

WASHTENAW URBAN COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, July 12, 2023 - 2:00pm – 3:30pm (Remote)

Members in Attendance:

Supervisor Diane O’Connell (Ann Arbor Township); Holli Andrews (City Planner, City of Ypsilanti); Council Member Chris Watson (City of Ann Arbor); Supervisor Ken Schwartz (Superior Township); Heather Jarrell Roe (Clerk, Ypsilanti Township); Trustee Linda Adams (Augusta Township); Jessica West (Director of Community Development, Pittsfield Township); Council Member Bill Ruddock (City of Chelsea).

Members Absent: Mayor Brian Marl (City of Saline); Mayor Shawn Keough (City of Dexter); Supervisor Kathy Kennedy (Sylvan Township); Supervisor Chuck Tellas (York Township); Supervisor Duane Luick (Lima Township); Supervisor Laurie Fromhart (Bridgewater Township); Supervisor Diane Ratkovich (Dexter Township); Supervisor Gary Whittaker (Salem Township); Supervisor Jim Marion (Saline Township); Supervisor John Kingsley (Webster Township); Supervisor Ken Dignan (Northfield Township); Supervisor Ronald Milkey (Manchester Township); Supervisor Will Hathaway (Scio Township).

Facilitator: Commissioner Justin Hodge

OCED Staff Present: Tara Cohen and Jasmyne Townsend

Members of Public Present: Amy Krieg (Attorney & Compliance Officer, Habitat for Humanity), Wendy Carty-Saxon (Director of Real Estate Development, Avalon Housing), Amanda Carlisle (Executive Director, Washtenaw Housing Alliance)

I. Welcome & Introductions – Roll Call

Pursuant to [MCL 15.263 Sec.3](#), Cohen took roll call during which each member stated their name and physical location (I.e. City or Township, Washtenaw County, State of Michigan).

O’Connell: Participating remotely from Ann Arbor Township, Washtenaw County
Andrews: Participating remotely from City of Ypsilanti, Washtenaw County
Watson: Participating remotely from City of Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County
Schwartz: Participating remotely from Superior Township, Washtenaw County
Adams: Participating remotely from Augusta Township, Washtenaw County
West: Participating remotely from Pittsfield Township, Washtenaw County
Jarrell Roe: Participating remotely from Ypsilanti Township, Washtenaw County
Ruddock: Participating remotely from City of Chelsea, Washtenaw County

II. Public Comment

Zoom link:

<https://washtenawcounty.zoom.us/j/87514148686?pwd=QTFndWV6TkphL3g0R3hnV2FSVXpEdz09>

Passcode: 036269

Telephone: US: +1 470 381 2552 or +1 267 831 0333 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 312 626 6799

Webinar ID: 875 1414 8686

III. Announcements from Members and/or Staff

- A. OCED’s Housing & Infrastructure Manager Tara Cohen made an announcement concerning reauthorization for Urban County and Cooperative Agreement letters.

Ms. Cohen noted the City of Milan may be interested in joining, but it would be after FY2024, as they reached out past the deadline for non-participating local units to complete the required steps for obtaining HUD approval a year in advance.

IV. Minutes

A. 07-12-2023 Meeting Minutes – Review & Approval (ACTION)

Moved by Watson. Supported by Jerrell Roe.

ROLL CALL:

O'Connell: Yes

Andrews: Yes

Watson: Yes

Schwartz: Yes

Adams: Yes

West: Yes

Jarrell Roe: Yes

Ruddock: Yes

Ayes – 8; Nays – 0; **Motion carried.**

V. General Administration

A. Fair Housing Training (Pam Kisch, Fair Housing Center of Southeast and Mid-Michigan)

Pam Kisch, Executive Director of [The Fair Housing Center of Southeast & Mid Michigan](#) (FHC), provided a training to Urban County members covering basic fair housing law and the role of The Fair Housing Center, followed by time for Q & A. There were no questions from the group, but Council Member Watson mentioned he would contact Pam Kisch separately to discuss further training availability.

B. Public Hearing: Substantial Amendment to the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan (Tara Cohen, OCED)

Ms. Cohen gave a brief presentation of proposed changes to the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan before opening the public hearing for comment. This presentation outlined changes made to the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan voted and approved by Urban County Committee members at the March meeting. Ms. Cohen's presentation can be accessed [here](#) on pages 10-19.

The Public Hearing for the Substantial Amendment to the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan opened at 3:08 pm and closed at 3:17 pm – comments are below:

Amanda Carlisle (Executive Director, Washtenaw Housing Alliance)

The previously proposed and approved allocation was primarily to support the development of permanently affordable fair housing which I was strongly in favor of as the best way to end homelessness and housing insecurity was to build new permanent affordable housing. Home funding has been previously used to support new developments or cost associated with preserving affordable housing developments in the community and I worry that the affordable developments currently in the pipeline that could have benefited from these HOME-ARP dollars will be hindered by the change to the previously proposed and approved allocation and it also is at the same time of construction becoming more costly as time goes on. Because it was not included in the communications I speculate the new proposed allocation for HOME-ARP funding tries to react to immediate needs that our homeless community is currently seeing such as increases in evictions and a rise in family homelessness and while we do need additional resources in the system I worry that most of the solutions proposed in the amended proposal are a temporary band aid on a really deep wound; one that is the result of rising

housing costs in our county. I also worry that the county is trying to redirect these HOME-ARP funds to support the hotel program for families started over the winter months which has had some issues. I think our work on veteran homelessness shows that if we have the right resource mix, we can reduce and end homelessness. The government has put resources into permanent housing to end veteran homelessness as a holistic way to end homelessness instead of temporary solutions. Both locally and on the national level this has resulted in reduction for veteran homelessness. The new proposed allocation provides temporary solutions but lacks the long-term strategy with permanent solutions that would have a longer impact in our community.

Wendy Carty-Saxon (Director of Real Estate Development, Avalon Housing)

We've submitted a written letter, but also wanted to provide verbal as well. It was noted there was a significant shift from the March County HOME-ARP proposal which had a budget of 3.5 million going towards new development to no dollars going towards new housing development with this new proposal. While definitely recognizing the challenges of balancing emergency needs with long-term solutions, I would say though that this type of one-time funding that is under the ARP can be used for capital and upfront development cost which could be used for affordable housing and add to the local housing stock and remain a source for affordable housing well into the foreseeable future. Housing development using these HOME-ARP funds would be expected to incorporate housing long-term affordability agreements which would generally leverage other funding sources to ensure the ongoing affordability of housing in our community. And with that I would note that development of affordable housing does require the leveraging of various funding so that lack of sufficient gap funding can result in delays or even prevent new development. Hope the County will reconsider going back to the original proposal – so that the community can benefit from long lasting units.

Holli Andrews (member/City Planner, City of Ypsilanti)

Thank you for letting me chime in. I have a really nice chance to work with Wendy and Pam as well here in the City of Ypsilanti on maintenance zoning reform to remove supportive housing from our regulation in terms of where supportive housing can be built in which zoning district and we were able to work with and bring in Avalon Housing to help support the zoning tax amendment by maximizing a parcel in Downtown Ypsilanti for I believe 21 brand new units that are in walking distance from public transportation, schools and parks, shopping, and other services. There are some things about the changes that maybe should be weighed in on. I love and support and agree we need affordable housing, but I also think people need to have choices on where they want to live. Sometimes when we put a lot of money into new development and end up with huge developments on the fringe and the outskirts of a city where the transportation is more expansive; I see that happening a lot. I do like the idea that some of this money will be geared towards supportive housing that will have landlords offer 24/7 maintenance and services – that is not a typical landlord. Also, maybe have some money for people who may want to buy a duplex and rent to a long-term renter such as seniors but buy something that people can afford and charge market price. I do believe the new plan does have some opportunity. Recently visited my hometown of Portland, Maine – the homeless encampments are worse than I've ever seen in all my 59 years. May be some possibilities in this new proposal with respect to where people can live affordably. I think the new plan does help diversify the funding and open more possibilities there.

Chris Watson (member/ Council person, City of Ann Arbor)

Affordable housing development has been toughest nut to crack from the point of view of the Ann Arbor Housing Commission and the County. I do want to applaud Ypsilanti for stepping up and building affordable housing units. In addition, Ann Arbor and this Urban County body has helped create affordable housing with the Catherine Street project which is supposed to be 62

new units for affordable housing. Our goal was to create 2000 over 10 years and we've created 189 over 4 years and change. The money that could be spent on affordable housing development I think that we need to still secure some still for that. The 3.5 million dollars that was proposed months ago to one development is not the biggest percentage to the overall cost but is money that can be leveraged for non-profits or other agencies. There are a lot of projects where that 3.5 million can be invested and be one of the final hurdles which could prevent the increase in housing cost. I want to point to the success that Ann Arbor has had, that Ypsi has had, even the successes the County has had. There is also the success in identifying space where it makes sense to build new development. The county has pointed to a lot of downtown areas such as parking lots and dense areas where this funding could be used. We are kind of starting to get on a roll here and to walk away from this funding would not be the smartest move right now. While I understand the immediate need, this type of funding only comes once and we need to use to our best advantage.

Bill Ruddock (member/Council person, City of Chelsea)

I agree we shouldn't take one-time money and spend it on something that's a continuing problem like homelessness other than to put it into capital expenses.

C. Fiscal Year 2023-24 Roster & Designee Forms (Jasmyne Townsend, OCED)

Ms. Townsend thanked members of the Urban County Executive Committee for submitting designee forms for FY 2023-24 by the June 6 deadline. Staff asked that if there has been a change to the elected official or designee to notify Ms. Townsend by July 20, 2023.

VI. Public Comment – See II. above for Zoom details. - None

VII. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn – Moved by Jarrell Roe. Supported by Watson.
Adjourned at 2:46 PM

Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 6, 2023, 2:00 – 3:30pm, Location: Remote (Zoom)