

MINUTES
Board of Directors Meeting • April 16, 2004

ATTENDANCE

Members present: Dixie Kracht, co-chair; board members: Gloria Burton, Guillermo Castaneda, Lupe Gamboa, Pete Garza, Mike Gempler, Billie Heath, John Smith, Mario Villanueva and Mike Youngquist. Board member(s) absent: Juan Aguilar (co-chair), Alicia McRae, Tomas Villanueva, Heyward Watson, and fiscal agent, Brien Thane, Office of Rural and Farmworker Housing. Staff present: Tom Byers, Cedar River Group and Kristi Buck, Cedar River Group. Guest: Rhonda Peterson, Cedar River Group.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Co-chair Dixie Kracht brought meeting to order at 10:50 a.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Dixie opened the meeting by asking everyone to review the Minutes of the March 19, 2004 meeting. John Smith moved acceptance of the Minutes and his motion was seconded by Guillermo Castaneda. The motion passed unanimously.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Mario Villanueva gave the nominating committee report in the absence of Juan Aguilar. Mario called the Board's attention to the resume of Erik Nicholson.

Erik is the new regional director of the United Farm Workers Union, having succeeded Lupe Gamboa. Lupe described Erik as a graduate of Duke University who is very sharp and able to see the big picture. He said that Erik understands the critical importance of the housing issue and would be a good addition to the Board.

A discussion followed regarding the best way to retain the balance among the four constituencies present on the Board. Since Erik represents the UFW, he would clearly be categorized as a "farmworker advocate," and that category is currently fully represented with four members. The two openings are in the "grower" and "community stakeholder" categories. Mario pointed out that Senator Murray had felt it important to have the Union represented in the Board and initially appointed Lupe Gamboa to fill that role. Now that Lupe is no longer with the UFW, perhaps it would be appropriate for him to fill a "community stakeholder" position.

Members of the Board generally supported that idea. Mike Youngquist suggested that Lupe serve as a community stakeholder until a vacancy opened among the farmworker advocates, and then resume his position in that category. Lupe was asked whether he would feel comfortable with that arrangement and he answered in the affirmative.

Pete Garza moved that Erik Nicholson be appointed to the Board as a farmworker advocate, subject to a telephone interview with the nominating committee and Tom Byers to verify his interest in serving and learn more about his background; and that Lupe continue to serve on the

Board as a community stakeholder. The motion was seconded by John Smith and passed by a unanimous vote of Board members present.

Mario then called the Board's attention to the resume of Paul Purcell. Mario indicated that he had worked with Paul and knows him to be very capable and dedicated to Farmworker Housing issues. His background in housing development and policy issues would make him a candidate for the Board as either a "housing developer" or a "community stakeholder." Since those categories are filled at present, Mario suggested that the nominating committee hold his candidacy in reserve pending a vacancy.

Tom Byers and John Smith cited the value of having a group of qualified nominees in reserve. Tom suggested that we supply potential nominees with Minutes of meetings to keep them up to date so that when the Board chooses to put a candidate on the Board when there is an opening, he or she can come in abreast of what has been going on.

Dixie Kracht and Billie Heath suggested that potential candidates could attend meetings in a nonvoting role. John Smith stated that he did not agree with nonmembers attending, but supports giving them copies of the Minutes and meeting materials so they can submit any thoughts or recommendations. He said that we have already had long discussions and if nonvoting members are added now it could make it longer to complete our work.

Mario Villanueva stated that he agreed with the idea of sending Minutes out to potential candidates and also agreed with John that bringing in others could dilute the Board's discussions. He said that experts, such as Alice Larson, could add a lot to some of our discussions and that Paul Purcell could be that kind of person.

The chair asks if it was the consensus of the group that Paul Purcell be held in reserve and the group responded affirmatively. Dixie asked the nominating committee to send a letter to Paul explaining the Board's decision.

BUDGET REPORT

The Budget Report was postponed due to the absence of Brien Thane.

HUD DDA DESIGNATIONS

The chair asked Gloria for a report of the DDA issue.

Gloria reported that Brien Thane had taken the lead in bringing the DDA issue to the Low Income Housing Alliance Board and that the meeting had gone very well. The Alliance is fully supportive of the Trust's position.

Gloria called the Board's attention to the letter she received from HUD in response to her initial letter protesting their action in changing the DDA designations at the eleventh hour. She indicated that the State Housing Finance Committee had received an identical response.

A lengthy discussion followed regarding the best methods for resolving the issue. It was mentioned that Tom and Gloria were scheduled to meet with officials at the HUD regional office on Monday, at which time they could seek advice on the best way to explore the possibility of new legislation to create a designation method that would be more relevant to the needs of farmworkers.

Tom Byers reiterated that we are pursuing a two-part strategy: 1) freeze designations made in 2003 so proposals now would not be hurt; and 2) come up with longer range fix with legislation. HUD's letter leaves a small opening that suggests HUD may be open to a legislative solution that addresses the specific needs of farmworkers.

If the Board agrees, Tom would work with Gloria and Mario on a letter in response to HUD that takes advantage of that potential opening.

The chair asked whether there was consensus that Tom and Gloria should meet with the regional office of HUD and, after seeking their guidance, draft a letter to the national HUD office proposing a legislative solution to the DDA issue. The draft will then be distributed to all members of the Board prior to being finalized. There was unanimous support for that proposal.

Guillermo Castaneda suggested that it might be time for Board members to contact other members of the congressional delegation, including Eastern Washington representatives, to get them more involved in the issue.

FARMWORKER SURVEY

Mario Villanueva reported that he is organizing a meeting of the Survey Committee later this month with Robert Ozuna and Ricardo Valdez of UW/Heritage College to develop a detailed plan for the farmworker survey. During the same period, Tom will meet in Seattle with other UW faculty members who have volunteered to assist the Trust.

NEED FOR A COMMITTEE ROSTER

The chair asked the staff to prepare a roster of the various committees and working groups now operating. Tom responded that a roster would be prepared for the next meeting.

NATIONAL SURVEY OF "BEST PRACTICES"

Dixie asked Tom to present the draft survey document and explain the purpose of the survey. Tom said that with the completion of the needs assessment, we now have a very good sense of the magnitude of the problem on a county-by-county basis. We can now turn our attention to how we intend to address the needs. As a first step, the staff is suggesting a national survey of organizations pursuing similar goals to identify best practices. Rhonda Peterson, of Cedar River Group, has developed the questionnaire that was included in the Board packet as the basis for that survey, as well as a list of organizations to be contacted. She would like the Board's suggestions regarding both. She can be reached by e-mail at rhonda@cedarrivergroup.com.

MEDIA CONTACTS

The chair asked Billie Heath to present the material she had developed in response to a request for information about the Trust for an article that will appear in the newsletter of the RCAC. Billie called the Board's attention to the draft which was included in the packet of Board materials, and explained that it was basically an updated version of speaking points prepared by staff for an interview with the Yakima Herald.

The review of the draft drew generally favorable comments from the Board and it was the consensus of the group that the draft be approved for the purpose of the RCAC newsletter. At the same time, Mike Gempler, John Smith, and other members expressed the opinion that we need a more proactive and detailed communications plan. After some discussion, it was agreed that the staff would be asked to prepare such a plan for the next meeting.

COUNCIL OF ADVISORS

Mario Villanueva asked for a review of contacts with key stakeholders. Tom responded by listing the stakeholders with whom he has met, and the commitments he has received from them to serve on a "Council of Advisors" to the Trust. Tom will send an updated list to the Board with the Minutes.

INVENTORY OF FARMWORKER HOUSING PROJECTS

Tom called the Board's attention to the updated Inventory in their packets, thanked John Smith for correcting the earlier version (with regard to projects in Skagit County) and asked the members for additional suggestions. He also indicated that the Inventory will soon be expanded to include licensed labor camps once he receives data from the Department of Health.

NEEDS ASSESSEMENT

Tom reviewed the latest additions to the needs assessment which were contained in the Board packet.

BEST PRACTICES WITHIN WASHINGTON STATE

Dixie asked Tom to facilitate a discussion of "What's working within Washington" as a second step in our effort to identify "Best Practices". Tom reminded the group that when CRG conducted a national survey for Governor Locke in 1997, people from throughout the nation pointed to CASA in Oregon and ORFH in Washington as national leaders in this field. To take advantage of the expertise of the Board, the rest of the meeting was used to analyze eleven key issues in terms of "what's working, what are the challenges of bringing what's working to scale; and what strategies can we employ to address those challenges." (The results of that exercise are summarized in a separate document attached to these Minutes).

WORK PLAN FOR APRIL/MAY

Dixie asked Tom to review the work plan for April and May. Tom said the priorities will be to:

1. Continue with outreach to key stakeholders including:
 - USDA
 - Federal Home Loan Bank
 - HUD Regional Office
 - Impact Capital

2. Draw up a report that will summarize our discussion of “Best Practices in Washington”.
3. Conduct the national survey of “Best Practices”.
4. Meet with UW to get faculty support for housing survey.
5. Arrange the conference call with Erik Nicholson and finalize his participation.
6. Draft the letter to HUD and the congressional delegation regarding legislation on DDA designations.
7. Brief Senator Murray’s staff regarding DDA issue and the Trust’s progress.
8. Complete/update the committee roster.
9. Develop a running list of regulatory issues discussed at the Board meetings and site visits.
10. Develop a draft communications plan for dealing with:
 - media
 - housing development agencies
 - Philanthropic organizations
11. Draft the “Needs Assessment” section of the Comprehensive Plan.

NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Board will be held on Wednesday, May 26, 2004, in Yakima at the Diocese of Yakima offices from 10:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Meeting at that time and place will enable the Board to join in the celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the Office of Rural and Farmworker Housing scheduled later that afternoon and evening.

Upon suggestion of the chair, Guillermo Castaneda moved for adjournment. The motion was seconded by Mario Villanueva and approved unanimously at 3:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted: _____
Secretary

Approved: _____
President/Vice President