

MINUTES
Board of Directors Meeting
Friday • June 2, 2006
Law Offices of Riddell Williams
Seattle, Washington

ATTENDANCE

Members present: Gloria Burton, Guillermo Castaneda, Donn Etherington, Alicia McRae, John Smith, Mario Villanueva, and Michael Youngquist. Members participating by phone: Pete Garza Mike Gempler, Dixie Kracht, Stella Vasquez. Members not present: Juan Aguilar, Billie Heath, Erik Nicholson, Tomás Villanueva. Ex Officio members present: Mary McBride – Office of Senator Murray, Janet Abbett, Washington State Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development. Staff present: Tom Byers– Cedar River Group, Brien Thane and Marty Miller- Office of Rural & Farmworker Housing, Dan Evans—Retreat Facilitator.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

President Mario Villanueva called the Board meeting to order at 10:45. In the absence of a quorum, Mario and Tom reported on the March 23rd Legislative hearing until a quorum was present at 11:02.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The Minutes of the April 27th/28th Board meeting were reviewed. Guillermo Castaneda moved approval. His motion was seconded by John Smith and passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

May 23rd Legislative Tour: Tom and Mario reported that the legislative tour was very successful. Five of the seven members of the housing committee attended the blessing of the site of a new farmworker housing project in Toppenish in the morning. (Reps. Miloscia, Springer, Ormsby, Holmquist, and Dunn were present). The Committee then convened at Villa Nueva in Mabton for a legislative hearing and tour of that project, which includes permanent and seasonal rental units as well as home-ownership units. (Rep. Pettigrew joined the group at for this portion of the day). Tom and Mario were the first to testify, addressing the committee's questions about the need. Janet Abbett and Steve Walker of the Housing Finance Commission then reported on what has been achieved to date and Paul Purcell of Beacon Development and Marty Miller of ORFH concluded by listing actions the State could consider to increase the supply of farmworker housing of all types. The committee members were fully engaged and asked great questions. Tom reported that Rep. Springer was particularly interested in the outcome of the Trust Board's retreat regarding seasonal housing. He indicated that the committee may be willing to entertain a request for State participation in funding pilot projects to test the Trust's ideas. Tom indicated that Speaker Chopp is also tracking the Trust's progress on the seasonal housing issue.

Local resistance to tax-exempt projects: Mario Villanueva reported that Rep. Miloscia seemed particularly interested in the issue of local government's concerns regarding the tax-exempt status of most farmworker projects. Guillermo Castaneda suggested that one strategy for addressing that issue is to mix in for-sale units with rental units so there is an on-going revenue

stream for the local jurisdiction from the taxes paid by home owners. Mike Youngquist added that money for schools seemed to be the most important issue. John Smith added that most people don't understand the way the property tax burden is distributed, and that having tax exempt projects does not actually erode the tax base even though it is often perceived that way.

President Fox's visit to Washington State. Mario reported on his participation in President's visit to Yakima. The event was very impressive. It took place at a Hispanic-owned orchard, and featured a statement by Tomás Villanueva about his family's odyssey from Mexico to the Yakima Valley. Most of the President's remarks focused on the issues of trade restrictions and the need to enhance educational levels in Mexico. He pointed out that Mexico is now the seventh largest import-export market in the world. During the event Mario was able to meet with President Fox and Governor Gregoire and provided them with information on the Trust and its work, and giving the Governor credit for the State's participation in funding farmworker projects. Gloria Burton was also heavily involved in the visit and had been scheduled to host an event for the first lady of Mexico, but the event was cancelled due to security concerns. Mario, Gloria and Tom said that there were numerous signals before and during the visit that Governor Gregoire is becoming increasingly interested in farmworker housing as an issue.

Executive Director Search: Mario reported that the search committee conducted a conference call with Executive Search Services on May 5th. The committee is recommending some changes in the contract. Copies of the revisions were handed out to the Board members and reviewed. Guillermo Castaneda recommended approval of the revisions and John Smith seconded the motion. After some discussion the motion was approved unanimously.

Cedar River Group's role. Mario raised the issue of CRG's role in light of the initiation of the Executive Director's search. He noted that some members of the Board had suggested that the Board consider CRG's continuing to provide staff support and asked for opinions. The members of the Board expressed appreciation for the quality of Cedar River's work and general support for the firm's continued involvement in supporting the work of the Trust, even after an Executive Director is selected. Mario asked that that sentiment be recorded in the minutes.

FINANCIAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Brien Thane distributed a financial report through May 31st showing a balance of \$278,868.20. Guillermo Castaneda moved to accept the report. His motion was seconded by Mike Youngquist and approved unanimously.

FUNDRAISING REPORT

Tom Byers presented a fundraising report in a revised format, which shows the status of the funds dedicated to specific projects. During the past few months he has shifted his emphasis from writing grants to bringing in the funds that have been committed but are not yet in hand. Tom reviewed the status of the grant agreements with Skagit County and CTED, and with the Community Health Plan of Washington. Board members expressed their appreciation for the revised format and the clarity it provides.

WEB SITE DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

Tom Byers reported that the initial glitches in the web site have been ironed out, and it is working well. He asked Board members to review the site to make certain there are no errors because Rhonda Peterson is about to do a major update before developing the Spanish language version. Tom pointed out that maintenance of the web site is a substantial task that is beyond the scope of Cedar River Group's current contract. It was agreed that Tom would work with Mario to develop a separate contract for maintaining and up-dating the site.

FARMWORKER SURVEY

Tom reported that the survey is now well underway. Nine teams have been identified and trained. The teams are based in Toppenish, Sunnyside, Pasco, Quincy, Othello, Omak Wenatchee, Bellingham and Centralia. The field work is being very ably coordinated by Rosalinda Guillen, who has been instrumental in selecting well-qualified team coordinators and interviewers. To date more than 260 interviews have been completed in conjunction with the bulb harvest and the asparagus harvest. Tom and Mario have been doing their best to monitor progress. Both met with Peter and Rosalinda, and conducted conference calls that included Alice Larson. At this stage, Tom believes that we will need to make three adjustments in the budget:

- 1) Increase the amount budgeted for Rosalinda's work to reflect her increased level of responsibility;
- 2) Increase the amount budgeted for Dr. Larson's time to allow her to play a larger role in field monitoring; and
- 3) Increase the amount budgeted for travel to reflect rising fuel costs.

Tom reported that we currently have \$35,000 set aside in the budget for the farmworker survey as a contingency fund. He recommends increasing the amount budgeted for Rosalinda's time by \$10,000 to reflect both her increasing responsibility and a larger percentage of her time. At this point, the team has not developed solid estimates for Dr. Larson's time or the travel increase, but Tom wants the Board to be aware that we may need to add additional funds in those areas in the future. John Smith moved approval of the recommendation. His motion was seconded by Gloria Burton. In the discussion on the motion Mike Youngquist expressed a concern about Rosalinda's political involvement and suggested that we need to take steps to assure that the survey does not become tainted in the eyes of growers for that reason. After a thorough discussion, it was agreed that the staff would speak with Rosalinda and Peter Connery about this concern and manage it carefully. The motion was then adopted unanimously.

SEASONAL HOUSING—FOLLOW UP FROM RETREAT

Dan Evans presented a final draft of the agreement reached at Sleeping Lady regarding the baseline requirements for Trust support for public funding. He also passed out a draft "punch list" developed from the Landlord Tenant Act and the Migrant and Seasonal Worker Protection Act as the basis for the discussion of the statement of Rights and Responsibilities we had agreed to produce as part of the Accord. Dan suggested that two items might be needed:

- 1) A detailed statement of rights and responsibilities, and
- 2) A template that could be used by housing providers.

In general, the Board members supported the idea of creating a template. Mike Gempler said that we need to remember that the Trust has no regulatory authority over any resources but our own, but we do have the power to set an example. In reviewing Dan's draft, he noted that it essentially summarizes rights and responsibilities that are already contained in other laws and regulations, but are not assembled in clear language in a single place. He said that if the Trust can agree on a template, it could become part of what the Grower's League provides to its members.

The Board members reviewed the list that Dan provided in detail and agreed that it represented the right series of protections. Guillermo Castaneda pointed out that many of these issues have been addressed in the past on paper, but there has historically been a lack of enforcement, and confusion among agencies. Mario agreed with Guillermo regarding the history, but pointed out that the Trust has no enforcement powers, but that we do have the ability to set a standard for best practices and encourage others to follow. The discussion ended with agreement that the draft Statement of Rights and Responsibilities was a fair representation of the Board's intent. The next step will be to develop a draft template in very simple language for use by housing providers and tenants.

Tom then passed out a study on designs for seasonal housing created by North Carolina State University, and suggested that the study might serve as a starting point for work on construction standards, the other key element of the Accord. He noted that discussions with House members at the legislative meeting suggest there may be the potential for State funding of some seasonal housing pilot projects if we can continue to make headway on the issue.

NEXT MEETING LOCATION/TIME

The next meeting of the Board will be held in Yakima on July 7th, 2006.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 3:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted: _____

Secretary

Approved: _____

President/Vice President