

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

  
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Hearing on Impediments to Fair Housing July 6, 2005

Tony Jones: Our first item on the agenda tonight is election of new Co-chairs for the Housing and Development Commission for 2005/2006.

Janet Byrd: I would like to move that we elect Tony Jones and Jim McConnell as Co-chairs of the Housing and Community Development Commission.

Linda Kaeser: I'll second.

TJ: Great. Any comments?

BKK: Sounds like a great idea. (Inaudible)

TJ: Okay. Like to vote? Okay. All those in favor?

Aye, Aye,

TJ: All those opposed?

Good great, thank you. Looking forward to serving.

Okay, our next item is review of the minutes of the June meeting.

BKK: We will need to table that until the next meeting.

TJ: Okay we can do that. All right well we are ready to move into our next item on the agenda, which is a very important issue that we are very anxious to hear the comments from Tracy and Mike as well as comments from the community about issues faced with regard to fair housing. So like to have Tracy Letho (SP) and Mike Sheehan (SP) come forward and present their information on Impediments to announce this introduction of the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing and obstacles to housing choice.

TL: Hi again I'm Tracy Letho and I work at the City of Portland Bureau of Housing and Community development and I am staffing the process, we are updating our Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing and in joining me up here is Mike Sheehan which is the consultant that we have contracted with to help us do the analysis. I am going to keep my comments pretty brief because we are really here to hear from the community about what is happening regarding fair housing. But I did just want to give a quick overview about sort of what the Analysis of Impediments is all about.

Furthering for housing and working to ensure housing choice for all of our members in the community is available. Working to make sure housing choice is available for all of our community members. It's what the Federal require, but it's also a mission of all the governmental organizations at HCDC oversees. So, this is really an important issue to us. So, when we talk about housing and fair housing choice, what we are really talking about is equal and uninhibited access to residential housing, housing choices fundamental to meeting the essential needs and pursuing personal educational employment and other goals. So basically, if people have the opportunity to choice the best place to live for themselves, it is really hard for them to pursue their other goals in life.

Because this is so important for housing as an important goal of government, it's tied to the funding that we receive in the community through the Federal Government for doing our housing activities. So specifically, we receive a lot of money from the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development to do our housing activities and they do ask us to do some specific work around fair housing. And one of those specific activities is that they do ask us to complete what is called an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing. And basically what we are looking at, an impediment is a barrier to accessing housing, fair housing or to having housing choice. And some of those barriers are real specific, purposeful acts, emissions, or decisions that are taken because of someone's race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status, or national origin. And these sort of specific actions end up restricting housing choices for people. There are also actions that people take that end up having the affect of limiting housing choice. They are not direct discrimination, but they end up having the affect and so when we do this Analysis of Impediments we will look at those types of activities as well. And particularly we are looking at fair housing issues related to federally defined protected classes and those are again, race, color, national origin, religion, disability, and familial status. But also in the State of Oregon, protected classes include marital status, and source of income and then particularly in the City of Portland and Multnomah County there laws that protect people based on sexual orientation, age, and gender identity. So those are all factors that we will consider when we do this Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing.

The reason we are bringing this issue to the Housing and Community Development Commission is that it's sort of the official body that will oversee the Analysis of Impediments process. And while I work at the City of Portland and will be staffing the process, we will do this analysis for the County as a whole and all the jurisdictions that are within it. So hopefully tonight we are going to hear from people throughout Multnomah County. And so the purpose of the hearing tonight is sort of our first step in this analysis process.

Mike is going to be out doing interviews with community members and looking at lots of other data sources, but we want to hear from the community, what their experiences have been regarding fair housing. If folks are not here tonight, there are other ways that they can submit public testimony about fair housing. So, in the back there are multiple flyers that tell people that they can also E-mail us at the Bureau of Housing and Community Development, they can leave us a voice message or have a phone conversation and they can write letters. We have got these translated into Spanish, Russian and Vietnamese, so hopefully we can get the word out in multiple communities. And these are in the back, folks should feel free to take those and share them in their communities. We are accepting testimony until July 29th.

Oh, let's see. I think the last thing I just wanted to add quickly is we are looking forward to hearing from folks tonight. We are not able to actually take, we don't have the authority to take specific complaints around fair housing issues. What we have done is invited the Community of Alliance of Tenets and the Fair Housing Council of Oregon to join us, there at the back. And so, folks have specific questions, we welcome them to talk with those community resources and I want to thank them for coming out tonight.

Do you have anything to add Mike?

Mike Sheehan: Nope, that was pretty much it.

BKK: I would just like to add that we do have a Spanish Language translator here, so if anybody would like that help, you're welcome. Irma would you translate that for me.

Irma Valdez: Spanish translation of the above statement.

- ?: Question, clarifying question. How is this being funded?
- Tracy Lehto: It is part of our funding through HUD, Fair Housing Activities including the Analysis of Impediments is an eligible expense for Home and CDBG funding.
- ?: And did you say it is a HUD requirement as well, the periodic Analysis of Impediments?
- TL: It is. I should be a little more specific. Hud asks us to certify that we are affirmatively affirming fair housing and so the way they suggest that we do this is through an Analysis of Impediments. I don't know if it's a hard core requirement, but that's
- ?: It is, in fact the Hud Office has requested that we do an update.
- TL: Okay.
- BKK: We gave the original analysis in 1996. So, it is 9 years old. And we have recently been monitored and told that we are slipping out of Fair Housing Compliance.
- TL: And that would affect our ability to receive the 20 some odd million dollars that come into our community every year. So we had to.
- ?: Does that also flavor any reflection that you might have upon the Federal funding policy and priorities and how that affects fair housing by jurisdiction?
- MS: Yes, certainly would be inquiring about Hud policies and how that affects agencies in the performance of, you know the programs. Certainly.
- LK: After you do the Impediment Study, will you then be coming up with policy recommendations to address the issues?
- TL: Yes, actually sort of all the whole title of the process is Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing and Strategies to address those Impediments. So part of the process will be developing strategies to address the impediments that are found. And another way that the community will be involved in the process is, we will have an advisory committee that's open to the public but will particularly be soliciting the participation of Fair Housing stakeholders and individuals who work with protected classes, and part of that committee's role will be helping us devise strategies. The strategies will be seen in our annual action plans that are part of the Consolidated Plan.
- MS: Any other questions? Okay. Thank you.
- TJ: Well at this time what we will do is that we will call up 3 people at the time. We will call out 3 names and we like you to come up front and each person is given 3 minutes to share their comments, and we will be following the time limits fairly closely so we give everybody an opportunity to speak. So, the first 3 people will be Brenda Jose, Jay Thiemeyer, and Colin McCormack.
- Brenda Jose: My name is Brenda Jose, although I always answer to Jose, especially when food is involved. I am the Executive Director of Unlimited Choices. We are in our 14th year of operation and have been providing services that have been labeled by some as Fair Housing Enforcement or Remedies. We remove barriers and create more accessible housing for low-income people with physical disabilities, who generally live in affordable housing units, rental, or owner occupied. With Adapt a Home, we get grant money, qualify potential clients, visit their homes, and perform an onsite assessment. We make specific prioritized modifications to the resident by licensed, bonded, and

insured contractors; we inspect the complete projects and pay the contractor. This enables people to live independently in the home and community of their choice, no matter their age or disability. With Mend a Home, another of our programs, we offer emergency home repair to very low-income homeowners and mobile home owners. And with Save a Home, our very newest program, is in conjunction with the Portland and Vancouver Fire Departments. We provide fire safety, education and equipment installation. We complete 400 to 500 construction jobs per year.

Every project that we do, requires a owner release form that contains a requirement that the owner waive that portion of their Fair Housing Rights that allows the owner of the property to require their rental to be returned to their original condition. In fact, we require that all adaptations we pay for are left in place for future clients with mobility impairments. We suggest that they make use of the Web site, WWW.Housingconnections.org, and list these units with the adaptations for those who are looking for them.

Now, what have we seen out there in the world of rentals? There is at least one major property management company in town that manages a lot of affordable Section 8 type housing. Over our 14 years, we have tried numerous times to modify units. The resistance has been soft, subtle, and hard to pin down. Long periods of time with no response to phone calls or letters, odd requests, impossible demands.

One man who lived in an apartment in North East Portland died while waiting for us to build a 4-foot ramp. This 4-foot ramp would have made his unit and the one next door visitable by anybody in a wheel chair. The ramp would have given him the independence and dignity that would have made his life better and more filled with hope. The hope he was rapidly losing by his inability to come and go independently. A ramp may seem a small thing but we had 3 people taken off a hospice program after we have made this home modification and that is no small thing.

May I go on for a couple of minutes?

TJ: 30 seconds roughly.

BJ: A recent client in Beaverton had an on site property manager who championed her cause, her Church members leaned on the property management company, they made petty requests upon petty requests, we stayed the course, and after 14 years we finally made one of their thousands of units accessible, both lower apartment units. A new renter commented on how much easier it was to move in, up the ramp with their hand truck. But the on-site property manager lost her job.

We are not an advocacy agency, we try to work cooperatively with property owners and find common ground. However when we hit the wall we give our clients the names and phone numbers of advocacy agencies. But most of these people will not make that phone call. They are too afraid of losing their housing, subsidized housing is hard to find and a bad landlord is better than homelessness. And I suggest that this fear might be the biggest barrier of all.

TJ: Okay, thank you.

JT: Good evening, my name is Jay Thiemeyer and I am a member of the Affordable Housing NOW, Speaker's Bureau. Portland's Urban Renewal Policies and the rising cost of housing has indirectly created a barrier to fair housing. Due to displacement related to gentrification's sparked by urban renewal and subsequent rising housing costs in North and North East Portland, many African American families were forced to move to communities outside of Portland city limits, particularly to East Multnomah County. Fair Housing Council of Oregon statistics indicate a spike in racial harassment, complaints in

unincorporated Multnomah County. Statewide Fair Housing complaints based on race, comprise between 10 and 14% of the total complaints received by the Fair Housing Council. These numbers have been consistently at this level for over a decade. Yet 2003 to 2004, statistics show that 26% of the complaints in unincorporated Multnomah County were based on race, almost all involving allegations of harassment from neighbors.

One factor in this rise in complaints is that until the late 90's nearly 85% of Multnomah Counties African American families lived in North and North East Portland. Those this concentration of African Americans is a legacy of the segregation fostered by Portland Realtors' policy of redlining. (A practice made illegal by Fair Housing Law.) The fact that so few African American have lived in these newer communities where they have been displaced has allowed a climate of race based fear and ignorance to flourish.

Now as African American families have been priced out of North and North East Portland and into communities in the east county where housing is cheaper, although that is changing. They are being met with hostility and outright threats from the neighbors. You cannot enjoy the benefits and opportunity that comes with housing if you are subject to intimidation and harassment.

According to the Fair Housing Council, many of these people submitting requests said that they plan not only to move from the county, but to move entirely out of Oregon. As if that is not bad enough, instances of harassment such as these are often the precursor to hate crimes. When we talked with the Fair Housing Council, they were not able to provide a catalog of the specifics of these complaints, but we strongly urge AC, HCDC to make sure this information is captured in the final Analysis of Impediments.

We believe that for Portland, Gresham, and Multnomah County to affirmatively further fair housing, Portland and the County must take greater responsibility for residents who are being displaced due to City policy related to urban renewal. One idea would be to expand the central city no net lose policy citywide. So that when affordable housing units disappear in neighbor hoods, they are replaced to give low-income community members the choice to stay in their community.

TJ: You need to wrap up please.

JT: We also believe that efforts must be made to educate Law Enforcement Officials as how Fair Housing Law can be employed in race based harassment cases. Fair Housing can be a strong tool to clamp down on harassment, allowing law enforcement agents to pair criminal and civil law. Thank You.

CM: Good evening ladies and gentlemen of the Commission. I thank you for your time. My name is Colin McCormack and I am honored to represent the Native American Youth and Elders Council on Poverty Reduction tonight. This program is housed by our fiscal sponsor, the Native American Youth and Family Center. I have had the opportunity to work with the Youth and Elders Council since January of 2004. Our over reaching goal is to reduce poverty in urban American Indian, Alaskan Native Communities across the North West region. Since January of 2004, we have conducted no less than twenty-six local community meetings and completed 2 rounds of community based research. I can tell you that during that period, no issue has been mentioned as a barrier to poverty reduction more often than access to housing.

A perception exists that there is an abundant of resources available to Native Americans. However, we have the experience and research to assure that in fact Native Americans suffer disproportionately from inequalities. At all levels of median family income, American Indian, and Alaskan Natives pay a higher percentage of their income to rent or

mortgage payments and live in older structures than on average. The value of homes owned by American Indians is almost 20,000 less than the value of homes owned by the total population in Portland. A difference of over 11%.

While the 2000 census reports that about 42% of Native Americans in Portland own homes, our 2005 Native American Youth and Elders Council show that about 25% of our respondents were home owners, while the census indicates that of the total population nearly 63% of Portlanders are home owners.

According to our nearly five hundred respondents, nearly 1 out of every 10 had experienced racism in housing. And also more than 1 out of 10 respondents reported having to go without shelter on a monthly basis. A common theme in our work has been that affordable housing isn't actually affordable. Consider that one quarter of the 2005 Native American Youth and Elders Council survey respondents in Portland have income less than 10,000, while another 22% have incomes from \$10,000 to \$20,000 per year.

We have heard from community members across age and gender boundaries that housing is a continual struggle. Many cannot find housing and as such, Native Americans are over represented in homeless statistics. Many families are living in places far too small for their numbers and the decentralization of poverty has made service provision prohibitively difficult. Community members have made it clear that low incomes, inability to pay deposits and fees, credit and background checks and discrimination have provided substantial barriers to housing.

I hope that we can all agree that there is a direct link between stable quality housing and education, health and employment. These are all areas in which Natives struggle disproportionately. To address them, we must address the housing situation. For historical reasons, the Native American community has shown a propensity for avoiding mainstream service delivery. The community needs culturally specific answers to culturally specific challenges. The Youth and Elders Council would eagerly accept any opportunity to partner with the commission to address these issues and create access to affordable housing and make home ownership opportunities a prevalent reality for Portland's American Indian, Alaskan Native community. Okay.

TJ: Thank you very much.

BKK: We have a written copy of Mr. McCormack's testimony and we will make sure to circulate it. If anyone else brought a written copy of testimony, if you can drop one off with us, we can make sure that the commissioners receive it.

TJ: Okay, thank you. Next, we have Michael Anderson, Orion Gray, and Nickole Cherer.

MA: Hello, my name is Michael Anderson and I am a member of Affordable Housing NOW. And I work for the Community Development Network.

The decrease in availability of Mental Services is a significant barrier to fair housing. As resources needed to provide services for people with mental illness are cut, the result is that people with mental illness are struggling to maintain the stable behavior and life styles necessary to succeed in housing which in many cases results in the loss of housing for mentally ill people. And in the worse case scenario, homelessness.

Prior to my coming to the Community Development Network, I spent 6 years working for the Fair Housing Council of Oregon. During my tenure there, I came to understand that perhaps the most useful provision of the Fair Housing Laws is the provision that allows people with disabilities to request reasonable accommodations to rules, practices, or

policies of a housing provider. When the request is connected to the disability and necessary for providing equal opportunity to that housing.

Unlike many of the other enforcement provision of Fair Housing Laws, reasonable accommodation provides for problem solving that allows a person to maintain their existing housing. In other words, when a person is denied housing because they have children, they can file a complaint or a lawsuit and after 2 to 4 year process, if their complaint prevails, they can get some sort of financial settlement and perhaps the opportunity to rent that unit.

Reasonable accommodation on the other hand, provides an opportunity to solve the problem before a complaint is filed or before an eviction goes through.

Let me give you an example. A person with a mental illness stops taking the medication that helps him control his behavior. While off that medication a person stops cleaning their apartment, allowing garbage to pile up and to become a breeding ground for maggots. This is clearly an action worthy of an eviction. But in the case of that person has a case manager or some support staff that can help develop a reliable plan to keep the apartment clean or to keep the person stabilized on their medication, eviction can be avoided and the person can keep their apartment and maintain the stability and the opportunity that comes with that housing.

Now we know with the amount of cuts that have come to case management and support services to people with mental illness, that this crucial component that allows an accommodation to be reasonable is deteriorating. Therefore, when we see a barrier that Multnomah County, Portland and Gresham must address in order to affirmatively further fair housing, it must be to keep this service component alive, so people with disabilities have the right provided to them under Fair Housing Law. Thank you very much.

TJ: Okay. Thank you.

LK: Can I ask (inaudible)

MA: Well in the case that you have a case manager, they could connect you with say, somebody who would provide the services of coming in once a week and helping you clean through your refrigerator. Or perhaps develop a plan where they are checking in with you making sure that you are taking medication at the intervals that allow you to keep that stability. If that case manager is gone, the person doesn't necessarily know where the resources are to have help cleaning that apartment or certainly doesn't have someone to help them develop a plan to keep stable on medication.

LK: Thank you.

OG: Good evening. My name is Orion Gray and I am a member with the Soft Voice of Affordable Housing NOW and I also work for Sisters of the Road.

So we help people who are on a low income or who are homeless and we see a lot of people go in and out of housing, so I have heard a lot of stories. The lack of affordable housing is a fundamental systemic barrier to fair housing, even as the letter of the law offers protection to people based on race and national origin, disability, religion, sex and familial status. The fact is that many of these protected classes of populations are disproportionately poor. And therefore disproportionately impacted by the lack of affordable housing.

Affordable Housing Now believes that with housing comes opportunity. And this opportunity for kids to succeed in school, and families to build their dreams and for

people with disabilities to live with dignity and independence. My little brother lives in Section 8 housing and he would be lost without it. It is this connection between housing and opportunity motivated the passage of the Fair Housing Act in 1968. So, without equal access to housing opportunities is totally denied.

The statistics from the Fair Housing Council of Oregon show that the majority of people who contact them bon fide complaints are low and very low-income people. So from 2001 to 2004, the Fair Housing Council received 423 Fair Housing complaints in Multnomah County. And out of 423 complaints, 265 of them met the Federal criteria for very, very low income. And 81 qualified as low-income. So that means that 82% of all the Fair Housing complaints came from people at the lowest income levels.

Also, the American Housing Survey data estimates that 82% of all households in the metro region, earning less than 30% of median family income are in need of affordable housing. That is 82%. So, although these numbers don't exactly match up, we think that the relationship between who is experiencing discrimination and who is in need of affordable housing are really very related. The reason is, I mean when the market has you know, few options that you can afford, you just become vulnerable to living in uncomfortable situation or hostile situation and because you just don't have very many choices.

Also, the impact of being denied housing you can afford because of race, because you have children or because of any other reason covered by Fair Housing Law is more damaging to low-income people. Precisely because you have less choices from the very start, even before you are discriminated against. So it is just stacked against you.

We believe that for Portland, Gresham, and Multnomah County to affirmatively further fair housing more affordable housing is needed at the lowest income levels. We need more housing so that we can ensure that the promise of opportunity is guaranteed by Fair Housing is truly available to those protected under law. Thank you very much.

TJ: Okay, thank you.

NC: Thank you. My name is Nickole Cherer and I am here actually to talk about, I'm not with any organization actually. I moved to Portland about 5 years ago to attend Portland University and was able through a bit of a struggle with them to get them to outfit an apartment with something we call a roll in shower, which is a vital piece of architecture that I need and most people in wheel chairs need to live comfortably and independently.

So I graduated about 2 weeks ago and have been looking for housing. Planning in staying in the Portland area, I am originally from the east coast. And over the last, I would say, 2 months this have been a very futile effort. I have called; gosh, it's got to be over 60 complexes at this point. And if they do have roll in showers, there is only about 3 apartments in the whole building and they are taken. And they are not necessarily taken by people who need them. I had one instance where I got to a place over on MLK and she had 2 apartments open and I said you don't happen to have one with a roll in shower and she said yes but I rented it this morning. So, and it wasn't to someone who needed a roll in shower. So I just here to kind of, to make it clear that there is this real need for just simple modifications that if when buildings were being built, you know, more units had roll in showers to begin with, I wouldn't be running into this problem.

And not just for people with disabilities. But, you know we have a whole generation of baby boomers who are going into their golden years. And for anyone with mobility issues, something that they don't have to step into or sit down in, makes it easier and so you know, it's kind of a no brainer to me and yet here I am not being able to find housing. So I put it to you.

TJ: Okay. Thank you very much.

?: Just a question and it's more to Mike Sheehan than although congratulations to you and your graduation. Mike would that be considered a barrier to housing where they would rent the accessible unit to a person who does not have disability?

MS: I don't know the answer to that off hand, but I have just written it down.

?: I think it is an interesting issue.

MS: So we will definitely look at that, (inaudible)

?: Yea and I think it's way more common than we realize. Both in rental housing and even for motels, hotels, and people on vacations, it's very common that happens I think. Brenda probably sees that to a lot.

BJ: I believe that the housing management is not required to hold open a unit to wait for an application from a person with a disability or a person with another kind of mobility impairment. However, in the situation you described, I think it would have been a reasonable accommodation to call the person who had, for the property manager to call the person who had leased the apartment in the morning and say "I have another applicant here, would you be willing to consider such and such an apartment". That would have been reasonable under the circumstances and practical as well.

TJ: Okay. Thank you.

BJ: And smart.

TJ: Okay, 2 more presenters, Roger Meyer and Veronica Bernier.

RM: MY name is Roger Meyer and I am appearing just on behalf of myself as a private citizen with a disability and as a former member of this commission.

I would encourage the commission to consider in it's policy conferences and discussions with the jurisdictions, which are not only city but county and Gresham, that in the event that there is a possibility of somehow creating good partnerships between public funding and the assistance that public funding may offer to private developers, that in cases of new constructions, that there be a deliberate policy of set asides in those private developments in which there are any degrees of public dollars for disabled housing.

A perfect example of that is a lot, not because I am chairperson of a neighborhood association and do the land use review, came to my attention that the new owner of the lot is intending to partition the lot, which is perfectly fine. But what he would end up with would be 2 units in the back, at least according to his proposed plans, that are not visible to the street and are postage stamp size apartment buildings. Each of which has an apartment in it, 486 square feet. Now this is slightly larger than a large bath tube, but my point is that if it were possible somehow for funding or for the jurisdictions to encourage such developments, which are in my view substandard. To make them available to people who are disabled, single units of that size may in fact suitable for individuals who are disabled, but may not be suitable to for example for people who expect to expand families and so forth and otherwise would be subject to high transiency rates. Disabled tenants make good tenants and disabled owners make good owners. Thank you.

TJ: Thank you.

VB: Hi Veronica from PSU Community Health Education, and representing the Women's Affordable Housing Forum.

The issue I bring here tonight is just a little bit off fair housing, but it still relates to fair access to housing from the teen population here in Portland.

I wanted to say that, I wanted to put in a proposal for the YWCA to open a store to teen housing by opening an emergency shelter, 30 day shelter, possibly 20 to 30 beds, of emergency shelter and transitional housing for teens who are at risk youth. Now the target population of YWCA should be the group of teens who are at risk for the following problems.

We all know about teen pregnancy, dependency on alcohol and drugs, teens who are at risk for exposure to violent crime, especially when being on the streets late at night. We also have teens who are at risk for STD's because of their free lifestyle on the street. Teens who have dependent children and remain homeless and unmarried. Teens at risk for communicable diseases with things like mononucleosis and strep throat. Those are things up from the past, but if you are a teen out on the street, you are at risk because you just don't have a natural life style and you can catch these diseases and it kind of weakens your resistance. A lot of teens are sleeping underneath the freeways with their boyfriends in order just to get housing. That is not housing, that is just camping and it's not acceptable, surely we as a community can do better. Teens with pets can keep them from being sheltered because of the no pets' law.

The YWCA must be sensitive to these young adult needs as they look to the future for providing sheltering for Portland's women. The YWCA's program's mission is to provide safe housing for all females without regard to race, color or creed or gender, also national origin. Across the Nation, the YWCA programs have helped women nationwide to become independent, productive people. After a few short months in a YWCA shelter program, the young adults can become contributing members of society. Case managers will want to work directly with the teens within the frame work of teen Y. And as this relates to that, there is a possible work in it drop in shelter program, not sure how that will refer, the referrals will come from social workers, street workers on the street and people who do run into these kids where ever they are at. The main mission is to meet their goals for housing and bridge the gap to these homeless teens.

A 30-day program will be the start of this reworking of the teen care plan after 30, 60, and 90 days. By explaining that, it just means, it's like a nursing care plan, it's a housing plan for success and setting goals that are self directed. The teen's plan for themselves, their own housing plan, and the case managers would just allocate, Okay, I'll just be done in a minute. The goals are set by the client can be achieved within a certain period of time. YWCA programs work for teens to provide foundations in the format with which kids can work to become young adults employed in independent of family restrictions. Given the teens on the streets, a chance to live at the YWCA may be the saving grace in their lives for the future. At this point in time, we need to build into these safeguards into the built environment Portland safeguards for our future teens. Thank you.

TJ: Okay thank you. Okay thank you for everyone's testimony and Tracy and Mike, your input and we look forward to your work and hearing back from you in September when we have our meeting in seeing what your work finds and what your recommendations are. So I appreciate everyone's participation.

Next, if there are any other public comments, this is the time if you want to step up and make any public comments. Anyone in the audience would like to do so.

?: (inaudible)

TJ: Okay sure.

Irma could you let folks in the audience know if there is anyone that wants to make any general public comments that they can come forward and do that.

IV: Sure.

No, Mr. Chair, I don't think there is anyone.

TJ: Okay thanks.

Okay with no public comment at this time, our next item on the agenda is our Federal and State Legislative update with Janet. Janet do you have any comments?

JB: Senate Bill 996, which is the state expansion of the Oregon Affordable Housing Tax Credit has passed the Senate first, passed the House 58 to 0, and had to go back to the Senate because the House had made a minor change, so the Senate concurred like within 24 hours. And it is on the Governor's desk and we feel confident that one of these days the Governor will sign it. So that is good news, it expands the limit on the Affordable Housing Tax Credit. This is a Tax Credit that involves bankers, banks purchase the Tax Credit and then the proceeds are used to buy down rents for lower income families and individuals.

?: So what was the expansion? From 5 million to

JB: 6.2 to 11 million and extended the sunset for an additional 10 years. So it was set to expire in 2010 and we were kind of bumping up against that in the pipeline, and so now its going to go until 2020.

?: What's likely to be Multnomah County's cutoff?

JB: I don't that there is geographic, I don't know, I don't know.

?: My understanding is, you know when you apply to state, different projects from all over the state can apply for the tax credit. So it isn't, now, I think they do maybe make some internal thoughts about trying to have some balance between urban and rural but there is no specific hard formula.

JB: And this should give enough moneys so that most everybody that wants affordable housing tax credit in their project can have it. It's calculated, (inaudible) calculated the amount that would be needed to make it a kind of revolving amount. Projects are limited in the total dollar amount of OHTC that can ask for. But pretty much, it is available, so it's a pretty exciting expansion. It is a really good tool. And it came out in testimony that it actually, the state gets more than a 100% of its dollar in rent buy down. Not only is it a very efficient program, because banks get community reinvestment tax credit for their participation. They often pay a premium price for the tax credits and so it is really a good value for the states. It's not a program that loses a lot in terms of administrative costs and so on.

Other stuff in the Oregon Legislator, the Earned Income Tax Credit is still looking like it is moving, there's, things are slow on anything related to money at this point, so, you might of all heard. I think the House adjourned today until Sunday. But we are still optimistic that the Earned Income Tax Credit will continue to move. It's on the Senate side now, it's passed the House.

In DC, there was actually some good news this week. The House put, and I don't have the details in front of me, but they put a lot of money both in the appropriation committee and then on the House floor back into housing programs. Got things back up to levels pretty close to what they were last year. So that's pretty exciting and definitely worth paying attention to what's going on in DC and thinking our particularly our local congress people for fighting hard for that.

The other thing that is happening is that there is work in progress to look at how Fanny Mae and Freddy Mac, the big secondary mortgage companies use their profits to benefit affordable housing. And there is a big push to take some of their profits and put it into the National Housing Trust Fund. And there are some people who think that this is a proposal that actually might have legs this year. It's got pretty strong bipartisan support. A lot of the opposition that was coming in early is seems to be fading. And that's something that we have endorsed in the past and all of our local jurisdictions have endorsed. HCDC is officially on the endorsement list. So that will be something to watch over the next month or so.

We have a request in Senator Gordon Smith, this just happened, there with preservation of affordable housing. A lot of owners of housing that was built in the 80's, private owners that built subsidized housing are reluctant to sell at this point because they get penalized for all the wonderful tax benefits that they were given over the years as part of how owners were enticed into the program as part of the reward. And so there is a proposal to relieve owners of some of those exit taxes if they sell to a non-profit who promises to keep the property affordable. And Senator (inaudible) that legislation, it's on the house side and we have asked them to co-sponsor it on the senate side. It looks like he might do that, so that is another thing to watch, which would be a nice tool. The estimates nationally are that it would double the number of preservation sales just by making the sales less painful in a tax sense for selling owners. So, that's all I know.

There was a home ownership bill that passed that the Housing Lobby Coalition had been part of. I don't know the details of it. Do you know that Barbara?

B: You know I don't know the details of that. The bill, the Senate Bill 847, which would allow us to reinstate our single family new construction program has passed both the House and the Senate and it's just awaiting the Governor's signature. But there maybe some other bill.

?: There was a bill, I just saw an e-mail from Tom Cusack (SP) saying there was a bill that provides tax credit to homeowners who use an individual development account. \$2000 tax credit. It's a small step but important.

JB: So somethings are moving out of Salem.

TJ: Great, thanks Janet. Any comments? Barbara do you have any comments about anything happening in planning that you think that we should be aware of or no?

B: No.

TJ: Okay, just wanted to check in to make sure. And I think we may want to introduce Elaine Foltis (SP) your first meeting? She is our new representative from the City of Gresham, replacing Karen Barton and so welcome aboard and we are glad to have you. Yes Irma?

IV: I just wanted to make sure that I had a moment (inaudible) a moment has passed but I wanted to go back for a second. It's ironic that I was doing the translation into Spanish and there is nobody in the audience who speaks Spanish. And I just wanted to make sure that I talked with Michael, especially that you are going to be heading up this study.

- That one of the main impediments that I think that happens with people that speak other languages is the access to information and I am just going to kind of ask a question to you as to where the information went out for people that could come to tonight's meeting and present some testimony. That is my number one question, because some of the fears that I think exist in some of the communities of color where language is an issue is INS status for people. And sometimes people are fearful to come to a government building if they feel like their immigration status is going to come into question or any kind of challenge because we have had hearings before in the community and you see families with children, a lot of children. So I just want to encourage that because we have such a tight time line, but hopefully we do get some of the testimony from some of those communities.
- ?: (inaudible)
- IV: You know, I have one right off the bat. And I thought she was going to stay. Is Jean DeMaster still here?
- Jean had to leave but she is going to provide us with testimony.
- IV: Human Solutions, a lot of the poverty is moving out in that direction and she has access to a lot of tenants that will be able to speak to that.
- ?: To answer your question Irma, we did outreach in all the languages that we listed, so English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Russian. We did a press release to all the newspapers serving all communities of color, and all geographic regions of the county. We did a paid add in all of the newspapers serving all the communities of color, and the Oregonian and the different geographic areas of the county. We used our e-mail distribution list and the same kind of list as we used for the outreach for the Consolidated Plan. And we also contacted everybody for whom we had an e-mail address who had attended a complain hearing. We were not able because of the budget to hire an outreach coordinator like AMINA (SP) and I think that's what you really see reflected hear. You see that limitation.
- IV: Oh, I know you have worked really hard, but I just want to make sure to let you know what we did. And I'm on the Advisory Committee and I just want to make sure that we get that out to get people to really get testimony from the people that we are really trying serve as well that are not here. They are always absent.
- ? (inaudible)
- TJ: Okay, with that anything else? Meeting is adjourned. Thank you for coming. I just want to comment, correct me if I am wrong, there is no meeting in August. Our next meeting will be in September.
- ? That is correct and the next Executive Committee meeting is next Wednesday at noon, a brown bag at the Bureau of Housing and Community Development.
- TJ: Okay, Thank you.