septic ideas for multifamily homes).
4. Howard County Housing Commission Letter of Support – Pat Sylvester
   1. MIH has drafted a letter in support of a project to make 6 units accessible. Tim will review the letter and send it to Pat.
   2. Juniper has 24 units that will serve households at 80% AMI. Marlow has 15 units that will serve households at 80% AMI.
   3. The commission will be providing money to make 6 of the 15 units accessible. [The estimate to retrofit these units to make them accessible is $300,000.] They will go to people with vouchers.
5. State Senator Guy Guzzone; FY24 DDA Budget
   1. Senator Guzzone said that he was looking forward to supporting this new program, the DDA Rent Subsidy.
   2. He said he was planning on introducing a bill that was similar that would add 1,100 new vouchers to targeted vulnerable groups including people with DD.
   3. He said that he had already met with the new Budget Secretary and he was pleased with this new collaborative relationship with the Moore administration.
   4. He talked about his support for Patuxent Commons and his commitment to bring that and other similar projects to completion.
6. New Website and Communication –Andy
   1. The MIH website has been revamped. Andy showed it to the committee members
   2. Check it out: [www.mih-inc.org](http://www.mih-inc.org/)
7. Gubernatorial/Legislative Priorities – Tim
   1. Next steps with newly elected offices
      1. MIH staff will be in Annapolis for the budget hearings and DD day at the legislature in February.
         1. The staff plan to educate them on the work MIH is doing and share the MIH [priorities](https://mih-inc.org/news/mih-fy23-statewide-funding-and-advocacy-priorities/#:~:text=It%20is%20the%20mission%20of%20Maryland%20Inclusive%20Housing,opportunities%2C%20identifying%20resources%2C%20connecting%20people%20and%20providing%20services). They also plan to talk about the context of the DDA rental subsidy program.
   2. Tim said that he had already scheduled a meeting with Del. Kirill Reznik, Chair of the Appropriations subcommittee that oversees the DDA budget and that we were working scheduling a similar meeting with Senator Cory McCray.
8. Structure of Committee
   1. Sharonda said that she was looking for someone from Howard County to chair this committee. She would be happy to hear from volunteers but if not she would be calling people and making an ask.
   2. MIH will continue to staff the committee.
9. Next Meeting
   1. March 16th