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BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING  
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND COMMISSION MEETING

(Webex)

Tuesday, February 22, 2022

BEFORE: CINDY TRUITT, Acting Co-Chair  
TISHA GUTHRIE, Acting Co-Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT:

MATT HILL  
KATE EDWARDS  
BREE JONES  
VERNADINE KIMBALL

Reported by:  
Roland Thomas Bowman, III

1 Also Present:

2 EBONY RECTOR, Project coordinator, Affordable Housing  
Trust Fund, DHCD

3 STACY FREED, Senior Advisor to Chief Operations Officer,  
4 DHCD

5 STEPHANI ESTRADA, Project Coordinator, Affordable Housing  
Trust Fund, DHCD

6 CAROLYN WATSON, Community Aide/Administration, Affordable  
7 Housing Trust fund, DHCD

8 NICOLE BATTLE, Chief Executive Officer, Govans Ecumenical  
Development Corporation

9 CLAUDIA WILSON RANDALL, Executive Director, Community  
10 Development Network of Maryland

11 BRENDAN SCHREIBER, Founder and President, Schreiber  
Brothers Development

12 JASMINE ARMSTRONG  
13 Department of Housing and Community Development

14 MELONY THOMAS, Public Speaker

15 TERRELL ASKEW, Public Speaker

16 SHARON HUNT, Public Speaker

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(6:04 p.m.)

1  
2  
3 CO-CHAIR TRUITT: Good evening, and welcome  
4 everyone to the Baltimore City Affordable Housing Trust  
5 Fund Commission Meeting. Today is the 22nd of February,  
6 and the time is now 6:04. And I'd like to call the  
7 meeting to order. My name is Cindy Truitt, and I'm the  
8 Interim President of the Commission, and I will hopefully  
9 be joined by Tisha Guthrie, who will be co-facilitating  
10 with me as well.

11 So we're going to jump right into our roll call  
12 for this evening. If once I call your name, if you're  
13 here, please answer affirmatively.

14 Matt Hill.

15 COMMISSIONER HILL: Present.

16 CO-CHAIR TRUITT: Okay. Thank you, Matt.

17 Ms. Vernadine Kimball.

18 Okay. Tiara Watkins.

19 Iletha Joynes.

20 Ernst Valery.

21 Okay. Kate Edwards.

1 COMMISSIONER EDWARDS: Present.

2 CO-CHAIR TRUITT: Wonderful.

3 And we have a new Commission Member, Bree  
4 Jones.

5 COMMISSIONER JONES: Hi, everybody. Present.

6 CO-CHAIR TRUITT: Fantastic. So as a new --

7 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: I'm here. I'm here, Cindy.

8 CO-CHAIR TRUITT: Oh, good, wonderful. Okay.

9 Thanks, Tisha, fantastic. Tisha, we were just going to  
10 let Bree have a second to introduce herself as a new  
11 Commission Member. So, Bree, welcome to the Commission.  
12 We're really excited that you're joining us. But before  
13 we turn it over to you for a brief introduction, as I  
14 think on behalf of the Commission we wanted to shank --  
15 thank -- sorry -- Shannon Snow, who is a retiring  
16 Commissioner, who has been a phenomenal member of this  
17 Commission, and contributed greatly. So we wanted to  
18 formally thank her for all of her work on the Affordable  
19 Housing Trust Fund Commission.

20 Okay, Bree, over to you. If you wanted to do a  
21 quick introduction, that would be wonderful.

1           COMMISSIONER JONES: Sure. Thank you, Cindy.  
2 Just want to thank my fellow Commissioners, and just for  
3 being nominated and appointed to the Commission. My name  
4 is Bree Jones. I'm the founder of an organization named  
5 Parity, and we are really working to try to close the  
6 racial disparity both in terms of the wealth gap, but  
7 also in the homeownership gap. And we're doing that by  
8 working intentionally in neighborhoods that have been  
9 ravaged by redlining, segregation, block busting, urban  
10 renewal, predatory lending. And we're really trying to  
11 just create social momentum around revitalizing the  
12 neighborhood, but also creating homeownership  
13 opportunities in the neighborhood. So I really do kind  
14 of eat, live, breathe the mission of the Affordable  
15 Housing Trust Fund, and I'm just really honored to be a  
16 part of the team.

17           CO-CHAIR TRUITT: Wonderful. Thank you so  
18 much. We're really excited that you've been appointed  
19 and accepted.

20           So I'm going to turn it over to my co-partner  
21 here Tisha to continue on with the agenda.

1 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: Thank you, Cindy, and  
2 welcome back. I know you've been here virtually, but  
3 (indiscernible) back in Baltimore so --

4 CO-CHAIR TRUITT: Thank you.

5 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: -- may you be in good  
6 health.

7 CO-CHAIR TRUITT: Thank you. Appreciate it.

8 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: Of course. I invite the  
9 Commissioners to take a moment now to review the summary  
10 of the January minutes. For all those who are attending  
11 virtually, this is the portion where we go over the  
12 summary of the minutes and, hopefully, adopt them,  
13 approve them and adopt them to the archives.

14 So we'll go ahead and do that. And once you've  
15 reviewed the minutes, please, I invite one of the  
16 Commissioners to motion to accept the minutes, and we'll  
17 go from there.

18 (Pause.)

19 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: So do we have any motions to  
20 adopt the minutes?

21 CO-CHAIR TRUITT: I can make a motion. This is

1 Cindy Truitt. I'll make a motion to adopt the minutes.  
2 And as just a matter of housekeeping, after we make a  
3 motion we're going to circle back on roll call so that  
4 each individual Commissioner can weigh in on their  
5 approval, dissention or abstaining. So I'll make a  
6 motion to approve.

7 COMMISSIONER EDWARDS: This is Commissioner  
8 Edwards. I will second the motion.

9 CO-CHAIR TRUITT: So then we'll go through a  
10 quick roll call.

11 Matt.

12 MS. ESTRADA: Cindy, one second. Ms. Kimball,  
13 are you on the line?

14 COMMISSIONER KIMBALL: Yes, I am. Thank you so  
15 much.

16 CO-CHAIR TRUITT: Okay. So, Ms. Kimball, we're  
17 just -- reviewed the minutes. So we're just going  
18 through now as a matter of housekeeping, and we're just  
19 doing a roll call so that Commission Members can approve  
20 the motion or dissent or abstain.

21 So I'll start with Matt.



1 COMMISSIONER HILL: Aye.

2 CO-CHAIR TRUITT: Okay. Tisha.

3 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: Aye.

4 CO-CHAIR TRUITT: Kate. Kate, are you still  
5 there?

6 (No audible response.)

7 CO-CHAIR TRUITT: Okay. We'll go to  
8 Ms. Kimball.

9 COMMISSIONER KIMBALL: I do apologize for being  
10 late. Had some --

11 CO-CHAIR TRUITT: That's okay.

12 COMMISSIONER KIMBALL: -- difficulty.

13 CO-CHAIR TRUITT: Did you -- do you approve the  
14 motion to approve the minutes?

15 COMMISSIONER KIMBALL: I didn't even -- I  
16 didn't get all the minutes. I just saw -- yeah, I  
17 approve.

18 CO-CHAIR TRUITT: Okay. And then I guess,  
19 Bree, you were not at the meeting. Therefore --

20 COMMISSIONER JONES: I will abstain.

21 CO-CHAIR TRUITT: Okay. And then let me just

1 make sure. So, Kate.

2 COMMISSIONER EDWARDS: Yeah, approve.

3 CO-CHAIR TRUITT: Okay. Wonderful. Okay. So  
4 we have a unanimous approval to accept the motion to  
5 accept the meeting minutes. Great.

6 Back to you Tisha.

7 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: All right. Thank you. So  
8 next on the agenda we have department updates starting  
9 with nomination updates and going forth.

10 MS. ESTRADA: One thing before we get started.  
11 Cindy, you didn't state whether we had a quorum or not,  
12 and I believe we do now --

13 (Simultaneous comments.)

14 CO-CHAIR TRUITT: Yes.

15 MS. ESTRADA: Now we do.

16 CO-CHAIR TRUITT: Thank you very much,  
17 Stephanie. The transcriber --

18 MS. ESTRADA: Yeah, he needs --

19 CO-CHAIR TRUITT: We do have a quorum.

20 MS. ESTRADA: Thank you.

21 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: Yes. Thank you for that.

1 So, yes, we have department updates. I really am not  
2 sure who is providing that --

3 MS. ESTRADA: I'm going to provide it. Give me  
4 one second. I'm going to share it. One minute. Pull up  
5 the PowerPoint.

6 (Pause.)

7 MS. ESTRADA: Stacy, while I'm pulling up the  
8 PowerPoint, I believe they want the nomination  
9 information -- you want to go through that?

10 MS. FREED: Sure. Good evening everybody. I'm  
11 Stacy Freed. I'm with the Department of Housing and  
12 Community Development. As Cindy said, we are delighted  
13 to welcome Bree Jones, who was recently sworn in as a new  
14 member of the Commission. We'd also like to congratulate  
15 Matt Hill, who was sworn in for a second term. There are  
16 three additional Commissioners, who were confirmed by the  
17 Council, whose swearing, whose swearing-ins are being  
18 scheduled possibly for this week. The nomination for  
19 Stacy Griffith representing a homeowner, who received  
20 assistance from an affordable housing organization, was  
21 introduced at City Council this week. We received a

1 total of 10 nominations through our open nominations  
2 process for four positions; a renter earning 30 percent  
3 or less of the area median income, a renter earning 50  
4 percent or less of the area median income, a renter  
5 earning 30 percent or less of the area median income, who  
6 represents the Right to Counsel Program, and a  
7 representative of Baltimore City Realtor or Homebuilders  
8 Association. Those applications are being reviewed by  
9 the Mayor's office, who will make the -- make final  
10 decisions and determinations about sending nomination  
11 letters.

12 Happy to answer any questions that folk may  
13 have.

14 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: Yes. Thank you, Stacy.  
15 Thank you for that update. Do we have an idea of when  
16 the Mayor plans on making that decision?

17 MS. FREED: He's aiming for as soon as  
18 possible.

19 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: Thank you.

20 MS. FREED: I would like to add that the three  
21 Commissioners being sworn in this week are Catherine

1 Stokes representing the position of Housing Planning  
2 Community Development; Ramsey Ferris representing the  
3 position of Lending and Affordable Housing Finance; and  
4 Bishop Kevin Daniels representing a social service  
5 provider.

6           COMMISSIONER HILL: This is Matt Hill. More of  
7 a comment than a question. I mean, the Commission some,  
8 I think, it was two months ago now, two prior meetings  
9 submitted the name of Tisha Guthrie to fill the slot of  
10 the renter who (indiscernible) Right to Counsel Program.  
11 That nomination has not been introduced at Council to my  
12 knowledge. If I'm wrong, please correct me. And I don't  
13 understand why not. So I'd like to move, I think, that  
14 we authorize our interim president to follow-up on that  
15 nomination.

16           CO-CHAIR TRUITT: Matt, I will follow-up  
17 because the other Matt has been following up with that.  
18 So I can follow-up on that.

19           COMMISSIONER HILL: Thank you so much.

20           CO-CHAIR TRUITT: Thank you. I have been  
21 following up on that as well. So I will continue to do

1 so.

2 COMMISSIONER HILL: Thank you.

3 MS. ESTRADA: Okay. All right. So I'm going  
4 to be presenting the DHCD updates today. That's going to  
5 go over the Trust Fund revenue, the expenditures, the CLT  
6 NOFA and new construction, the Annual Report, and Stacy  
7 already went over the nominations.

8 This month revenue that came in as of January  
9 31st, we had 34 transactions. The monthly revenue  
10 totaled 4,221,000, giving us an average of \$124,149 per  
11 transaction. December's was 41 transactions, and that  
12 was a whole lot lower, 1,408,000. We did substantially  
13 well this month.

14 On the next slide we're going to talk about the  
15 revenue collected to date for FY 22 is \$18,441,018. That  
16 does include the City contribution. We have a total of  
17 \$44,247,628.

18 The next slide talks about year-over-year  
19 contribution, City contribution, and the revenue. For  
20 FY '22, the revenue to date is \$14,191,019, with a  
21 contribution of 4.25 million. That gives us a total of

1 \$18,441,018 for the year.

2 I do want to tap on at this moment that we are  
3 reaching the mark where if -- which is 16 million. If we  
4 hit 16 million for the year, the Affordable Housing Trust  
5 Fund and Baltimore City will split the revenue that's  
6 coming in. So there will be a 50 percent split. Once we  
7 hit 16 million, which we do believe will happen within  
8 the next month, Baltimore City General Fund will get 50  
9 percent, and the Affordable Housing Trust Fund will get  
10 the other half.

11 Revenue source and revenue amount. We had  
12 11,750,000. That's from the City contribution. And  
13 \$32,497,629 totals out to the tax revenue that comes in  
14 from the tax recordation.

15 Next is our net expenditures and commitment  
16 balance. We have -- we broke it down to show the  
17 administrative cost, which is \$707,988. Our committed  
18 money is \$17,379,500, which 350,000 of that has been  
19 expended. We have \$26,160,140 available.

20 These are lists of all the projects that have  
21 been committed that gives us the total of \$17,379,500.

1           This is our project status report that was  
2 requested by the Commission to include this monthly in  
3 our DHCD updates, and this is just to show you the status  
4 of how far we've got along in each project.

5           Next is the Community Land Trust.

6           CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: I'm sorry, Stephani. Could  
7 you just roll back to that just for a second?

8           MS. ESTRADA: Sure.

9           CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: Yeah.

10          CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: I mean, I know we have this  
11 on -- you have sent this up, but just, just to give us a  
12 second, to just look at it a little closer. Thank you.

13          MS. ESTRADA: Next is the Community Land Trust  
14 NOFA. Round one we're still doing deal structuring, and  
15 presenting agreements to the BOE for approval.

16          The round two we just finished our Community  
17 Land Trust orientation which was held on Friday, February  
18 18th. We will be scheduling kickoff meetings.

19          New construction and preservation of existing  
20 rental housing NOFAs. Round one, we're doing -- we're  
21 still doing deal structuring. Round two, deal



1 structuring and presenting to BOE. Round three, new NOFA  
2 will be released spring '22. Date is not confirmed yet.

3           For the inclusionary housing consultants  
4 enterprise and HR advisors are evaluating the current  
5 requirements, and will make recommendations to improve  
6 the program's effectiveness. The consultant study report  
7 draft was posted for public comment in August 2021. It  
8 has not been finalized. Council Bill 195, Inclusionary  
9 Housing for Baltimore City, was introduced on February  
10 7th by Councilwoman Ramos. A hearing date has not been  
11 set. Inclusionary Housing Advisory Board meetings still  
12 are monthly every third Wednesday of the month. You can  
13 look at the website for any updates.

14           The Annual Report, FY '21, the AHTF Annual  
15 Report was approved and posted on the website. You can  
16 visit the website. The link is included on this.

17           And Stacy already did the Commissioner  
18 nomination updates, and that's all.

19           Questions.

20           COMMISSIONER HILL: Hi, Stephani. This is  
21 Matt. The -- I think -- I'd like to put in for perhaps

1 the next Commission meeting that -- and I think I've  
2 talked about this before, but I'd really -- my concern is  
3 still around moving the money out the door because now we  
4 have a more substantial chest here, which is fantastic.  
5 But if the money doesn't start to move, people I think  
6 are going to start to ask more questions about why, and  
7 there is such a desperate need out there to get this  
8 money moving. So to that end, I'd like to propose that  
9 at the next meeting perhaps we go down each project one-  
10 by-one, and try to understand a little bit more from each  
11 -- on each project whether award's been made, what the  
12 next step is for that project, and what the holdup is.  
13 What's preventing that project from moving forward is a  
14 way to forward more of our time and effort on that  
15 particular issue.

16           And I'll be -- a related -- a side comment is  
17 just I am a little frustrated that we don't have a date  
18 for that spring rental housing NOFA yet. I think it's --  
19 again, it's just we're getting more and more money, which  
20 is fantastic. We just need to get the money out the  
21 door.

1 MS. ESTRADA: Yeah. We can probably discuss in  
2 the Commission meeting about our new agenda for next  
3 month on maybe getting some more projects, and people  
4 speaking to their projects and the status of them. I can  
5 kind of speak to the NOFA a little bit. I know we're in  
6 the middle of building a database for the Affordable  
7 Housing Trust Fund that's going to create a very easy  
8 application process. I am hoping to have that up for the  
9 next NOFA.

10 So we just got off the phone with the database  
11 people, and we're really hoping to have that built for  
12 the next NOFA. It will make it a whole lot easier for  
13 everybody the whole process, them uploading their  
14 documents and everything. So I -- it is happening in  
15 spring though.

16 COMMISSIONER EDWARDS: Yeah. And we'll have a  
17 date by the next Commission hearing. We've had a lot of  
18 things that we've been working on internally getting  
19 agreements out, and preparing for the next NOFA round  
20 with what Stephani talked about with the new database.  
21 So we want to have that up and running before we are able

1 to select a date. But I think by next meeting, we will  
2 be able to do that at that time if not before.

3 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: Thank you both Stacy and --  
4 I mean, sorry -- Kate and Stephani. And I echo Matt's  
5 sentiment. It's more than disconcerting to see how much  
6 money has actually gotten out the door in contrast with  
7 the amount that's been, that's been promised, that's been  
8 awarded. And I'm hoping that we can get into this  
9 somewhat of a discussion as we get into the Annual  
10 Report. But we've, we've hired Grounded Solutions as a  
11 consultant, and I'm wondering if that is part of the  
12 discussion. If that's part of the, the advise, the  
13 advisement that we're getting, how can we streamline this  
14 process so that we don't have this grand amount of money  
15 that's being awarded, and dating back to 2020, and we  
16 still haven't gotten those funds to the awardees. It's a  
17 problem, and people -- projects are suffering because of  
18 that. And because projects are suffering, our  
19 communities are suffering. So, hopefully, when we get  
20 into the Annual Report we can talk a little bit about  
21 that, but that's also a reason why -- wanted to take us

1 back to the, the one slide that highlighted the projects,  
2 their status. I know that the Commissioners get these  
3 slides, but people are here in real time. And just to  
4 give them an opportunity to actually see these slides,  
5 and digest them a little bit so that the presentations  
6 can form any questions they have. So I thank you, but  
7 just let, if we can be a little bit more mindful. That  
8 I've been on the end of these presentations, and having  
9 to take like screen shots so that I can go and look at  
10 them to actually have informed questions. So but thank  
11 you very much.

12           COMMISSIONER EDWARDS: This is Commissioner  
13 Edwards. I'd like to just speak to that a little bit.  
14 We have definitely been working with Grounded Solutions  
15 to help streamline our Community Land Trust process, and  
16 help educate our side, our Law Department, and all the  
17 different players with Community Land Trust. So that has  
18 been very helpful for the, the Agency, but as far as the  
19 -- they're specific to Community Land Trust. And then  
20 for the larger rental projects, we've gone through the  
21 dates that are in that chart that tell you where we are

1 with each project. And a lot of the issues as we've  
2 talked about in the past are that these projects still  
3 have some work to do on their end as far as site control,  
4 legal issues, completing their financing packages. So  
5 there is a variety of steps and reasons for each  
6 agreement and where they are in their stages. We could  
7 talk -- well, we will be talking about that more because  
8 we have a couple presenters today. But I just wanted to  
9 highlight that.

10 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: Thank you.

11 Pardon me. I'm sorry, Matt.

12 COMMISSIONER HILL: If someone else wants to  
13 go, I can hold. I don't want to suck up the oxygen.

14 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: No. You suck on.

15 COMMISSIONER HILL: Oh boy. So two things that  
16 I mentioned before, and I just wanted to keep it on the  
17 Department's radar as you're looking at the next rental  
18 housing NOFA. One, again, if it's going to be some sort  
19 of transitional housing or non-permanent getting --  
20 requiring that -- applicants to get a letter of support  
21 from the City's Continuum of Care. And, secondly --

1 actually maybe it's three things. Whether or not the  
2 rental housing NOFA will include potentially an ability  
3 of Community Land Trust to apply, and whether some of the  
4 Community Land Trust money might be available within that  
5 rental housing NOFA. Some sort of set aside.

6 I think those are the, probably, the two most  
7 important. Well, the third one was then making public  
8 ultimately the applicants. Once awards have been made,  
9 the applicants and what their scores were. And I know  
10 I've brought those things up in the past. I just want --  
11 if the Department had any further discussion on that or  
12 if that will be (indiscernible) the NOFA?

13 COMMISSIONER EDWARDS: Yeah. I can speak to  
14 those three points. To start with the Community Land  
15 Trust rental. We have been working with Grounded  
16 Solutions to put language into the NOFA so that we can  
17 have a portion of the NOFA for Community Land Trust  
18 rental projects. So we're moving on that.

19 We are happy to list the applicants. At this  
20 point we're not planning to release scores. We can  
21 discuss that further. But we'll definitely list all of

1 the applicants as well as those who -- those who have  
2 been awarded, and those who have not been awarded. And  
3 as far as the transitional housing projects getting a  
4 letter of support from the Continuum of Care, we're happy  
5 to consider that. I was thinking that that would -- to  
6 me would make sense to have a motion if you want to put  
7 forward the motion to see if the rest of the  
8 Commissioners also would like to make that  
9 recommendation. We have consulted just on our end with  
10 the Law Department to see where we stand with that and, I  
11 mean, I think basically it can be a recommendation that  
12 is made by the Commission to the Agency, and then the  
13 Agency makes the final decision on whether or not to do  
14 that. And we'd like to have a conversation with the  
15 Continuum of Care too if that is, indeed, the  
16 recommendation of the Commission. Then we'll have a  
17 discussion with them, and just work out how that would  
18 work out. Whether it would apply only to transitional  
19 housing projects or other projects that are also serving  
20 formerly homeless populations. So we're definitely open  
21 to that and -- but I do think that it's worth the entire



1 Commission considering and knowing whether or not that is  
2 a formal recommendation for -- from the Commission.

3           COMMISSIONER HILL: In that case, I'd like to  
4 make the motion that the Commission recommend to the  
5 Department that with respect to transitional or otherwise  
6 non-permanent housing that such applicants obtain a --  
7 well, that such applicants obtain a letter of support  
8 from the City's Continuum of Care, and that the  
9 Department consult with the Continuum of Care in  
10 considering this recommendation. I -- and so that's the  
11 end of my motion.

12           I don't have a concern with respect to projects  
13 that work with formerly homeless folks. That's not the  
14 concern. The concern is just with the nature of the  
15 housing being transitional, temporary, only because,  
16 again, my understanding is that the City, the country is  
17 moving more toward permanently affordable permanent  
18 housing, and away from the traditional housing model. So  
19 I -- that's my primary concern. Thanks.

20           CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: This is Commissioner  
21 Guthrie. I second the motion.

1 CO-CHAIR TRUITT: Let me just make sure I  
2 understand it. So the motion was that the Commission is  
3 recommending that the Department receive a letter of  
4 support from the Continuum of Care for any organization  
5 that is putting forth conditional or non-permanent  
6 housing. And that the, that the Department will consider  
7 and coordinate with the coordinating through the  
8 Continuum of Care.

9 COMMISSIONER HILL: Yes. Thank you.

10 CO-CHAIR TRUITT: Okay. So we have a motion.  
11 So I'm going to do the quick roll call again. And,  
12 please, express either approval or denial or abstention  
13 for that motion.

14 Matt, you made the motion.

15 COMMISSIONER HILL: Aye.

16 (Simultaneous comments.

17 COMMISSIONER JONES: Sorry --

18 CO-CHAIR TRUITT: If there is no more  
19 discussion, then we can -- calling the roll.

20 COMMISSIONER JONES: Yeah. So this is Bree.  
21 I, I guess I just don't know enough about transitional

1 housing, and if asking for a letter of support from the  
2 Continuum of Care, is that a normal process when seeking  
3 funding for folks who are doing transitional housing? Is  
4 there any potential that a project that for all intents  
5 and purposes is a great project if it's not in line with  
6 the Continuum of Care? Could it be rejected? I just  
7 don't know enough. So I just want to make sure that  
8 we're not creating an undue hurdle for organizations  
9 inadvertently.

10           COMMISSIONER EDWARDS: Yeah, I don't -- I'm not  
11 aware of that being something that has been required in  
12 others, but I don't know if Matt has seen that in other  
13 places where we require -- not we, but where a letter has  
14 been required from the Continuum of Care.

15           COMMISSIONER HILL: No. I'm not aware of that  
16 requirement either in other instances, but again the  
17 purpose is not to create an undue burden. It's really  
18 about the fact that our -- I understand it the federal  
19 policy, state policy, city policy is moving toward more  
20 of a housing first model where you are providing someone  
21 who is homeless with a house with supportive services to

1 help them stay in the property without putting some sort  
2 of time limit on how long they can be there. And that's  
3 because that model has shown the most promise in helping  
4 people to actually get and stay housed. And so that's a  
5 little different than the transitional housing model  
6 which, again, sets the -- that kind of time period as I  
7 understand it of how long someone can live there that has  
8 a more restrictive environment. And I'm not saying that  
9 those are bad programs. I worked for awhile at one of  
10 those programs at the (indiscernible) house down in  
11 Fells. It's just my understanding that as the federal  
12 and city and state policy is moving in the direction more  
13 of the housing first permanently affordable permanent  
14 housings (indiscernible) model. And so if, you know, the  
15 Continuum of Care just has a lot more expertise on this.  
16 They see the big picture. And so I think it's more  
17 appropriate for them to weigh in to say whether or not  
18 this, this particular project comports with the federal,  
19 the state, the city kind of housing policy.

20                   COMMISSIONER JONES: Okay. That helped clarify  
21 a lot. So it sounds like the Continuum of Care is really

1 kind of like an additional layer for us to ensure that  
2 whatever housing is created is really going to be meeting  
3 the needs of the, the individual or of the residents to  
4 the best of the housing providers abilities. Is that  
5 right, Matt?

6           COMMISSIONER HILL: That's right. I mean,  
7 don't get me wrong. There's a big debate between those  
8 who want to do more permanent housing, and those who  
9 believe more in a transitional housing model, and I'm  
10 just saying I don't really -- I don't know. I don't  
11 understand the debate well enough. I don't know the  
12 particulars. I don't understand the big picture. And,  
13 yes, so the Continuum of Care has that bigger pictures,  
14 and that's why I think we should, we should consult with  
15 them when an applicant wants to do more of the  
16 transitional non-permanent housing.

17           COMMISSIONER EDWARDS: And I do have some  
18 concern that we're treating this particular group of  
19 projects differently from the rest of them. I mean,  
20 permanent supportive housing also, to my understanding,  
21 goes to the Continuum of Care. I don't see why we

1 wouldn't treat all projects the same if we're going to  
2 seek their input on projects that serve that same  
3 population. Just wondering why we make that distinction.

4 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: This is Commissioner  
5 Guthrie. I mean, just from a lay person's perspective,  
6 when there is a very vulnerable population, and there are  
7 very specific needs, and those specific needs do in a lot  
8 of ways require expertise, an expertise that many of us  
9 do not possess, it's usually best practice to consult  
10 with an organization or entity that has demonstrated a  
11 level of expertise. I mean, I, again, I would have to  
12 agree with Matt. I'm -- or even with Bree. I'm not as  
13 well versed, but what I do know is that Continuum of Care  
14 is well respected and held in high regard with their,  
15 their level of knowledge with regards to best practices  
16 around addressing the needs of our homeless brothers and  
17 sisters. So that's my contribution. Again, I do think  
18 that not singling out these projects in a way that is in  
19 a negative manner, but just identifying that there's a  
20 reason why our homeless population is growing, and I do  
21 believe it's because there hasn't been a very

1 comprehensive nor a dynamic, a dynamic way of addressing  
2 the issues in a comprehensive manner. So --

3 COMMISSIONER JONES: Sorry. Go ahead, Cindy.

4 CO-CHAIR TRUITT: I have a quick clarification  
5 question, and I don't have the documents in front of me.  
6 So please forgive me. I was wondering if the original  
7 charter, if you will, for the Affordable Housing Trust  
8 Fund Commission was agnostic in terms of permanent or  
9 transitional. So for use of funds basically. I don't  
10 have the documents in front of me so we -- I can  
11 certainly research that, but I was curious if that was  
12 specified anywhere in the original charter.

13 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: Is specified perpetually  
14 affordable. That is the language in the charter.

15 COMMISSIONER EDWARDS: Perpetually affordable  
16 for every project?

17 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: I don't -- I think so, Kate,  
18 yeah.

19 COMMISSIONER EDWARDS: I think that the rental

20 --

21 (Simultaneous comments.)

1           COMMISSIONER EDWARDS:  -- 30 to 40 years, which  
2 is not -- not perpetually affordable.  That would be true  
3 for the home ownership and the Community Land Trust  
4 projects?

5           CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE:  Well, I don't think, well,  
6 okay --

7           (Simultaneous comments.)

8           CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE:  I'm not thinking that, that  
9 we -- does the charter actually address transitional  
10 housing then?  I mean, I'm --

11           COMMISSIONER HILL:  This is Matt.  I don't  
12 think this is talked about in the charter, my memory, but  
13 I don't have it in front of me either.  This is a good  
14 discussion, and you all are reminding me that I think the  
15 last time I brought this up we talked a little bit about  
16 maybe having someone from the Continuum of Care come and  
17 speak to this group to better inform our discussion.  So  
18 maybe -- I apologize -- maybe I skipped a step there, and  
19 maybe I'll table my motion, and suggest that we have  
20 somebody from the Continuum of Care, their Executive  
21 Committee, to come and speak to us on this issue.



1           COMMISSIONER JONES: Matt, I have one more  
2 question before we table the discussion. Were we looking  
3 to have the letter of support from the Continuum of Care  
4 as a supplementary document in the application process or  
5 after an application has been received, and we're  
6 reviewing the application, asking the COC for their  
7 perspective?

8           COMMISSIONER HILL: I assume that an applicant  
9 would want to provide it with their application, but I --  
10 if you think it will work better a different layout, I'm  
11 fine with that.

12           COMMISSIONER JONES: Okay. I guess I don't  
13 have a perspective right now. Maybe like when we have  
14 COC come in that will help give us clarity on what's the  
15 better work flow.

16           CO-CHAIR TRUITT: This is Cindy. I think  
17 that's a great idea, Matt, to be able to bring them in to  
18 be better informed and educated. Maybe then tabling the  
19 motion would be a great strategy for us to get better  
20 informed. So for housekeeping sake, are you withdrawing  
21 your motion?

1           COMMISSIONER HILL: I always get confused on  
2 the withdrawing versus tabling piece.

3           CO-CHAIR TRUITT: Tabling.

4           COMMISSIONER HILL: Sure. I'll withdraw my  
5 motion. That's fine.

6           CO-CHAIR TRUITT: Okay. That's probably what  
7 we'll do. And then we'll put on the agenda to have the  
8 COC present, and that way we can be better informed, and  
9 then talk through bringing back the motion if appropriate  
10 at that time. Thanks, Matt. Good discussion.

11           CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: Thank you everyone. And  
12 really this, this definitely begs the issue of why we  
13 need to have this seat filled on the Commission. We have  
14 not had anyone from the homeless population represented  
15 on this Commission for over a year, for well over a year.  
16 So a lot of this discussion, of course, is a robust  
17 discussion, but it could be informed more better informed  
18 if we actually had someone represented on the Commission.  
19 So --

20           MS. FREED: If I may, if I may, I can speak to  
21 that briefly. This is Stacy Freed again. The Mayor's

1 office has sent a nomination letter to a member of the  
2 Continuum of Care. They are waiting for that individual  
3 to return some required information before his nomination  
4 -- before their nomination can move forward.

5 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: Thank you, Stacy. Thank you  
6 for the update.

7 So I think the next thing in our agenda is the  
8 Annual Report.

9 COMMISSIONER EDWARDS: Stephani, were you  
10 planning to -- I didn't know --

11 MS. ESTRADA: We reported in the DHCD updates.  
12 On the agenda it should be on to the presentations.

13 COMMISSIONER EDWARDS: Right, yeah. Because  
14 that was just the update was -- we about --

15 (Simultaneous comments.)

16 MS. ESTRADA: -- posted.

17 COMMISSIONER EDWARDS: Yeah, that's been  
18 posted. We had the Annual Report discussion at the past  
19 two meetings when we sent it out for review by the  
20 Commission. So this was just letting everybody know that  
21 it was posted.

1 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: Okay. Thank you very much.

2 Okay. So moving on. The next item on our  
3 agenda will be the presentations. We have Nichole Battle  
4 offering a presentation. So this segment of, this  
5 segment of our meeting will be getting some feedback from  
6 those awardees and, hopefully, their experience. We have  
7 Nichole Battle from GEDCO. And hi, Nichole. Thank you  
8 for coming. Thank you for accommodating us.

9 MS. BATTLE: Thank you. So do I just --

10 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: I'm turning it over to you.

11 MS. BATTLE: Okay. Great. Hi. I'm Nichole  
12 Battle. I'm with Govans Ecumenical Development  
13 Corporation. We submitted an application for financing  
14 to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund for our project,  
15 Harford House, which is an SRO permanent supportive  
16 housing for men who have experienced homelessness. The  
17 building or the community has been around since the  
18 early, early '90s. It was developed by a nonprofit. We  
19 took over 10 years later in the early 2000s, and we have  
20 been providing supporting services, and have been the  
21 owner of that property since then.

1           We applied in, on -- in March, on March 5,  
2 2021, for a half a million dollars in Affordable Housing  
3 Trust Funds to really help us with some predevelopment  
4 expenses as well as conscription. The goal was to get  
5 funding so that we could continue to leverage additional  
6 funding so that we can get to the point where we could  
7 develop this -- redevelop this property within two years.

8           As I mentioned, we submitted our application on  
9 March 5, 2021. We received confirmation on March 9,  
10 2021, that it was received. One of the issues that we  
11 ran into was every time an application would be submitted  
12 I guess it was too large given the attachments that we  
13 included, and so it kept bouncing back, and it wouldn't  
14 have -- didn't go through. We happened to at that point  
15 in time submit two applications, and we saw it more so  
16 happening with the other application versus the one we  
17 submitted for Harford House.

18           What we are proposing to do with the funds is,  
19 as I said, used (verbatim) for predevelopment as well as  
20 construction funding. We are rehabbing the structure,  
21 which is three town homes in the 1500 block of North

1 Avenue in the Oliver community. We are converting our  
2 SROs, which are single-room occupancy units into  
3 efficiencies, and we're increasing the number from 26 to  
4 33. We are maintaining the same footprint. We're  
5 essentially just adding additional square footage to the  
6 back of the two properties that are part of the current  
7 structure.

8           It was a really interesting process,  
9 interesting good. There were some things like I said  
10 that we would suggest really kind of addressing. One, it  
11 may make sense to have maybe a drop box of some sort to  
12 applications so that you don't experience the bounce  
13 backs and the stress of thinking your application was not  
14 received. We, once we had our meeting with staff because  
15 originally the funds were only going to be used for  
16 construction financing, we were able to give some  
17 (indiscernible) and change -- there was a change in the  
18 language to allow us to use 25 percent of the funds for  
19 predevelopment. For any developer, especially smaller  
20 community based developer or nonprofit, having  
21 predevelopment funds are essential in order to move your

1 project to a point in time where you can actually submit  
2 applications for larger amounts for your construction.

3 I haven't gone through the draw process for  
4 this, these funds yet. I did appreciate the kickoff  
5 meeting. It has been a long process. We were award --  
6 well, we were told last week that our project will go to  
7 Board of Estimates on March 16, 2022. So, essentially,  
8 we're looking at a year long process from the time we  
9 submitted our application to the time that it's going to  
10 Board of Estimates for approval.

11 Unfortunately, this is probably not a very good  
12 time to have any type of project under construction or  
13 any project getting to the point of construction because  
14 everyone is experiencing an increase in construction  
15 costs because of Covid. They're having issues with labor  
16 shortage as well as time tables. All of that's  
17 impacting. We currently have a project where we closed  
18 in November, and we have seen an increase of almost 50  
19 percent in construction costs from the time we closed to  
20 now. So that's probably something that you will  
21 experience with those applications that may have been

1 funded or been approved a couple years ago. I can only  
2 imagine what, what developers are going to see, if they  
3 haven't already. It's just an increase where they're  
4 going to need additional resources in order to develop  
5 this housing that's really needed.

6           As far as process, let's see, yeah, the  
7 application was pretty straightforward, very  
8 comprehensive. It required a lot of information, but  
9 it's understandable. I appreciate it. Like I said, the  
10 kickoff meeting that occurred in October, so we submitted  
11 our application in March. We had a kickoff. We received  
12 our award letter in August, and we had a kickoff meeting  
13 in October.

14           It will be really helpful, I think, once you  
15 have a group of awardees to maybe have or host a session  
16 where you're really kind of teaching everyone how to go  
17 through the disbursement process. I'm hoping it's not  
18 something that's brand new. The City has been disbursing  
19 funds for decades. So being able to use an existing  
20 process, and just apply it to this, would be really  
21 helpful, and can save you a lot of time as opposed to



1 creating a whole brand new disbursement process. What I  
2 liked this time was how the City took the lead on the MBE  
3 and WBE goals. They were actually the ones that reached  
4 out to Chris's office, and they were able to share the  
5 budget that we had presented, and was able to kind of  
6 streamline the process, and get the goal letter that's  
7 often needed for the contract to be drafted.

8           What else? I don't know. I think that's,  
9 that's pretty much all I have to say. If you guys have  
10 any questions, I'm open and willing to answer.

11           Can you guys still hear you? Oh, okay.

12           MS. ESTRADA: Yes. We can hear you.

13           COMMISSIONER HILL: Hi, Nichole. This is Matt.  
14 First, thank you so much for coming and sharing your  
15 expertise and your experience with us. We really  
16 appreciate it.

17           MS. BATTLE: There are no worries. Thank you,  
18 Matt.

19           COMMISSIONER HILL: So just to -- so it sounds  
20 like though just trying to get -- how much of the delay?  
21 So the -- you're saying it's about a year from the award

1 to the Board of Estimates. I think the Department before  
2 has put out that they're looking to get that down to six  
3 months. If you could, A, how much of the delay that you  
4 experienced was due to something you needed? So, for  
5 instance, we've been told that sometimes the delays are  
6 because the developer's just not ready for the money yet.  
7 They need to line up other financing or they need this or  
8 that. And how much of it was part of the process of the  
9 City? And then I guess Part B of the question is how --  
10 how could you summarize how to change or shepherd that  
11 process better so that we can it down to closer to six  
12 months to get the money moving?

13 MS. BATTLE: Well, I mean, if you look at the  
14 timeline that I presented, I guess we received our award  
15 letter. So if you're looking at that six-month timeframe  
16 between award letter and actual contract, we received our  
17 award letter on August 4th, and we signed it on August  
18 4th. And we should, according to our representative or  
19 our liaison should have Board of Estimates approval by  
20 March.

21 It took from March to maybe August -- kind of

1 -- let's see. We received our first round of questions  
2 late April, and that process lasted until early May.  
3 Then there was a period of time where we didn't hear much  
4 of anything from anyone between May and August when an  
5 award letter was received, and then it was signed that,  
6 that same day. We had a kickoff meeting in October,  
7 which is understandable because there were probably  
8 summer schedules. And we received our draft agreement in  
9 December. I think it's -- looking at the agreement that  
10 I received, and comparing it kind of to the agreement  
11 that we received when the Affordable Housing Trust Fund  
12 was originally created, and when share -- that their  
13 agreement with the City, it's kind of boilerplate minus a  
14 few changes here and there. I am concerned if it's -- if  
15 the agreement takes longer than a couple of weeks to even  
16 have as a draft. I understand it was, it was the first  
17 time really kind of going through the Affordable Housing  
18 Trust Fund application process. So, I guess, taking two  
19 months from the time they received the application to  
20 when they reached out to you with questions, that could  
21 have been just a learning curve. It was first time going

1 through that process. I could probably see that maybe  
2 taking less time, and maybe an award letter. I'm  
3 assuming that's just pretty much a template. So I'm  
4 hoping between the last response received from us, which  
5 was in May, and the time that we received an award  
6 letter, which was August, so that's May, June, July,  
7 August. So it was almost four months to receive an award  
8 letter from my last -- from our last response. I'm sure  
9 that could probably be streamlined a little bit. Yeah. I  
10 mean, it's a lot of administrative things it seems. Not  
11 knowing the, the process is from the outside, but some of  
12 those administrative items can probably be addressed  
13 faster.

14           And as far as the delay, I don't think the fact  
15 that we didn't have all of our resources available was  
16 part of the delay. I mean, we, we clearly had a plan  
17 that we were, that we shared with the City of how we were  
18 securing the additional resources, which is what was  
19 pretty much laid out between the two weeks of -- I guess  
20 it was the last week of April and the first two weeks of  
21 May, which seemed to be the response that they needed to

1 make a determination on whether or not we would be  
2 awarded funds in August. I'm just -- I am concerned  
3 because that timeline has already shifted because of what  
4 we're seeing in the market as a result of Covid. And  
5 it's not just in the City. I mean, if you talk to our  
6 friends at DHCD at the State level, there are lots of --  
7 quite a few projects that are delayed because of these  
8 additional expenses that they're seeing on the  
9 construction end.

10           COMMISSIONER HILL: If you don't mind my  
11 asking, A, well, A, that's crazy. I can't believe that  
12 you're talking like a 50 percent increase in construction  
13 costs. That's insane. How are you planning on filling  
14 that gap?

15           MS. BATTLE: So right now it's really just  
16 we're -- because of the population that we're serving, we  
17 are like a COC group. So we're receiving subsidies from  
18 MOHS to really kind of pay our staff that's providing us  
19 supportive services. We're also going through -- housing  
20 first program, which unfortunately hasn't been the best  
21 for us because it just takes a little bit longer to get

1 residents, applicants, through the process, which is one  
2 of the reasons why we're really trying to change the  
3 housing type that we're proposing in an effort to kind of  
4 hopefully get more people interested in coming through  
5 this property, and sticking with the process.

6           So it's really for this type of project having  
7 any type of conventional debt is scary because you're  
8 having to rely on another process to bring people into  
9 your units to occupy the units and pay the rent. And  
10 given our experience with COC, it has been more  
11 detrimental than helpful. So we're really, at this point  
12 we're going to be submitting applications for as much  
13 subsidy or soft subsidy or soft debt as we can from the  
14 City, from the State, from foundations to really try  
15 reduce as much conventional debt that we're going to have  
16 to probably have with this project. But, yeah, that --  
17 it's really a lot of subsidy. I mean, whenever you're  
18 addressing the needs of the population that we are  
19 addressing because you can't just charge market rent,  
20 which a lot of market rate projects can, enough rent to  
21 service the debt, you really have to figure out a way to

1 subsidize your operations so that the rent that you do  
2 collect you're able to pay the expenses of operating the  
3 project and whatever debt service you have. So we're  
4 going to -- we'll be submitting applications to the  
5 State. We've talked to shelter -- what is it, Shelter  
6 Transitional Program at DHCD. We will be applying for  
7 Maryland energy assistance funding. That's also through  
8 the State of Maryland. We'll be submitting a federal  
9 home loan bank application. We'll -- we've, we have  
10 these numbers, which kind of helped us really figure out  
11 if our construction costs were realistic. Probably about  
12 a year ago they were. Now, based on what we received  
13 they're not.

14           So we're also going to have to go through a BE  
15 exercise with the contractor that we select to figure out  
16 a way to reduce the expenses, but yet still deliver a  
17 product that we are happy with, and that will address the  
18 needs of the people that we're serving.

19           So, yeah, Matt, it's, it's hard out here  
20 developing affordable housing. Land's not cheap. We're  
21 at the point now where we are -- we're at the mercy of

1 the contractors or the market. The general contractors  
2 are at the mercy of the subcontractors because it's, it's  
3 their world. They can decide what projects they want to  
4 take. They can increase their cost. And then to that  
5 there's also market conditions. I mean, everybody is  
6 experiencing it just with your day-to-day. We're not  
7 getting the supplies we need very quickly. As a result,  
8 demand is high. Supply is low. That's where you see  
9 increases. It's just unfortunate because we -- those who  
10 develop housing that's affordable, we don't have the  
11 luxury of increasing our rents to address that increase  
12 in debt service or, you know, we got to figure out a way  
13 to subsidize.

14           So one of the things that would be great, I  
15 mean, you guys received a lot of money, I don't, I don't  
16 understand how -- what the disbursement is. I hear that  
17 you get to a certain amount 50 goes to the Affordable  
18 Housing Trust Fund, and 50 goes to DHCD. But one of the  
19 things I would also suggest is maybe increasing the award  
20 amounts. That's a, that's another option, something that  
21 you, you can -- you should consider. Because I don't



1 know. Depending on how large the project, if your  
2 ultimate goal is to increase the number of affordable  
3 housing units that are coming online, then your projects  
4 need to be bigger than 5 or 10. If you have that ability  
5 your costs are going to, they're going to also increase.  
6 So it's, yeah. I hope I answered your question.

7           COMMISSIONER HILL: You did, and you read my  
8 mind. I promise folks we did not have this part planned  
9 in advance but, yeah, I mean there is a surplus, and I  
10 just wonder how difficult it would be to -- for DHCD to  
11 go to awardees and say, hey, if you have experienced --

12                           (Audio interruption.)

13           MS. BATTLE: Everyone is kind of -- they're  
14 limping along.

15           COMMISSIONER HILL: Not to put the Department  
16 on the spot, but I'm going to put the Department on the  
17 spot. What's your initial thought in terms of allowing  
18 for supplemental requests for current awardees who have  
19 experienced an increase in development costs over the  
20 past year? If any -- if other folks have the same  
21 experience as Nichole, that's a significant concern.

1           COMMISSIONER EDWARDS: I would just -- I  
2 haven't had a chance to think about it. So like you  
3 said, you're putting up on the spot, but I don't, I don't  
4 have an initial huge concerns. I think we were planning  
5 with the supplemental money to come back, and talk with  
6 the Commission about ways that we could allocate that,  
7 and that could be one of the options on the table. I  
8 think we should explore other possibilities, but that  
9 could be one of the, one of the ways. So I don't know if  
10 we want to have more discussion.

11           MS. BATTLE: I think, yeah, my screen.  
12 Claudia, do you want to share just kind of what we are  
13 talking about from CDN? Yeah, you're muted. CDN and  
14 MHC.

15           MS. RANDALL: Can you hear me now? Okay.  
16 Sorry. It's my -- for some reason my -- your headset  
17 does not rollover when I go from Zoom to Webex, but I  
18 have no idea.

19           I agree with what Nicole has said, and this is  
20 also one reason we've asked for a significant amount of  
21 ARPA funds to be put in Affordable Housing Trust Funds

1 throughout the State. We've written the Mayor. We've  
2 written the Governor. We've really -- because we're just  
3 losing ground, and this is, ARPA funds is sort of a once  
4 in a generation infusion. And so not only do we need to  
5 make the investment now, but we don't want to lose  
6 ground, and we don't want to stall on projects that we  
7 know are already have been approved. So that's -- I  
8 agree with everything that Nichole has said thus far that  
9 it's just really important that we think about ways to  
10 also keep the current group of projects on track and  
11 producing to the degree possible, and not to get stalled  
12 there.

13 MS. BATTLE: And I want -- note, I mean, it's  
14 more for this project that we're doing or community we're  
15 building. It's preservation as well as increase. So  
16 we're really trying to preserve the housing that's  
17 affordable that exists in addition to increase the amount  
18 of housing that's affordable. So, I mean, we have to --  
19 it will be great if we're increasing or we're creating  
20 all this housing, but then we're still losing housing  
21 that's affordable? Your net -- you run the risk of your

1 net begin a negative or just evening out.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah. But I think this  
3 is true throughout the State. We -- keep our eye on  
4 increasing as well as preserving at the same time. And I  
5 think the folks from DHCD are well aware of this just  
6 our, our losing ground, and the worries about losing  
7 ground. And I think the Maryland Affordable Housing  
8 needs assessment also really did a very good job of  
9 helping people understand this as also a regional issue.  
10 So, yeah, we just -- we're going to have to do both at  
11 the same time, and it's expensive, but our health and our  
12 economy and our education system depend on these things.  
13 So we really need to think about that investment, and how  
14 it's connected to other investments that the State is  
15 making at the same time. And I think the COC connection  
16 is also a really important one just as we think about the  
17 overall help and equitable recovery from the pandemic.  
18 Because we're -- we might have denied it before our  
19 connection, but if this pandemic hasn't taught us  
20 anything, I mean, it's -- we're not going to just be able  
21 to let people go it alone. And housing and stability is

1 going to have a huge cost of spreading disease and Covid,  
2 and so I would just say we really need to think about the  
3 broader connection to other aims of the City and the  
4 State should be really important at this point.

5 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: Thank you both. I just  
6 wanted to make a comment, Claudia and Nichole. Since to  
7 the Commission we had a surplus last year, and I believe  
8 it was last year, and we did something not the -- not  
9 exactly the same, but the funds that -- the surplus funds  
10 we actually did kind of reallocate them to different  
11 buckets, and we added another awardee to one of the  
12 buckets.

13 Matt or anyone else, if you can recall how that  
14 actually transpired, the details of it. But we actually  
15 did do that once with surplus funds.

16 COMMISSIONER EDWARDS: I'll jump in. I guess,  
17 I think that it was split up based on the percentages  
18 that the different buckets already were. It was just  
19 increasing things by that percentage, and that's what I  
20 thought we would probably end up doing this time, but we  
21 haven't had that conversation yet with the Commission to

1 talk about if that's the way we want to do it or if there  
2 were some other proposals that would be presented. If we  
3 increased it by percentages, and then, I guess, the  
4 proposal that Matt was talking about was to not  
5 necessarily then add that to just more awardees.  
6 Instead, it would be potentially adding it to people who  
7 were already previously awarded to cover increased costs.  
8 Would need them to show us proof of those increased costs  
9 to figure out how we would actually determine what those  
10 increased costs were.

11 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: Thank you.

12 MS. BATTLE: Could also -- there's a lot of  
13 discussion right now in the housing market about whether  
14 everybody's costs going up 20 percent. So you could have  
15 a straight line, hey, we're going to give everybody an 18  
16 or a 22 percent increase, and I, I have to say I feel  
17 that just within the, the calculation of this that  
18 sometimes we're asking people to prove things that I'm  
19 not exactly sure -- the exercise seems one of distrust,  
20 and I'm not -- I don't want to be cavalier with public  
21 money, but I'm not sure what, like, when you do all of

1 that, I think everybody is just tired, and we don't move  
2 any closer to actually completing projects or to -- I'm  
3 not sure what kind of accountability. You know what I'm  
4 saying? Just like if one person says it's 18 percent,  
5 and the other person says their cost increase is 24  
6 percent, it's like where, where are we going with this?  
7 So I think that maybe to consider a straight line  
8 increase of X percent for everybody as opposed to asking  
9 people to prove that they have X versus Y might be  
10 something to think about. But, again, it certainly would  
11 be up to the Commissioners to decide that, and how they  
12 would, how they would calculate that.

13 MS. RANDALL: Yeah. I doubt you're going to  
14 have someone that's going to be asking for more money  
15 than they need, I mean. And I think as you're doing  
16 rehab, it's always best to have a healthy contingency at  
17 least 15 percent. Not all lenders feel this way, but  
18 they -- I think they're going to start to realize how  
19 important that is moving forward. But, yeah, as far as  
20 cost increase, I don't know how you -- I mean, you can, I  
21 guess, evidence, you have a bid from a contractor.

1           COMMISSIONER EDWARDS: Right. That's what we  
2 would be looking for.

3           MS. RANDALL: Yeah.

4           COMMISSIONER EDWARDS: That's what -- always  
5 get for our loans anyways. Not loans, but these are  
6 usually going to be grants. But people would have to  
7 submit their budget, and they would show us what the  
8 contractor's bid was. And to get reimbursement, they're  
9 going to have to provide that. So we could --

10          MS. BATTLE: So I'm just, just throwing out a  
11 hypothetical here. So right now if people -- seeing that  
12 it's been a year for some of these since they actually  
13 proposed the project, and let's say now all their bids  
14 are coming in higher than what they originally costed out  
15 first, what can they do right now? Like nothing. They  
16 can't really do much.

17          COMMISSIONER HILL: So this is Matt. That is  
18 the suggestion, I guess, that the next issue we're trying  
19 to talk about here. So I'd like to just propose that the  
20 Department consider that issue further. I know we've got  
21 a few other things to address, and I do want to focus on



1 the disbursement issue of that more because I did -- just  
2 had one more question for Nichole, and that is, is there  
3 somebody at DHCD -- and forgive me, I just don't quite  
4 understand the process fully -- whose job it is to help  
5 shepherd you through both the DHCD process, and I think  
6 you mentioned this a little bit, but also the MBE, WBE,  
7 and the Department of Law, and to do that on a timely  
8 basis? And do you what I mean? Is there somebody who  
9 you can call and say, hey, what's the hold up here with  
10 the Department of Law? How can you make this move  
11 faster, and whose job it is to move, to move the needle  
12 faster?

13 MS. BATTLE: So I'm guessing you're asking  
14 Baltimore City, DHCD, and, yeah. I mean, I've been, I've  
15 been working with Stephani. It was John, and then Wendy  
16 before John and Wendy left. But Stephani has been my  
17 point person, and Stephani has been pretty responsive. I  
18 appreciate that.

19 COMMISSIONER HILL: Great. Thanks. So there  
20 is like a project manager whose job it is to get you  
21 timely through, through each of these different hoops?

1 MS. BATTLE: Yeah. I mean, Stephani has been  
2 my one consistent. She's definitely been my one  
3 consistent. At one point I was including Stephani, Wendy  
4 and John on all my e-mails. But right now Stephani is  
5 last woman standing.

6 COMMISSIONER EDWARDS: But, yes, we do assign  
7 -- as the, as the grant agreements get started, we  
8 assigned a point person. So at this point it's either  
9 going to be Stephani or Ebony would be assigned as the  
10 point person, and they would shepherd it through the  
11 process.

12 MS. BATTLE: And my apologies. Ebony has been  
13 on those e-mails, and I think Kate may have been cc'd on  
14 them as well. It's a team.

15 COMMISSIONER EDWARDS: It's a team, but we do  
16 have one person who is assigned as the lead for each  
17 project.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Agreed.

19 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: Nicole, thank you. Thank  
20 you so much.

21 MS. BATTLE: You're welcome.

1 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: And, Claudia, since you've  
2 kind of have been in the midst during this conversation,  
3 I'm going to hand the wheel over to you so you can share  
4 with us your experience, your feedback, and any insights  
5 that you would like to share.

6 MS. ESTRADA: We have one more presenter that  
7 was supposed to come after Nichole.

8 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: Okay. I figured since she  
9 had already started talking, she might want to finish up.

10 MS. ESTRADA: Okay.

11 MS. RANDALL: I'm the other presenter. That  
12 was my understanding. So I'm just going to try to add to  
13 what Nichole said. And we -- I understand that the  
14 Community Land Trust they'll have a, they'll have a  
15 separate meeting where they'll give feedback to the Trust  
16 Fund Commission. But I just wanted to add to what  
17 Nichole said, and I just went through and talked with  
18 some of our members about their experience working with  
19 the Trust Fund. I think a lot of the things that Nichole  
20 mentioned I'm going to just skip over.

21 I think some of the things you're also just

1 listening to the discussion it seems to me that you're  
2 working on electronic submission. I think that's great.  
3 I think just in terms of the NOFA that that electronic  
4 submission process, whatever it is, whatever it turns out  
5 to be will be really helpful. We did share about that.

6 I think people found the initial meeting, and  
7 the ability to have meetings every couple of weeks at the  
8 beginning really helpful just to orient them to what,  
9 what they needed to do. I think I, I think, frankly,  
10 what I hear from organization is that cash flow for  
11 organizations to recoup predevelopment funds is very  
12 difficult and very demanding, and that I don't know how  
13 we address that in this process, but people were -- did  
14 comment that that was difficult.

15 The need for cross -- for more than a single  
16 person at DHCD to know what was going on so that there  
17 was -- there was a point person, but sometimes with  
18 absences and vacancies things sometimes were dropped or  
19 misunderstood.

20 Then also the documentation of agreements  
21 between partners and DHCD. One person was just

1 commenting just the documentation like having a meeting  
2 summary of this is what we agreed to, this is what --  
3 these are the documents you need to have by X date in  
4 order for your application to go in front of the Board of  
5 Estimates. Sometimes those agreements weren't always  
6 clear. And I think just the expectation about getting  
7 your application to the Board of Estimates just people  
8 were remarking that the requirements that missed some  
9 times, and each department seems to layer on additional  
10 requests, which made it take longer for them to provide  
11 what was needed.

12           So some organizations talked about being  
13 cycling back and forth without a clear understanding of,  
14 like, okay, here are all the things that you need for  
15 your contract to go to the Board of Estimates. And I  
16 hear that. Also, I want to be really frank here that I  
17 hear that in general, but I also sometimes hear, oh, it's  
18 just a single organization that's having this problem.  
19 But I see it as a systemic thing within DHCD that people  
20 aren't always clear about what it takes for their  
21 application to reach the Board of Estimates.

1           And then I would just say that overall, like, I  
2 think one of the things that I was asked to address is  
3 just how do we move the money out of the Trust Fund more  
4 quickly? I would just say like this development it takes  
5 time. It takes -- it's not easy. So we need some  
6 patience and some grace, like, this is a pandemic, man,  
7 people -- this is -- you're not going to go quickly. So  
8 I think people need to sort of on both sides we need some  
9 grace extended there.

10           I also think that it may be time -- I think  
11 there's also a lot of distrust embedded in the system.  
12 So there's a lot of the Department worried about making  
13 payments and being accountable, and that somebody could  
14 be -- misuse money, or but we may need, if we're, if  
15 we're really serious about moving faster, we may need not  
16 to have everything be reimbursable. Like, yeah, there  
17 may be -- maybe there's 12 percent that you get up front,  
18 and why? Because we want the money to move faster, and  
19 we want units to be built faster. But, yeah, I just, I  
20 think that we have to question some of the inherent  
21 biases and inherent systems that we've had in place now

1 for a very long time. We may have to question some of  
2 those things that we've, that we've always done.

3 I want to also say that there is a need for  
4 companion programs when serving people at 50 percent of  
5 AMI or below. And what Nichole is talking about is a  
6 need for subsidy. Look, the Low Income Housing Tax  
7 Credit Program is not plentiful, and it is not being  
8 extended to mission based organizations in Baltimore City  
9 in general. Like, we, we -- just looking at a trend  
10 analysis for the last five years, we don't see a lot of  
11 Low Income Housing Tax Credit going to nonprofits as  
12 they, as they once did.

13 So we're going to have to think about where  
14 organizations are going to be able to find subsidy. I  
15 don't have an answer. I also, like, hey, how can CFIs  
16 and alternative financing be used to increase production?  
17 We're going to have to ask some of those harder  
18 questions. I think the Trust Fund itself is, is great.  
19 We haven't had it. I also wanted to say that I think CDN  
20 as an organization was, was certainly instrumental in  
21 kicking off the Trust Fund, and seeing that it came to

1 be, and was born in Baltimore City. But, like, we, we're  
2 going to have to do other things, and keep pushing for  
3 other companion programs with it.

4           And I would also just say that overall as an  
5 organization CDN also as we look to how we address  
6 challenges, just what other best practices are being used  
7 in the field of affordable housing trust funds. Looking  
8 for best practices, I've looked at Alexandria, Virginia,  
9 and Philadelphia, and just are there things -- hey, is  
10 there a chance not only externally but internally at DHCD  
11 that they look at how trust funds were, were being used  
12 in other cities, and used effectively, and their  
13 processes. Because they -- there may be able to inform  
14 how Baltimore City does its work. And some of those  
15 places have had trust funds for longer.

16           I think that's it. I just, I, I had on my, my  
17 bullets also just increased costs, the pandemic and  
18 inflation. We got to address that. It's not going to be  
19 easy. So with that, I'll stop, but thank you so much for  
20 having me today, and I, I would also like to facilitate  
21 whatever work we can to move the Affordable Housing Trust



1 Fund forward.

2           COMMISSIONER EDWARDS: Thank you, Claudia.  
3 This is Commissioner Edwards. And I just wanted to -- I  
4 thank you for all of your comments. They're really  
5 helpful. And one of the issues that you pointed out was  
6 needing more up front money, and we have heard that from  
7 our applicants and awardees, and we've actually have put  
8 into place a policy where up to 25 percent of the grant  
9 awards can be given up front. So that was in response to  
10 that seeing that that is a need to cover some of that  
11 predevelopment cost, some of that stuff up front. So we  
12 have put that into play.

13           And we, of course, I don't want to -- but I  
14 just wanted to make clear that there was one other  
15 presenter too, but if there's more questions for Claudia  
16 first, and then we have one other presenter.

17           COMMISSIONER HILL: Claudia, I just want to say  
18 thank you for coming to speak tonight. We really  
19 appreciate it. It was really helpful. And I think maybe  
20 we should take you up on that that offer to try to drill  
21 down, and just look at what other trust funds are doing

1 in terms of moving the money they have, and if there's  
2 anything that the City can learn. So maybe that's a,  
3 that's a way to, to move this forward.

4 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: Yes. Thank you, Claudia. I  
5 mean, all of your insights and your remarks are just very  
6 enlightening and beyond helpful.

7 MS. RANDALL: Thank you.

8 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: And as Commissioner Edwards  
9 said, we have another presenter Brendan Schreiber from  
10 the Schreiber Brothers Development.

11 MR. SCHREIBER: Can you hear me okay?

12 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: Yes. Thank you.

13 MR. SCHREIBER: Hi everyone. My name is  
14 Brendan Schreiber. I'm the president of Schreiber  
15 Brothers Development. We were fortunate enough to be one  
16 of the awardees in last year's preservation and creation  
17 of affordable housing. Before I forget, I just want to  
18 echo two things that have -- really three related things  
19 that have been said already. Stephani has been our go-to  
20 contact almost entirely since the beginning. She's been  
21 very responsive. So just wanted to thank Stephani for

1 being that way consistently, and even before she was  
2 involved with the Affordable Housing Trust Fund in DHCD  
3 work.

4           There's no need to belabor the cost issue, but  
5 we -- I just wanted to also make sure everyone is aware  
6 that we are constantly on a day-to-day basis fighting  
7 rising costs too. Our unusual situation is that we  
8 closed, and were able to lock in some -- our GC was able  
9 to lock in some pricing, but on literally a day-to-day  
10 basis they are having bids come in that are running  
11 counter to what they originally provided to us. Some GCs  
12 think, well, we'll just eat that cost, but that's not  
13 necessarily something that every GC can do.

14           And the last thing was I just really, I felt  
15 that the idea of trying to focus a little bit on  
16 predevelopment funds as a source is really very critical  
17 to sort of democratizing affordable housing development,  
18 and to not just have it be the purview of large  
19 developers. We're a very small development company, and  
20 we -- and predevelopment on all of our projects is always  
21 the biggest obstacle. So it very well could be that the

1 main way to unleash a more fluid pipeline of affordable  
2 housing development and just create more units would be  
3 to actually focus on predevelopment. The initial costs  
4 are somewhat lower than construction costs, and it might,  
5 it might, again, help break the, the dam, so to speak.  
6 But our, our -- I know I'm not here to talk about all of  
7 that so I'll quickly summarize our projects. We received  
8 funding for 15 units for our 20-unit apartment building  
9 in the Penn North Neighborhood right at the intersection  
10 of Pennsylvania Avenue and North Avenue. We also have  
11 four commercial units specifically targeting black-owned  
12 businesses and local community profits two of which are  
13 in the process of being leased up. So we're excited  
14 about that.

15           And the building will be the first mixed use or  
16 multi-family passive house or zero energy building. I  
17 may have said all of that a little bit wrong, but the  
18 bottom line is that utility goals -- bills should be able  
19 to be -- at least BGE bill should be able to be zero  
20 dollars over the course of a year for residents. Excited  
21 to be able to demonstrate that so that others can

1 hopefully follow the lead.

2           We were in a somewhat unusual position where  
3 we've actually found the process to be pretty smooth and  
4 fast. The reason being though was that we -- well, there  
5 -- have some caveats to that, but the reason being was  
6 that we had funds that were actually -- we had full  
7 capital stack, and without the funds, the Affordable  
8 Housing Trust Fund money coming through, we would have --  
9 we had funding that was going to either expire or go  
10 away. So when -- we breathed a huge sigh of relief when  
11 we received an award letter. The issue was really more  
12 on the front end where -- for reasons probably tied to  
13 Covid and the mayoral transition. The timeline  
14 expectation we had for the NOFA and the award letter was  
15 much, much slower. It was -- I know everyone was  
16 working overtime and incredibly hard, and probably just  
17 as frustrated as we were, but it was definitely a painful  
18 process. I mean, literally on a daily basis worried that  
19 our funding -- that our partners were going to just sort  
20 of walk.

21           DHCD did to their credit absolutely did

1 everything they could to manage those expectations in  
2 partnership with us. So it's -- I don't -- I'm not  
3 coming down on end or the other of, like, some sort of  
4 blame thing or anything like that. It's just, it's  
5 messy, the development is messy especially for small  
6 young groups like ourselves.

7           The timeline was for us was we received our  
8 award letter approximately the same time as Nichole  
9 mentioned earlier, but we were pushing literally on a  
10 day-to-day basis, a daily basis trying to get in front of  
11 the BOE. So we actually ended up in front of the BOE  
12 very quickly. This was the last thing we needed to do in  
13 order to be able to close and start construction. So it  
14 made sense that BOE -- that DHCD was helping push a lot,  
15 and it was for better or worse helped by the fact that we  
16 had everything ready to go. We had all the documentation  
17 necessary ready to make a move forward. On one hand that  
18 makes it sound like it's all on the -- the ball is in the  
19 developer's court or the nonprofit's court. That's not  
20 exactly what I'm saying. We were fortunate in that we  
21 had already had time to get all of that together, and we

1 were sort of in a bit of desperation. So if someone said  
2 they needed something, we had it sent in within 24 hours  
3 if we possibly could. But keep in mind we had been  
4 stalling on the start of the project for several months  
5 because we needed to get to where we were with an award  
6 letter, and getting in front of the BOE.

7           So the positive piece of that is people like  
8 Stephani and previously Wendy were able to get us where  
9 we needed to be in front of the BOE relatively quickly,  
10 and that was hugely helpful. There were some surprises  
11 because there always are. This is a relatively new  
12 process. But not everyone is going to be in a position  
13 like we are. So I don't want to over state how smooth it  
14 was. It was still -- we, we still had -- we just really  
15 benefited from the fact that we had time to get all of  
16 that stuff together, and we had a full capital stack that  
17 was ready to go.

18           But generally speaking -- oh, and I should  
19 mention we are in the middle of our, our first funding  
20 request, and for, I guess our first drawal (verbatim)  
21 request is the right way to put it. And everything on

1 the list seems reasonable. Everything is something that  
2 we are able to provide. I just have to send it to  
3 Stephani so we can move forward with it. So I can't  
4 exactly say where -- how long that reimbursement period  
5 is going to take. I hope to be able to one day report  
6 that it was smooth and quick and not problematic. But  
7 I'm not really able to say yet how that looks, but I am  
8 happy to answer any questions, if anyone has any.

9 CO-CHAIR TRUITT: Brendan, this is Cindy  
10 Truitt. I just wanted to say thank you for -- I  
11 appreciate your comment regarding the democratization of  
12 the development especially around access to capital with  
13 the predevelopment. So I applaud the Department making  
14 that available. So hope we can even maybe increase that.  
15 So I just wanted to thank you for your comments.

16 MR. SCHREIBER: Sure.

17 (Simultaneous comments.)

18 COMMISSIONER HILL: Thank you very much for  
19 coming. I just wanted to add that, and I wanted to say  
20 that the intent I think is not that we're taking sides or  
21 the Commission versus DHCD. This is really about



1 exploring how the process is working, how it can be made  
2 to work even more efficiently in helping move some of  
3 this money out the door. So I really appreciate your  
4 comments, and everybody's good faith in bringing this  
5 today.

6 MR. SCHREIBER: We know that it's -- it gets  
7 messy. We haven't even addressed the fact that politics  
8 sometimes get involved. So it -- we try to be as  
9 understanding as possible, and as polite as possible.

10 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: Brendan, this is Tisha.  
11 Thank you so much for, for being here and for reflecting  
12 on your experience. And your insights are invaluable. I  
13 tip my hat to anyone who gets involved in this kind of  
14 development. It's needed, but like you said, it's a lot  
15 of hard work, and it is messy. So but we really do  
16 appreciate you being here and sharing your experience and  
17 your insights and your reflections.

18 MR. SCHREIBER: I'm absolutely happy to be  
19 here, and I'll put my information in the chat in case  
20 anyone wants to follow-up with any other questions or  
21 anything like that.

1 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: Thank you.

2 MS. ESTRADA: Do we have any other questions  
3 from the Commissioners?

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No, I don't.

5 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: Well, Brendan, you are  
6 definitely welcome to stay.

7 MR. SCHREIBER: I'm going to go deal with some  
8 screaming kids in the bath.

9 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: Oh, yeah, okay, wonderful.  
10 Again. Thank you so much.

11 MR. SCHREIBER: Of course. Thank you all.

12 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: Okay. So this is the time  
13 for public comments, and but I think we have a couple of,  
14 couple of questions and comments in the queue. So I'll  
15 hand it over to Stephani.

16 MS. ESTRADA: Okay. One minute. Let me -- I'm  
17 going to let -- let's see if I can let them speak. I  
18 believe it's two that raised their hand. Second.

19 Melony Thomas, your mic is unmuted. You have a  
20 question?

21 MS. THOMAS: I did. I have put several in

1 there. First, I'm noticing John Mobley is not here, and  
2 just wanted to see -- when I tried to e-mail him because  
3 he and Ebony were my point persons for our grant. I got  
4 a message saying that he's no longer with the Department.  
5 So I just wanted to see is his position vacant now, and  
6 then is there a plan to fill it, and then what, if any,  
7 way will this -- what effect will that have on, on the  
8 funding moving things forward?

9 MS. ESTRADA: Yeah. Yes. His position is  
10 vacant. There is a plan to fill it. We are -- they're  
11 currently interviewing prospects. And as of right now I  
12 think me and Ebony are mentioned.

13 MS. THOMAS: No shame to you all Stephani --  
14 (Simultaneous comments.)

15 MS. ESTRADA: Yeah, I did, I did. We got it.  
16 We've been doing pretty good so far. So, no, I don't  
17 think that it's going to have an effect on the fund.

18 MS. THOMAS: Okay. Well, thank you for  
19 answering that. I just wanted to again acknowledge it  
20 publicly.

21 And then the second question that I had in

1 there in regards to the discussion where you talked about  
2 possibly opening up for, for applicants or recipients of  
3 the awards to apply for additional funding based on cost  
4 increase. Now, will this -- because I mean all, all the  
5 groups that we've heard from, the groups that we've heard  
6 from thus far, none of them still have gotten any money  
7 from the Fund yet, right? So that still poses a  
8 challenge then in, okay, if new request are put in, what  
9 does that -- what, what could that timeline look like?  
10 And then will we still be confronted with the same issue  
11 of delayed in getting fund out, and will that process  
12 have to, to go through the Board of Estimates for  
13 approval, and have to go back through that whole cycle of  
14 approval, which can cause, and has caused some delays?  
15 So I'm just asking a hypothetical question, and so if  
16 this is something that's considered, like, what will that  
17 mean for -- or what do you all envision that process  
18 being? Does that make sense?

19 MS. ESTRADA: Yeah. I'm going to let Kate  
20 speak to it. I think the only thing I would say is that  
21 this is a recommendation at the moment, and we will have

1 to sit through, and like map out how we're going to do  
2 that.

3 But, Kate, please feel free to add to that.

4 COMMISSIONER EDWARDS: Yeah. As Stephani  
5 pointed out, definitely this is at the recommendation  
6 stage. So we would have to figure out how we would  
7 process those, whether or not it would be an application  
8 process, or if it would just be as Claudia has suggested  
9 just a straight 20 percent across the board. So I think  
10 it's yet to be determined. But when you do increase, if  
11 you already had a grant agreement that already went  
12 through the Board of Estimates, and if we increase that,  
13 that grant amount, then that would have to go through the  
14 Board again to approve. It would be an amendment to the  
15 agreement. It wouldn't be the same level of I think the  
16 length of time. I think it could go quicker because it  
17 would be just updating the budget, and updating the  
18 agreement, and then going through the Board. So I think  
19 it would be quicker process, but it would still have to  
20 go back to the Board.

21 MS. THOMAS: Thank you. That's what I just

1 wanted to get a understanding of. That was all my --  
2 okay. Thank you.

3 MS. ESTRADA: The next is Terrell Askew. I'm  
4 sorry if I pronounced your name wrong. Your mic is  
5 unmuted.

6 MR. ASKEW: Thank you, Stephani. Yeah, I'll  
7 just say that I think that DHCD needs to develop a real  
8 process to determine how these different challenges are  
9 occurring for folks, and both a way that people can  
10 address that sooner. It's in a, in a city where a  
11 majority of this -- has a, has a huge population of,  
12 like, folks that are, like, rent burden and like housing  
13 burden in general. It's like there isn't a lot of  
14 affordable -- truly affordable housing being developed,  
15 and a lot of these newer folks that are doing it are not  
16 super experts at it, and I kind of get a feel like  
17 they're being treated as though they should be figuring  
18 this out when the City is supposed to be their partner.  
19 And I think they're -- the City is not the first one to  
20 do an affordable -- the first one to do a trust fund.  
21 And so a lot of these things could be much more

1 streamlined. It could be much more proactive around it,  
2 figuring out how to like better support them. Honestly,  
3 I think the overall cost of affordable housing creation  
4 is just, is remarkably too high, and that the City really  
5 needs to explore ways to make that far more affordable so  
6 that more of it can be created because we do have a, a --  
7 the challenge of affordable housing is not going to be  
8 going away any time soon. And I think that's how you can  
9 help to make this process much more of a deeper -- a much  
10 more deeply collaborative relationship that's beneficial  
11 to both side. So and I'll stop there.

12 MS. ESTRADA: Thanks, Terrell.

13 Okay. I have another one, Sharon Hunt. Sharon  
14 Hunt, your mic is unmuted.

15 MS. HUNT: Yes. Thank you very much, and good  
16 evening. I have two or three points. My first point  
17 relates to the new commissioners and the swearing in and  
18 the selection of commissioners. I understand that this  
19 is in the Mayor's -- say in the Mayor's court to resolve  
20 and to complete. This open timeline scenario I find  
21 unacceptable. We have been doing this, and waiting for

1 this for over a year now. And to -- every time an  
2 announcement is made it is at the Mayor's discretion.  
3 There needs to be a commitment of time. It doesn't have  
4 to be a day, a week or a month, but not open-ended. Just  
5 like there are things that have to be done by the Mayor  
6 in a certain timeframe, I feel that this Commission has  
7 earned the right to be completed for his term, which was  
8 sworn in over a year ago. That's one question.

9           Secondly, I find when I listen to the  
10 allocation of responsibilities to be off. Those who have  
11 been given awards certainly have responsibilities to  
12 submit whatever is required of them, but I also feel that  
13 DHCD has an equal responsibility to get these awardees  
14 the money that they were awarded, and I don't always feel  
15 that I hear DHCD stepping up to its role. I cannot  
16 understand how 17 different awards have been made, and  
17 virtually no one has any money paid. So I'd like to see  
18 more of a shared responsibility on both sides. And I'll  
19 leave it at that for now.

20           MS. ESTRADA: Ebony, do you see any other  
21 questions or -- no?



1 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: Are there no more questions?

2 MS. ESTRADA: No.

3 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: Just to Mr. Askew's point,  
4 that's something that was discussed amongst the  
5 presenters, and I really am hoping that, that we can  
6 reach out to some other jurisdictions that have  
7 successfully implemented trust funds, and may be a little  
8 bit more seasoned than we are, and collaborate and  
9 discuss how they moved through their growing pains, and  
10 eventually streamlined their process. Because there's  
11 probably a lot of information out there, a lot of  
12 experience out there that we may not be, we may not be  
13 capitalizing on to really make the most of our revenue  
14 and our resources. Not just the capital resources, but  
15 those developers who are really interested in doing this  
16 work. It's like Brandon said it's hard work. It's messy  
17 work. And these developers are devoted to affordable  
18 housing, and they could be taking another, another turn,  
19 and being more on the speculative side. So I'm really  
20 hoping that we can internally the Department and the  
21 Commissioners reach out to do some brainstorming, and

1 reach out to some other jurisdictions, and maybe have  
2 them present, or just kind of inform us with regards to  
3 their experiences how, how do we do this better?

4           COMMISSIONER JONES: I'm curious if, Kate, from  
5 your perspective if we'd be able to -- if DHCD would be  
6 able to move the funds faster if it had more like human  
7 capacity on its team or more technology or like what are  
8 some of the inputs or resources that DHCD needs?

9           COMMISSIONER EDWARDS: Yeah. So, I mean, we  
10 are working like we said on some of the technology  
11 pieces. I think that will help a lot getting the  
12 applications more streamlined and online having a better  
13 database. I think some of the issues were also learning  
14 curve, and making sure that our staff and the  
15 Commissioners -- I mean, not the Commissioners, but the  
16 applicants getting through the process together. So some  
17 of that was a learning curve in all the different  
18 agencies that we have to work with. And more staff,  
19 we're hiring for one more position, and, yeah, I mean,  
20 it's always helpful to have additional people. But I  
21 think a lot of it is, like I said, the learning curve,

1 and then what was mentioned earlier that this development  
2 is a messy business, and it takes time, and a lot of  
3 these large projects are going to take time. And not to  
4 forget that we've all been doing this in the middle of a  
5 pandemic where all of our lives were turned upside down  
6 including those of us at DHCD. So we've all been trying  
7 to figure out this process in the middle of a lot of  
8 different turnover and a lot of issues, and learning new  
9 processes. So the pandemic did cause us to all have to  
10 figure out how to get things signed electronically. How  
11 to just do simple things that were things that we did  
12 every day in the office we had to come up with whole new  
13 processes to do. And so we've settled into that now, but  
14 it definitely took us some time to figure all of that  
15 out. So I think that each time we're going to get better  
16 at it, and it's going to get faster, and we're all  
17 getting the expertise as we go through to move things  
18 along faster and learn from our past experiences. But I  
19 do think the idea of having the other affordable housing  
20 trust funds in to speak to the Commission, I think that  
21 would be great. I would be happy to learn more from

1 others that have been doing this, and see if there's any  
2 tips and things that can -- we can apply. Hope to do  
3 that in upcoming meetings.

4 CO-CHAIR TRUITT: That's great. I agree.

5 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: Before I turn this back over  
6 to Cindy, I just would like to -- Commissioner Jones,  
7 Commissioner Bree Jones, you have been initiated, and we  
8 are so happy to have you as a new Commissioner on, on the  
9 Board. So --

10 COMMISSIONER JONES: Thank you so much  
11 Commissioner Tisha, and I, again, I'm just so honored.  
12 And please forgive me as I also have a learning curve,  
13 and learn all the different moving parts. But I'm just  
14 really excited to learn from you all and work with you.  
15 So thank you again.

16 CO-CHAIR GUTHRIE: Yes. And you bring a  
17 breadth of experience as well. So we're excited to learn  
18 from you as well. So thank you.

19 And now I'm turning it over to Commissioner  
20 Cindy Truitt.

21 CO-CHAIR TRUITT: Thank you so much. Thank

1 everyone for your grace. This is a really great meeting  
2 with a lot of fantastic dialog. So we appreciate you  
3 handing in there with us. I know we're overtime. Just a  
4 quick call for any other business from the Commissioners.

5           Okay. Hearing none, then we are officially  
6 adjourned.

7           (Whereupon, at 7:57 p.m., on February 22, 2022,  
8 the meeting was adjourned.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the foregoing transcript in the matter of:

AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND COMMISSION MEETING

BEFORE: Cindy Truitt, Interim President & Co-Chair

DATE: February 22, 2022

PLACE: (Webex)

Represents the full and complete proceedings of the aforementioned matter as reported and reduced to typewriting by Free State Reporting, Inc.



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Roland Thomas Bowman, III, Reporter  
Free State Reporting, Inc.