



**HOMELESS COORDINATING COUNCIL**

**Housing Committee**

**September 23rd, 2020**

**1:00-3:00 p.m.**

**Approved FINAL minutes**

*Co-Chairs: Betty Valdez, Executive Director Bernalillo County Housing Department, Mark Childs, Professor Emeritus UNM School of Architecture & Planning, Lisa Huval, Deputy Director of Housing & Homelessness City of Albuquerque Dept. of Family & Community Services*

*Attendees: Councilor Benton and Commissioner O'Malley, Betty Valdez (BernCo Housing Dept.), Felipe Rael (Greater Albuquerque Housing Partnership), Izzy Hernandez (MFA), Jenny Metzler (AHCH), John Ames (HopeWorks), Leonette Archuleta (BernCo), Linda Bridge (AHA), Quinn Donnay (CFS), Robert Baade (BHI Supportive Housing), Yvette Ramirez Ammerman (coordinator/consultant)*

Item:	Discussion/Needs/Gaps:
Welcome and introductions of participants:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Lisa Huval noted we have one public attendee, Keith Breitback– Communications firm contractor with CABQ.</li> <li>2) The Co-chairs introduced themselves, Lisa expressed her confidence in the work of this committee, saying this is the right group (in the virtual room) as well as the right members on the Homeless Coordinating Council (HCC).</li> <li>3) Individual members introduced themselves and noted organizational affiliation.</li> <li>4) Lisa also reviewed the “Meeting Principles”, and reiterated this committee is fortunate to have the Urban Institute Report which clearly outlines needs and gaps around affordable rental housing for low income folks in our community as well as high impact strategies where we could focus our effort that would increase and protect the supply of affordable housing. We also have another report that CABQ commissioned last year, by Barbara Poppe, who used to lead the US Interagency Council on Homelessness and another major researcher on homelessness, Dr. Stephen Metreaux from the University of Delaware which provided an analysis of our emergency shelter beds system and found (not surprisingly), the more rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing we create, the less emergency shelter beds we will need.</li> <li>5) This committee will be sending up recommendations for review by the Homeless Coordinating Council by early October. She indicated her expectation for one of the</li> </ol>



	<p>high impact strategies identified, is to develop a more strategic plan which will loop back John Ross back in at that point.</p> <p>6) Both of those documents provide real world numbers around those concepts, and are helpful in our planning. They both are on the city's website and there are links to them at the bottom of the agenda (NOTE: links will be corrected on forthcoming agendas). She emphasized these documents are being used to drive the work of this committee. The homeless Coordinating Council is responsible for developing a framework for housing and services to address homelessness in our community. And this is where each committee is responsible for feeding into that framework meaning this committee is responsible for identifying, "Needs, Gaps and High Impact Strategies" which is the task before us, and we'll spend the rest of this meeting working on.</p> <p>7) The plan is to present that draft to the homeless Coordinating Council at their meeting their next meeting, which is next Tuesday. So we can get some initial reaction from them and adjust as needed, and then the hard work begins of, how do we actually make all of the high impact strategies, a reality?</p>
<p><b>Lisa shared the Needs, Gaps, Strategies draft</b></p>	<p><b>Lisa shared the first part of the discussion draft, developed in coordination with the Co-Chairs (updated draft is attached in email):</b></p> <p>Jenny Metzler acknowledged the Needs and Gaps were on target, but added that, throughout the document, it is not just that we need to identify new sources or funding or revenues, but we also may need to <b>CREATE new sources of funding</b> and look at what other communities are doing to leverage financing. Separately, she asked, "How do we optimize all the different kinds of housing subsidies, we already have (she referenced a Housing Authority group in Denver), communities that are looking at Project Based vouchers and the resurgence in single site projects, to make sure that the available housing just get used. What are our strategies for the population that can't live independently in scattered site housing? No one seems to know what is that percentage? It is important to define that, to make sure that whatever we do in terms of creating more vouchers, more funding for development that it matches the need, which of course is going to evolve, but we can't be leaving vouchers on the table."</p> <p>Jenny Metzler continued, "And the longer term strategies (bullet number two), we need to add increasing regulatory infrastructure funding development for affordable housing. Can we just make a bold statement of needing more funding to develop more affordable housing; I don't think it's explicit enough."</p>



Jenny Metzler added that the Urban Institute report recognized this is pre-COVID data and that we can expect this picture to get much worse. **The UI projects a possible increase of homelessness by 40% to 45%.** In addition, the National Alliance to End Homelessness, National Health Care for the Homeless Council and the National Low-Income Housing Coalition and some of the other national advocacy groups also have a 10% scenario for increasing homeless. The 40 to 45% increase in homelessness nationally is substantiated by the Columbia University study. This is information about who could potentially get displaced or is at risk of homelessness. We need to be more emphatic – we must pay attention to what Commissioner O’Malley was discussing in the last meeting, the deep, deep poverty and we have to anticipate what’s going to happen as well.

Quinn Donnay asked the group if anyone had more data on individuals who might not be able to live independently. When people who are exiting Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid re-housing, is it being noted on the Homeless Management Information System, (HMIS) which is the database required by HUD for any person that’s in a housing program, enters a shelter, receives outreach services etc. They are entered into HMIS; it shows a person’s trajectory from the time they’ve entered a shelter to also the time they were housed. And what happens afterward. So, it does give a clear picture for an individual, but is the discharge data collected?

John Ames: There is discharge data collected, but it doesn’t go so far as to suggest that a person may not be suitable for single for scattered side housing or independent living. The data that we have in Albuquerque/BernCo is closer to answering your question is **the data from the hospitals and the jail’s, frequent utilizers throughout the state and county are a better indication of who really is not able to live independently.**

Felipe Rael and Lisa Huval noted eviction-prevention, or cash assistance to funds are very limited. Although there are more funds during COVID; \$115,000 from CABQ.

Commissioner O’Malley: The **Community Schools project** does have a does have a program now where they help with eviction prevention. There’s a program with cash, working with the New Mexico Housing Finance Authority. If we have a successful program, we need to combine those and figure out who is doing what. I think the county would be willing to participate in support for that.

Ike Benton: “I think it’s something that’s self-evident, but in the overall housing picture



of the city and county, one of the data sets mentioned near the top was the fact that many of the dwelling units that could be available to lower income segments of the population are actually occupied by higher income individuals. I would suggest that we have some statement in here about the general housing market as a whole and the need to add more affordability throughout the city, even in non-designated projects. Many cities are starting to tackle **zoning issues**. There is the idea that apartments are going to bring bad people to neighborhoods, and there are even people who argue against secondary dwelling units in single family residential zones, based on the belief this it is somehow going to bring crime to their neighborhood. To the questions having to do with land use zoning policy, which is something that the county and the city can could take on jointly perhaps and try to increase the general market of market rate housing targeted. This needs to be an explicit statement to our governing bodies.”

Mark Childs and Ike Benton: **We need both the for-profit and nonprofit development of housing that's targeted to low income.**

Mark Childs noted one of his questions was regarding the assumption of the document was about rental units. But when you start talking about the broader market, it's not necessarily only rental units. “Things are more much more complex, we shouldn't limit ourselves to rental units as the only mechanism.”

Ike Benton: **“It's very difficult to produce new affordable ownership units. There are a lot of people living in ownership units, who can't afford to pay their utilities, for instance.** We need to help them with basic weatherization and things of that sort. That will help people stay housed. These are **working people and their home may be a legacy house of the families** -- otherwise they would not be an ownership housing. We need to address that as well.”

Linda Bridge and Lisa Huval: Public housing and other properties are often serving very vulnerable folks that once evicted from these properties are likely to end up homeless or in our homeless services system so how do we better provide supportive services to Housing Authority tenants who are in crisis and failing to pay their rent for one reason or another. How do we better support tenants? How do we make sure that we're linking people to eviction prevention assistance that exists? Further, Linda raised a concern that we should not default into trying to restrict the ability of owners of federal funded properties to pursue needed evictions. For instance, public housing funding is tied to occupancy and collections, as well as scoring with HUD. Other federally funded



properties have mortgage obligations, as well as community stabilization aims. She stated, “Absolutely, if we can prevent someone from GETTING EVICTED through Supportive Services, or cash assistance I am 100% behind that. But there are some cases where as landlords, (and we put up with a lot more than probably private landlords do). But at some point, we do need to pursue eviction unfortunately.”

Izzy Hernandez: Regarding eviction prevention, **MFA has some Community Development Block Grant funds (CDBG) funds that are made available to MFA for to help with folks that may need rental and mortgage assistance**, this is just COVID care related funding - rolling out towards the end of October, early November. In the long run we have **ESG funding**, and I believe the city does as well. I think that is one of the activities that's allowed under ESG, we haven't used it a lot in that particular area. But that could be a potential source. With regard to energy efficiency, we have a **weatherization program** that is used a lot for seniors and people with very low income and disabilities. This is could be available and resource that we need to keep in mind.

Also, MFA has a good listing of all the resources that are available in the city for housing support, the various funding sources and do they collaborate or overlap? We need efficiency. Lisa noted the UI report has a listing of resources, but it may need to be updated.

John Ross commented (regarding the High Impact Strategies) both the Strategies that can be implemented quickly, with immediate impact, as well as the Strategies that are equally important, but that will take longer to development and implement should have time limits associated. Perhaps 12-18 months for the first and 3-5 years for the second?

Jennifer Metzler underscored both the **necessity for eviction prevention funds, and the fact that they go very quickly, leaving significant unmet need**. She also queried Betty and Linda if they could differentiate between the numbers of people being evicted for behavioral versus a cash flow issue, hoping that services might be provided for individuals experiencing behavioral issues. Linda indicated she would gather the data on behavioral versus cash flow.

Betty reiterated Linda's previous comments regarding how much effort is put into assisting individuals, and stated that evictions are normally behaviorally related. A large problem is that **over 1,000 individuals are on the waiting list** for these units who are willing to follow the rules. It's a delicate balance.



John Ames: **There are very few evictions (annually, a dozen at the most)**, they are often related to drug use, or sale. Usually individuals are moved to other units when they commit to behavior change.

Mark Childs asked if some of the behavioral issues are because they are having trouble living independently. John Ames indicated the number is low. Quinn added that sometimes people aren't aware they don't want to live alone. The need for social connection cannot be underestimated and is a factor of stability.

Jenny Metzler added, "The issue of choice, when it comes to housing is complicated and troublesome. People may have bad options." She gave the example of a woman who "chooses" to squat on a property, because it is safer than being at home.

She added that AHCH and HopeWorks are funded (by Medicaid) to employ **'housing specialists'** who broker relationships between individuals and landlords, social workers, etc. to find the right housing "fit". It's a cop out to perpetually label someone as choosing homelessness.

Lisa noted that most of the **strategies all require funding!** We need to look at what other communities are doing.

Commissioner O'Malley: "We could **challenge other agencies (water, waste, COG) and ourselves to actually set aside a percentage of our budgets for this particular purpose.** The problem of homelessness impacts all of us (cleaning up camps in tunnels, waste, security). People have misconceptions about people living in poverty and homeless. They are afraid of them.

Lisa Huval: We used to have **set aside from the workforce housing trust fund, 8% up to 10 of the geo bond capacity set aside for workforce housing funds, but no longer.** It was a real commitment at a policy level from these different institutional partners for increasing funding for affordable housing.

John noted we need a commitment from large employers.

Linda reminded committee members that it is **National Housing Month in October**, an effort to raise awareness through education and outreach on the importance of housing funding at city, state, and national levels. The Housing Authority passed a resolution and if the city or county could pass proclamations or have any kind of events or shared outreach or press releases. The national organization is engaging, all housing



authorities to take an active stance this October – exactly what Commissioner O'Malley was just speaking about to help raise awareness to this issue. So reach out if you have any ideas, suggestions or need information about housing.

John Ross: We need a bullet about reshaping public perception on these issues, with COVID more people are now struggling - more people are moving from middle to low income. There's a community conversation that can happen. Increasing development of market rate housing, reviewing zoning codes is a huge issue. Maybe COVID is the moment where it opens the conversations up that we haven't been able to have. The concept of having more community partners is more the answer than where can we get more money.

Izzy Hernandez: We have **state tax credit program; if you donate or invest in affordable housing can get 50 cents back on the dollar under state tax liability. The state gives over \$4 million a year that we can use for that purpose. It's underutilized, the highest we've got on that is about a million.** So we're leaving about 75% of that on the table. Lisa Huval queried, why it is so underutilized when the federal low income tax credit is so competitive?

Izzy Hernandez: "I think we need to do a better job of marketing it, even targeting some of these big employers that have a lot of tax liability with the state. I can definitely get more details to the group here with all the requirements that that surround it."

Ike Benton: It may not even always just be money, but other agencies, I'm thinking of specifically of **APS and the conservancy district which have vacant land that is surplus - that's free -- a down-payment on a housing project.** It's an important point that Commissioner O'Malley made about challenging all of our community partners. We have resources, whether it's dollars or land or whatever.

Jenny brought up 'social impact bonds'.

Lisa Huval thanked the group for the rich discussion and adjourned the meeting.

8) Next steps

a. Consolidation report from Lisa Huval.

**Next meeting: Oct. 7th, 1:00-3:00 p.m.**