

MINUTES
Board of Directors Meeting • March 2, 2005
Red Lion Inn • Yakima Center
Yakima, WA 98901

ATTENDANCE

Members present: Juan Aguilar, Gloria Burton, Guillermo Castaneda, Lupe Gamboa, Pete Garza, Mike Gempler, Billie Heath, Dixie Kracht, Alicia McRae, John Smith, Mario Villanueva, Tomás Villanueva, Mike Youngquist. Members not present: Erik Nicholson, Frank Ochoa and Heyward Watson. Staff present: Tom Byers and Kristi Buck – Cedar River Group; and Brien Thane and Marty Miller – Office of Rural & Farmworker Housing. Ex Officio: Mary McBride and John Engber, – U.S. Senator Patty Murray’s office; Janet Abbett, CTED Guest present: Bruce Newman, RCAC.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting of Wednesday, March 2, 2005 was convened by President Juan Aguilar at 9:40 a.m., and a quorum was recognized. Tom reported that our graduate student intern, Teresa Guillien, had intended to come to today’s meeting but has been prevented from attending because she was involved in an automobile accident. She escaped unharmed and will join us at a future meeting. She will be working with the committee appointed to develop a case statement regarding the positive impact of farmworker housing on local jurisdictions.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the January meeting of the Board were reviewed and approved as submitted.

OLD BUSINESS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Juan announced that a joint meeting of the Executive Committee and the Finance Committee will be held by teleconference on Tuesday, March 8, 2005 to discuss the Trust’s financial condition and the status of the contract with Cedar River Group for staff support.

REPORT ON THE CAPACITY CONFERENCE

Juan asked those Board members and staff who had been present at the conference to share their impressions. Most Board members were able to attend at least a portion of the conference and had high praise for the RCAC and Trust staff who pulled the conference together in record time. John Smith said that he had been pleased to see so many new people from around the state getting involved in the Trust’s work. Alicia said that many of those present began with a fairly high level of skepticism but left impressed and encouraged. Most Board members felt there was a high level of agreement among those present about the kind of additional capacity that would be needed to achieve the Trust’s goals.

Tomas Villanueva, Lupe Gamboa and Pete Garza all said that the Trust needs to proceed cautiously with regard to seasonal housing. How can we be sure that the projects funded by the infrastructure matching fund incorporate best practices? Their concerns initiated a vigorous discussion regarding the manner in which seasonal housing should be developed. At the conclusion of the discussion there was a consensus that a committee of the Board should be

formed to work with CTED to identify and assure the use of best practices in conjunction with the use of the infrastructure matching fund. Janet Abbett indicated that CTED would welcome the involvement of the Trust through such a committee. The Chair asked for volunteers and Dixie Kracht, Pete Garza, Lupe Gamboa, Tomas Villanueva, Billie Heath, Mario Villanueva, Mike Gempler, Mike Youngquist and Brien Thane stepped forward. The chair indicated he will also ask Erik Nicholson to serve in light of his stated interest in best practices regarding seasonal housing.

Mike Gempler stated that the Trust should adopt a policy of pursuing the use of best practices in all its endeavors, not just seasonal housing. He also suggested that the committee be given a written charge prior to beginning its work. The chair directed the staff to develop the charge prior to the Board's next meeting.

UPDATE FROM SENATOR MURRAY'S OFFICE

John Engber and Mary McBride indicated that the Senator remains encouraged by the progress the Trust is making. In fact, during her annual meetings with the Democratic caucuses of the State House and Senate, she listed support for farmworker housing on a short list of priorities for issues of importance to the State. She received a warm response, particularly from Speaker Chopp.

The Senator believes that the time has come to use her influence to open the doors of philanthropy for the Trust. She has set aside time on the 31st of March and will be inviting leaders of several major national and regional foundations to meet with her and representatives of the Trust to discuss our comprehensive plan and what role they may be able to play in supporting our efforts to increase the supply of decent and affordable housing for farmworkers.

Members of the Board expressed appreciation for this opportunity, and suggested that it is such an important opportunity that we should move up the date of our next Board meeting to provide an opportunity for a "dress rehearsal". It was agreed that the Board will meet on March 25, 2005 in Seattle for that purpose. Senator Murray's staff will also attend.

REPORT ON STATE ACTION AGENDA

Brien Thane reported that signs appear positive for the increase in the Housing Trust Fund, although much will depend on the revised revenue forecasts which are due on March 17, 2005. He indicated that the Low Income Housing Alliance appreciates the collaborative position the Trust has taken. Tom Byers described a letter to Speaker Chopp signed by 21 agricultural organizations which supports expanding the Trust Fund by \$8 million for farmworker housing, as well as the creation of the infrastructure matching fund. He said that Mike Gempler and Mike Youngquist had been pivotal in getting the housing provisions included. Mike Gempler described the efforts of the larger agricultural community to agree on a common vision for the future of their industry.

Tom Byers summarized our progress on the State action agenda as follows: there is reason for optimism on the increase in the Housing Trust Fund and the Infrastructure Matching Fund, but the budget proviso to fund the farmworker survey and Trust operations is facing a very tough climb. He is hoping to meet with the Governor's staff in a few days to discuss these issues.

FISCAL AGENT REPORT

Brien Thane presented a financial report through the end of January. The status of the Trust's finances will be the subject of the special meeting of the Executive Committee and Finance Committee meeting set for March 8, 2005.

FUTURE FUNDING FOR TRUST OPERATIONS

Tom Byers distributed an updated version of the "fundraising target" summary which shows the total needed to complete the Trust's 2005 projects and continue basic operations, the amounts raised to date, and the amounts still to be raised. He reported that the staff was hard at work on a series of fundraising requests. The first of those is a request to Senator Murray for an appropriation of \$750,000 in federal funding in FY2006. Tom distributed a draft package of materials prepared by the staff in consultation with Mary McBride. The request is due no later than March 11, 2005, so the Board will need to take action today to approve or amend the draft. After reviewing the materials the Board voted unanimously to approve the request as drafted.

Tom then reviewed other funding requests the staff is preparing:

- A proposal for a Block Grant Planning-Only Grant for \$40,000 will be submitted on behalf of the Trust by Douglas and Skagit Counties. The funding would be used to pay a portion of the costs of the farmworker's survey. Kudos to Alicia McRae for securing the support of Douglas County and Mike Youngquist and John Smith for winning the backing of the Skagit County Commissioners.
- The Executive Director of the Washington State Housing Finance Commission will be including \$25,000 in his proposed 2005-2006 budget for the farmworker survey. Members should thank Kim Herman for this support.
- A proposal for \$75,000 is being prepared for Washington Mutual to support all aspects of the Trust's agenda.
- A proposal for \$50,000 is being prepared for U.S. Bank to support all aspects of the Trust's agenda.
- We are hoping for an invitation to submit an application for \$750,000 to the Allen Foundation to implement the results of yesterday's capacity conference. (*Note: the invitation was received on March 4, and the proposal prepared and submitted by the March 15th deadline.*)

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 2:25 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board will take place in Seattle on March 2, 2005. A major portion of the meeting will be dedicated to preparation for the meeting with Senator Murray and philanthropies on March 31, 2005.

Respectfully Submitted: _____
Secretary

Approved: _____
President/Vice President