

MINUTES
Board of Directors Meeting • March 19, 2004

ATTENDANCE

Members present: Juan Aguilar, co-chair; board members: Gloria Burton, Guillermo Castaneda, Lupe Gamboa, Pete Garza, Mike Gempler (after 11:15 a.m.), Billie Heath, John Smith, Mario Villanueva, Tomas Villanueva, Heyward Watson, and Mike Youngquist, Alicia McRae (via teleconference call from 11:45 a.m. to lunch break and then from 1:30 to 2:50 p.m.). Board member(s) absent: Dixie Kracht (co-chair) and ex officio, Mary McBride (office of Senator Murray). Staff present: Tom Byers, Cedar River Group; Brien Thane, Office of Rural and Farmworker Housing and Kristi Buck, Cedar River Group. Guest: Alice C. Larson, Ph.D., Larson Assistance Services.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Co-chair Juan Aguilar called the meeting to order at 10:40 a.m. and introduced Kristi Buck as administrative support for Cedar River Group and Alice Larson of Larson Assistance Services. Each member introduced themselves and a quorum was recognized. Tom Byers announced that weather conditions prevented Dixie Kracht, Alicia McRae and Mary McBride of Senator Murray's staff from attending in person. Alicia McRae participated via telephone conference.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the February 27, 2004 meeting were approved by unanimous consent.

OLD BUSINESS

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Candidate Recruitment Form:

Juan Aguilar began the nominating committee report by asking Tom Byers to distribute the draft candidate survey form which he developed at the Board's direction. The form will be used to develop standard information on all potential candidates to be used by the nominating committee in making its recommendations. The Board members suggested a number of refinements and approved the use of the form. Tom will make the suggested refinements and distribute the final product to all members by e-mail. (*Attachment 1*).

Tom reminded the Board that there are currently two vacancies: the grower position created by Julie Keen's resignation; and the community stakeholder position created when Tom stepped down from the Board to assume the staff role. Guillermo Castaneda reiterated the importance of finding someone with philanthropic experience and connections, and Mario Villanueva commented on the need for public policy experience.

UFW Representation:

Tom reported that he had spoken with Eric Nicholson, the new regional UFW leader, regarding formal UFW representation on the Board. Eric indicated a very high degree of interest, but indicated he wanted to speak with Lupe Gamboa before deciding on the nature of the Union's participation. Tom will follow-up on this to assure the UFW is formally represented and supportive of the Trust's activities.

FISCAL AGENT REPORT

Update on HUD Application:

Budget Report:

Brien Thane reported that the Office of Rural and Farmworker Housing has received HUD's approval of the application for funding, and they are awaiting the final signatures so that ORFH can pay the invoices received to date. Brien then summarized the expenditures to date. (*Attachment 2*).

UPDATE ON HUD DDA DESIGNATION ISSUE

Juan asked Gloria Burton for a report on the status of the effort to secure a change in HUD's recent designations, which exclude all but three counties in Washington State. Gloria indicated that she has worked closely with the State Housing Commission Director, who has formally requested an amendment of HUD's designation. She has heard from HUD officials that a response to that request has been prepared by the national headquarters staff and forwarded to the Department of the Treasury for review and approval six weeks ago. She indicated that the regional officials at HUD do not yet know the contents of the letter, but will inform us of its progress at the Treasury Department as soon as possible.

In the meantime, Gloria indicated that she and other advocates have been working to lay the groundwork for an increase in State Housing Trust funds to partially compensate for the impact of the loss of DDA designation. She indicated that those working on the issue are requesting a legislative hearing on the matter and asked the Board members for letters to State Representative Hans Dunshee, who chairs the Capital Finance Committee, to urge him to support the request.

John Smith suggested working through the Low-income Housing Alliance to assure broad support, and this suggestion was supported by other Board members.

Brien Thane reminded the Board that we are seeking two goals: a waiver of the DDA designation changes for the current round of tax credit allocations; and a larger change in the way HUD employs the DDA with regard to farmworker housing. John Smith asked if Senator Murray's staff was aware of the possible need for legislation. Tom responded that the Senator's staff was very much aware of both the goals Brien had mentioned, and are actively seeking solutions.

At this point a number of Board members volunteered to assist Gloria by serving on an ad-hoc committee on the DDA designation issue. The members of that committee will be: Gloria Burton, Brien Thane, Mario Villanueva, Billie Heath, and John Smith. Mike Gempler volunteered to assist the committee in mobilizing political support among growers. The committee will develop ideas and report to the Board at future meetings.

Farmworker Survey

Juan asked Mario Villanueva to report on the work of the committee which was appointed in February to develop the Farmworker Survey. Mario reported that he and Tom had met with Robert Ozuna and Ricardo Valdez, who head up the University of Washington's Community Partnership in Yakima. The University has agreed to assist in developing the survey instrument and methodology, and Robert and Ricardo will begin meeting with Mario's committee soon to develop a scope.

Mike Youngquist asked for an explanation of the purpose of the study. John Smith responded that it is intended to “put faces on the data” regarding the need for farmworker housing, and to really understand their current conditions and future hopes. Mike Gempler added that the survey will help to validate our numerical data and build our credibility with funders.

The Board then engaged in a vigorous discussion of ideas about the best ways to conduct the survey. Mario pointed out that we are already getting a late start if we hope to conduct the survey during this growing season. He suggested that the best approach may be to target the apple harvest, since it accounts for a large proportion of farmworkers and peaks in the fall.

In conclusion, Mario indicated that he will convene a meeting of his committee with Ozuna and Valdez and prepare a report for the April meeting. Tom Byers indicated that once the committee has developed a scope, he, Juan and Heyward Watson will attempt to identify funding to carry out the survey.

After a brief break for lunch, Juan asked Tom to introduce the topic of the Needs Assessment. Tom introduced Alice Larson as one of the nation’s leading researchers on farmworker issues. It is Alice’s research, combined with additional analysis by Northwest Regional Facilitators, that forms the foundation of the needs assessments that the Cedar River Group has produced during the past four months. Tom reviewed the Board discussion at the February meeting, in which the Board directed him to take additional actions to reconcile the estimates derived from Ms. Larson’s work with those developed by the State Employment Security Department.

Following up on that discussion, Tom met with Alice Larson to review her methodology and contacted Jeff Jaksich, the leading researcher for ESD and then conducted a conference call that included both. He reported that Jaksich indicated that he regarded the Larson numbers as the more accurate of the two data sets for the Board’s purposes. (He subsequently reiterated this view in an e-mail.) He stated that ESD’s data, which relies on monthly surveys of 600 farms, is widely believed to significantly underestimate the population of farmworkers. He stated that Ms. Larson’s application of the “Demand for Labor Method” was a more accurate indicator.

Tom then asked Ms. Larson to describe her methodology and major findings, which she presented with the use of a PowerPoint outline. (*Attachment 3*). She then took questions from Board members regarding various aspects of her methodology. The general tenor of the discussion indicated the Board members were appreciative of her explanations and comfortable with using the estimates that resulted from her work.

Tom then pointed out that those estimates, combined with work of Northwest Regional Facilitators, have been the basis for all of the subsequent analysis that has been done by Trang Tu of the Cedar River Group regarding the need for housing on a County-by-County basis. He then distributed copies of the latest data, in which Ms. Tu combines Ms. Larson’s data with US Census Data regarding rental housing to arrive at County-by-County estimates of gaps in:

- the number of rooms available for rent;
- the number of units of rental housing units available for rents that are affordable to farmworkers;

- the number of new units required to meet the needs of migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their families; and
- the number of rehabilitated housing units needed to repair moderately substandard units housing farmworker families.

This data is summarized in (*Attachment 4*).

In addition, Tom distributed the first draft of a Farmworker Housing Inventory, which is intended to list all units in the state that are specifically dedicated to farmworkers. John Smith quickly observed that the Inventory did not include certain specific projects in Skagit County. Tom acknowledged that the list is a work in progress and asked each Board member to review it and submit corrections and additions so that we have a complete inventory.

Following the presentation of the needs assessment and inventory, the Board members held a spirited discussion of the implications of the data.

Among the salient points were the following:

- The analysis focuses on ten Washington counties, which account for more than 92% of the total need.
- In those counties, there is a need for approximately 12,000 units of new housing for “migrant” workers, and 27,000 units of new housing for “seasonal” farmworker families. In addition, there is a need for renovation of approximately 5,000 units.
- A housing program of this magnitude is a monumental undertaking with profound implications for rural Washington, which we will need to understand and address (Juan Aguilar, Mike Gempler).
- There will be a serious challenge in building sufficient development capacity to create this many units (Tom Byers).
- Siting the units may present even greater challenges (Brien Thane).
- This initiative will require public policy changes at the local level, requiring a great deal of thought and energy (Mike Youngquist).
- Our actions have the potential to influence local housing markets in ways that are difficult to fully predict (Mario Villanueva, Mike Gempler).
- We are going to need creative strategies that combine public and private actions. Is there a way to combine code enforcement with nonprofit management and dollars for rehab.? (Mike Gempler).
- We need a range of strategies that reflect the conditions in each county and give us the most “bang for the buck” (Mike Youngquist, Billie Heath).
- There is going to be a need to address infrastructure issues and the questions of costs to local jurisdictions (Mario Villanueva, Billie Heath).

Following the discussion, Tom made a brief presentation of the Outline for the Strategic Plan (*Attachment 5*), and received suggested refinements from the committee which will be incorporated in subsequent drafts.

It was decided that the next meeting will take place on April 16, 2004 at the Port of Seattle Conference Center, Room 2DE.

Juan concluded the meeting by congratulating the Board and staff on an excellent session and summarizing the steps that will be taken in preparation for the April meeting.

A motion for adjournment by Juan Aguilar was seconded by Guillermo Castaneda and approved by unanimous consent at 2:50 p.m.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. *Board Candidate Survey form;*
2. *Budget report;*
3. *PowerPoint outline of Alice Larson's presentation;*
4. *Needs assessment materials prepared by Cedar River Group; and*
5. *Preliminary outline of the Strategic Plan.*

Respectfully Submitted: _____
Secretary

Approved: _____
President/Vice President