

**MINUTES**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
**Friday, April 18, 2008**  
**Vance Building, Seattle**

**ATTENDANCE**

Members present: Donn Etherington, Mike Gempler, Billie Heath, and Steven Witte. Members participating by phone: Roger Bairstow, Guillermo Castaneda, Alicia McRae, John Smith, Mario Villanueva and Stella Vazquez. Ex Officio members present: Janet Abbett, Washington State Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development; Mary McBride, Senator Murray's Office. Staff present: Brien Thane and Rosalinda Mendoza.

Members not present: Gloria Burton, Dixie Kracht, Tomás Villanueva and Mike Youngquist.

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Since Mario Villanueva was participating by phone, Donn Etherington was asked to chair the meeting. Donn called the meeting to order at 10:55 a.m., there being a quorum present.

**I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The Agenda was reviewed. Mike Gempler asked to include discussion of the Nomination Process and staff hiring to the agenda. *Billie Heath moved to approve the agenda as amended. Mario seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.*

**II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

The Minutes of the March 21, 2008 Board meeting were reviewed. *Mario moved approval of the Minutes. Guillermo seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.*

**III. Financial Report**

Both Mike Gempler and Donn presented the Finance Committee Report. Donn reported that Enterprise Community Partners has awarded the Trust \$35,000 for general support and the funds will be available by reimbursement basis only. Also, Bello Rio LLC and their managing member the Housing Authority of Chelan County and the City of Wenatchee have donated \$7,000 to the Trust. Bello Rio is the recently completed 25 unit Low-Income Housing Tax Credit development for farmworkers on the north end of East Wenatchee (in the County.) Mike Gempler noted that in addition to \$130,000 on deposit the Trust also has HUD funds available, making the Trust financially stable.

Mike Gempler asked the board to approve the Finance Committee's recommendations:

- To move Trust funds from our current savings account that earns 3% interest to a Money Market Account which is just as liquid and yields 4.19% interest.
- Check signatories: Authorized checks signers currently are the four officers (Mario, Dixie, Mike G. and Gloria) and Brien. Checks for more than \$500 or payable to Brien require two signatures. Now that our books are kept in the Seattle area, Gloria and Brien are the only authorized signatories readily available. Staff recommends adding Mike Youngquist, Billie Heath and John M. Smith as signatories.

Brien Thane mentioned that LeMaster & Daniels have started work on our FY2007 (October 2006 – September 2007) independent audit now that tax season is over. *Mike Gempler moved*

*approval of the March 31, 2008 Financial Reports, addition of west-side check signatories, and to move savings to a Money Market account. Steven Witte seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.*

## **V. Board Elections**

Donn asked to move Board Elections earlier in the agenda and the directors present agreed.

Brien reported that the Nominating (Executive) Committee was not able to meet due to scheduling conflicts, so there is not a recommended slate of directors or officers prepared. Brien also mentioned that Section 4.01 of the Bylaws specifies that the Board shall designate an Executive Committee. Section 4.02 specifies that the Executive Committee shall consist of not less than 3 directors. The Bylaws do not specify officers as the Executive Committee. Staff requests that the Executive Committee establish regular meeting times at least bi-monthly to help prepare for board meetings and handle interim matters as appropriate.

Mike Gempler proposed designating a Nominating Committee that will establish the process to nominate the Executive Committee and Officers. Mario stated that the Trust needs to amend its bylaws to designate Officers as the Executive Committee. Roger and other directors agreed changing the Bylaws but also emphasized the need for a Nominating Committee. Brien suggested adding other board members apart from the Officers to the Executive Committee for future board development. *Guillermo moved to direct staff to draft a resolution for amending the Bylaws that will designate the Officers and up to three board members as the Executive Committee and to distribute the resolution to directors at least 10 days prior to the May meeting, in accordance with procedures for amending the Bylaws. Mike Gempler seconded the motion which passed unanimously.*

Brien stated that the Board still needed to designate a Nominating Committee. Billie and Alicia volunteered to serve in the Nominating Committee. Mike Gempler nominated Mike Youngquist and Brien nominated Steven to be members of the Nominating Committee. *Mario moved to have Billie, Alicia, Mike Youngquist and Steve serve as the Nominating Committee. Guillermo seconded the motion. The Motion passed unanimously.*

## **IV. Effective Messaging**

Ben Gitenstein from the Washington Low-Income Housing Alliance provided an overview of their Communications and Information Program, and expressed their interest in partnering with the Trust to develop effective messaging and a communications strategy. The Alliance has worked with Impact Capital, Columbia Legal Services and Washington State Housing Finance Commission to change public perception of affordable housing by creating a new communications strategy that realigns the public's perception of affordable housing, and therefore creates a more positive public policy environment for farmworker housing.

General discussion ensued after Ben's presentation. Mario recommended staff check with other organizations that have contracted with the Alliance; Mario will help with this. Billie suggested we might also use this work to develop a communications guide on farmworker housing for our partners.

Brien stated that he will work with the Alliance to put together a more specific proposal and stated that he would like to proceed in two steps:

- 1) Brien asked the board's permission to contract with the Alliance for up to \$2,500 to help review the final survey report and the Trust's rollout plan.
- 2) Brien will work with Ben to create a specific proposal for Alliance assistance with developing a messaging and communications strategy for the Trust, including measuring the effectiveness of the messages. The proposal is intended to be included in Trust grant applications after the Board reviews and approves it.

*Mike Gempler moved to authorize staff to negotiate a contract with the Alliance for up to \$2,500 for assistance with the survey report and rollout. Steve Witte seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.*

Mike Gempler reminded the Board that his term along with Guillermo's and John's terms are expiring and would like for the directors to reelect them. *Billie moved to reelect Mike Gempler, John Smith and Guillermo Castaneda to four-year terms as directors and to re-elect for one-year terms as officers Mario Villanueva, President; Dixie Kracht, Vice-President; Gloria Burton, Secretary and Mike Gempler, Treasurer. Alicia McRae seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.*

## **VI. Outreach**

At the March meeting Board members agreed that the Trust should develop a program of systematic outreach to strengthen support from and communications with housing providers, growers, advocates and other constituents. Mike Gempler has arranged for the Trust to work with Benton County Commissioner, Claude Oliver, to do collaborative outreach work at the county level. Brien stated that the Trust needs to plan the steps for working with Claude and others to work in key counties with representatives from the four sectors to help us plan and support farmworker housing at the local level.

Brien provided an overview of the various outreach activities:

- Use survey roll-out to convene local forums
- Trust directors help identify and turn-out local leaders and elected officials
- Encourage/assist local supporters to:
  - Build a broad base of support for meeting farmworker housing needs locally
  - Identify specific local needs, challenges and opportunities (e.g.; zoning, developable land supply, GMA comprehensive plan updates, types of housing needed locally, development opportunities)
  - Identify/recruit housing partners (e.g.; housing providers, service providers, growers seeking housing options).

Janet Abbett stated she would like CTED and the Affordable Housing Advisory Board to partner with the Trust in this outreach and planning effort. Roger asked if the Trust's outreach program could be linked to the affordable housing movement in Walla Walla. Brien replied that the Trust should collaborate with affordable housing advocates but that the Trust's outreach program should remain focused on farmworker housing. John Smith suggested speaking with Rene Rooker from the Housing Authority of Walla Walla. Janet proposed that the outreach program be by agricultural regions rather than by county lines. Billie asked how the Trust would get additional people to handle the extra work of this proposed outreach program. Brien replied that the Trust would need an additional Full-time Employee to manage the logistics and outreach efforts. Donn suggested focusing on our work with Claude and Benton County first and then to

use that as a spring board to work in other areas. Mike Gempler emphasized the importance of the Trust's role in leading this project because this would eventually open our doors into other counties such as Franklin County. Janet mentioned that many legislators stated that they want a plan from stakeholders or else they are going to assign CTED to do the plan. Billie advised we have clear initial directions and expectations for local groups and have a skilled facilitator at these county/regional meetings to ensure they produce outcomes. Brien proposed that the core proposal to the Gates Foundation include our outreach plan and hiring an FTE.

## **VII. Announcements & Updates**

Roger: Broetje Orchards broke ground in an 18-unit seasonal occupancy development in rural Prescott and will have the units available in the fall for harvest.

Alicia: The Housing Authority of Chelan County and City of Wenatchee is closing their sale of land to the WA Growers League for Sage Bluff. Chelan/Wenatchee Housing Authority will have the grand opening for Bello Rio on May 28<sup>th</sup> at 3 pm and the entire board is invited.

Janet: There will be an On-farm Construction/Rehabilitation stakeholder meeting on May 14<sup>th</sup> in Yakima.

Mike Gempler: The Rent-a-Tent program started about a week ago and it is increasing to 300 tents this year.

Mary McBride: Senator Murray is willing to help with letters, and/or videos for the survey rollout, housing dedications and other events.

## **VII. Farmworker Survey Roll-out**

Skagit County secured Community Development Block Grant Funds from the state to cover some of the survey costs. A public presentation and hearing before the Skagit County Board of Commissioners is required and scheduled for April 29th at 10 AM at the County Administrative Building, 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon.

Brien reported that the survey report Introduction, Executive Summary, Methodology, Demographics and Housing sections have been rewritten with considerably more analysis. Staff will distribute these chapters and the draft chapters on Health and Civic Involvement to all directors both electronically and as hard copy for your review. Staff requested directors to volunteer to review and comment on specific sections. The directors asked Staff to email assignments to board members for responses by May 5.

## **VII. Program Updates**

### *Development Director Hiring*

Staff completed 2<sup>nd</sup> round interviews on 3/17. At our last Board meeting, Brien reported that one of the finalists expressed concern about the Trust's youth and small staff. On 3/24, the other finalist informed the staff that she was unable to proceed in the hiring process due to family illness and withdrew her application. Brien recommended we not readvertise Development Director position at this time but rather use that portion of the staff budget to hire a Program Manager. Several directors expressed support for hiring a Program Manager. Mary suggested we consider contracting with another organization to help the Trust implement programs without adding a staff member.

*Policy*

State:

Brien reported that Low Income Housing Tax Credit prices have decreased but luckily we managed to increase Housing Trust Funds and that state staff are working hard to mitigate reduced LIHTC prices for developments that were approved for Housing Trust Funds this year.

Federal:

Brien informed board members that USDA is not providing Rental Assistance for new construction Section 514/516 Farmworker Housing and considering reprogramming 516 grant funds to homeownership mortgages. Brien expressed concern over defunding Rental Assistance because that program makes it possible to serve the farmworker population that can't be served affordably with LIHTC. Rental Assistance is also essential to seasonal-occupancy housing. Brien also reported that Enterprise Community Partners requested our support for Congressional appropriations to the Section 4 Program. Enterprise has regranted Section 4 funds to the Trust and other farmworker housing providers.

*Green On-Farm*

On Monday 4/7, Mithun Architects submitted their draft report to the Trust. Staff is reviewing the report and will inform the Board of any major findings. Staff also provided ORFH with a copy of Mithun's draft report to coordinate our work with their research on cost differentials between Temporary Worker Housing Code and conventional code.

**X. Board Retreat**

At our March meeting, board members asked staff to schedule a board retreat in May. Brien stated that not all directors could attend the retreat in May and asked the Board to consider moving the retreat to Fall. All board members present agreed and directed staff to email the Board as soon as possible with possible dates in late October when harvest is wrapping up.

Brien will not be able to attend the June 20 Board Meeting and asked the Board to reschedule the meeting to June 27. All directors agreed.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Billie moved and Guillermo seconded adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
President/Vice President