

MINUTES
Board of Directors Meeting • August 20, 2004
Raspberry Ridge Community Meeting Room
Burlington, Washington

ATTENDANCE

Members present: Juan Aguilar, co-chair; board members: Gloria Burton, Pete Garza, Mike Gempler, Billie Heath, Erik Nicholson, John Smith, Mario Villanueva, Mike Youngquist, Heyward Watson. Board member(s) absent: Dixie Kracht, co-chair; Guillermo Castaneda, Lupe Gamboa, Alicia McRae, Frank Ochoa, Thomas Villanueva. Ex-Officio: Mary McBride, Office of Senator Patty Murray, Brien Thane, Office of Rural and Farmworker Housing; Staff present: Tom Byers and Kristi Buck, Cedar River Group.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Co-chair Juan Aguilar brought the meeting to order at 10:40 a.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Juan opened the meeting by asking everyone to review the Minutes of the July 16, 2004 meeting. John Smith moved acceptance of the Minutes, seconded by Pete Garza. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Juan provided a brief report on behalf of the Executive Committee/Nominating Committee. He indicated that the Board is now at full membership.

FARMWORKER SURVEY COMMITTEE

Juan then asked Mario Villanueva for a report on the work of the committee that has been planning the survey. Mario reported shortly after the last Board meeting we learned of a similar survey conducted in two counties in California. The California survey appears to have been well conducted, and had dramatic results in bringing increased funding for farmworker housing and health projects. The members of the Committee have been discussing the potential of using the California survey as a model for our efforts. In an effort to allow the Board members to become more familiar with the California model, the staff arranged a conference call with Maria Giuriato, the woman who was responsible for getting the survey underway. At that point, Ms. Giuriato joined the meeting by phone. Maria provided a brief description of the techniques used in the survey, its results, and the funding that has been generated as a result. At last count, she believes that nearly \$40 million in new assistance for farmworker housing and health care programs has been secured because of the survey. *(A more complete account of the conference call is available from staff upon request).*

Following the conference call, the Board members entered into a detailed discussion of how to proceed with a farmworker survey here in Washington State. There was a strong consensus that the California example was inspiring, and that we should use it as the starting point for our efforts. A lively discussion followed regarding the scope of the survey, and the trade-offs between the desire to add more lines of questioning and the need to limit the time required for

each interview. **Following that discussion, the members present agreed by consensus to move forward in designing the survey.** Mario led the group in setting a time for a Committee workshop, which will take place on September 10th at Snoqualmie Pass. The goal will be to reach final agreement on a scope and budget for the survey so that fundraising can begin in earnest. The members of the Committee include Mario, Robert Ozuna (Heritage College/UW), Alice Larson, Brien Thane, Pete Garza, Mike Gempler, Guillermo Castaneda, Billie Heath and Thomas Villanueva. Tom Byers was also asked to participate. Any other members of the Board who wish to attend will be encouraged to do so.

A brief discussion followed regarding potential fund sources for the survey. Juan and Heyward indicated that Washington Mutual and Fannie Mae may be interested in participating in a funding partnership when the time comes. Tom indicated that he and Mario will be having an exploratory meeting on September 1st with the Marguerite Casey Foundation. Tom also indicated that he had made an initial contact with CTED. The staff will continue to work on these leads once the Committee has finished its work.

FISCAL AGENT REPORT

Juan asked Brien Thane for a budget report. Brien then distributed a budget summary through July. He noted that we are now 75% of the way through our budget year and have expended 52% of our budget, leaving a balance of \$86,441.51 He also pointed out that expenditures by the Cedar River Group are almost exactly on schedule at 76% of the amount budgeted.

Tom Byers indicated that he and Brien have been working together to conserve the Trust's resources in the event that the federal appropriation does not materialize at the beginning of the next fiscal year on October 1.

FY 2005 APPROPRIATIONS/ PROBABLE FUNDING GAP

Juan asked Mary McBride to provide an update on the federal appropriation to continue the work of the Trust. Mary indicated that there was both good news and bad. The good news is that Senator Murray has submitted a formal request through the necessary channels, and that she is prepared to fight for that level of funding as a priority. The bad news is that the current budgetary pressures, and the tensions created by the elections, make it very difficult to predict whether or not her efforts will succeed. In any event, it is likely that the Congress will not finish work on the budget before the elections. Once they do pass a budget, and assuming that it includes funding for the Trust, it is likely to be four to six months before HUD would be able to pass the funds along. This suggests that there will be a substantial gap between the end of the current contract with the Cedar River Group and the date upon which new federal funding will be available. If the work of the Trust is to continue with the current level of staff support, it will be necessary to bridge that gap. Mary indicated that the Senator's office appreciates the problem and is prepared to help the Board identify and pursue other funding sources to fill that gap.

Mike Gempler suggested that the Trust should contact the Governor's office as soon as possible to determine whether or not discretionary funds might be available from the State to meet the need. He volunteered to contact Peter Antolin, who has been one of the Governor's major leaders on this issue, to explore the possibilities. He moved that the staff draft a letter to the

Governor to be signed by each member of the Board. **The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.** Tom indicated that he would draft the letter and circulate it to the members.

HUD DDA DESIGNATION ISSUE

Juan asked Gloria Burton and Brien Thane to report on the progress of the Trust's efforts to change the HUD DDA designations. Brien called the Board's attention to copies of a draft response from the Trust to HUD's recent letter which essentially side-stepped our request for changes in the DDA process. The letter was drafted by Brien and edited to reflect the comments of several Board members and the staff. **It was moved and seconded that the letter be sent to HUD as presented. The motion was passed unanimously.**

Brien and Tom reported on recent meetings with the Washington State Housing Finance Commission, in which it was clear that the Commission is equally concerned about the DDA issue. They observed that the State Housing Finance Commission is doing everything it can to adjust its own formulas to minimize the damage to rural housing projects, but there is only so much they can do.

Mary McBride indicated that Senator Murray is exploring legislation to deal with the issues we have raised about the DDA process.

The chair expressed the Board's appreciation to Brien and Gloria for their leadership on the issue and their efforts in drafting the letter.

NEW BUSINESS

MEMBER UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Juan opened the floor to items of concern:

- Pete Garza spoke briefly about a new innovation in building materials that promises to markedly reduce the cost of housing production. He passed around materials describing the products, and suggested that Board members visit a website for additional information. The website can be found at nilefiber.com. He indicated that a number of experiments are underway within the region to grow and use the material, which is composed of a fast growing material similar to bamboo. He urged the Board to think about innovations such as this as part of our plan.
- Juan announced that Mt. Vernon will be hosting a major celebration of Mexican Independence on September 16th. Washington Mutual is a sponsor of that event.
- Mike Gempler noted that Washington's Rep. Rick Larson is one of just two northwesterners on the House Agriculture Committee. He suggested that he would be an important ally in resolving issues with USDA.
- Mike Youngquist announced that Jack Gleason, a well-known regional official in the USDA, was recently promoted. There were mixed opinions among the Board about whether this would benefit the cause of farmworker housing.

PROGRESS ON PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Tom Byers distributed copies of three documents prepared by the Cedar River Group as portions of the comprehensive plan:

- The Summary of the Needs Assessment
- The Final Report on the National Survey of Best Practices
- Lessons from Housing Efforts across the Nation

He asked the Board members to review each of the documents and submit suggested changes prior to our September meeting so that the revised versions can be published as elements of the comprehensive plan.

SCHEMATIC PLAN FOR SECURING RESOURCES

Tom then presented a paper laying out a schematic plan for the Trust's work in the months ahead. The basic premises of the plan are:

- The State of Washington has made significant progress during the past six years on the issue of farmworker housing
- That progress has slowed in the past year by federal budget cuts, regulatory changes (DDAs), and the Governor's decision not to seek a third term.
- The need that remains is enormous, dwarfing the number of units that have been created to date.
- To meet the challenge, new partnerships must be created, and each partner must be asked to enlarge their role.

Tom then described a list of the potential partners and their prospective roles, and a strategy and time line for engaging them. That strategy includes a focused effort to engage the new Governor, Senator Murray, and other major leaders in the period immediately following the November elections. Each of these leaders would be asked to play specific roles, and in return, the constituencies represented on the Board of the Trust will also be asked to stretch their current commitments to new levels. Each member of the Board will be asked to take the lead in defining the commitments to be asked of their specific constituency. (*The text of the Schematic Plan is included as an attachment*).

A spirited discussion followed during which Board members generally supported the direction of the schematic plan and began to identify specific steps that will need to be taken to carry it out. Tom and Juan indicated that candidate Ron Sims has already committed to meet with the Board to explore the State's role if he is elected. He suggested that we need to find ways to get the same commitment from Dino Rossi and Christine Gregoire. Mike Gempler stated that many of his members seem to be lining up with Rossi, and that it should certainly be possible to find a way to raise the issue. He also reminded the Board that elections are times when people are asked to "choose up sides" and that it will be important for us to stick up for one another during and after the elections.

With regard to Senator Murray's role, Mary McBride indicated that she would be ready to help set up a meeting with the Senator after the election to pursue the schematic plan.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JOB DESCRIPTION

Tom distributed a draft of the job description for a permanent Executive Director for the Trust, and asked members to submit comments on the draft by e-mail. He stated that the staff is

attempting to prepare to begin the recruitment process as soon as funding is secure to support the position.

TOURS OF FARMWORKER HOUSING IN THE SKAGIT VALLEY

Juan announced that members of the Board were encouraged to participate in a tour of three farmworker housing sites after the meeting. The tour will include the Raspberry Ridge development created by the Skagit County Public Housing Authority, the adjacent labor camp operated by Mike Youngquist, a nearby child care and early learning center, and the San Jose farmworker housing development project in Mt. Vernon created by the Archdiocese of Seattle Housing Authority.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the chair declared the meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. *Schematic Plan to Address the Farmworker Housing Issue – (dated August 18, 2004)*

NEXT MEETING

10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Friday September 17, 2004
Offices of Fannie Mae
710 Olive Way, Suite 1510
(downtown Seattle)

Respectfully Submitted: _____
Secretary

Approved: _____
President/Vice President