



**Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes
Housing Committee
March 31, 2021
Virtual/Electronic Meeting
6:00 pm**

Link to rebroadcast: <https://boxcast.tv/channel/vabajtzeuyv3iclkx1a>

1. WELCOME

- a. CALL TO ORDER
 - i. Committee Chair, Shantell Bingham, called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm
- b. ROLL CALL
 - i. Shantell Bingham
 - ii. Tobiah Mundt
 - iii. Mary Bauer
 - iv. Wolfgang Keppley
- c. MISSION (recited by all): *Act as a strong advocate to justice and equal opportunity by providing citywide leadership and guidance in the area of civil rights.*

2. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

- a. PUBLIC COMMENT
 - i. None.
- b. COMMISSION RESPONSE TO MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC
 - i. None.

3. MINUTES

- a. Review of minutes from March 17, 2021 Housing Committee Meeting
 - i. Motion to approve as written
 1. Mary
 - ii. Second
 1. Tobiah
 - iii. Discussion
 1. None.
 - iv. Vote
 1. In favor: 3
 2. Can live with: 0
 3. Opposed: 0
 4. Abstained: 0

4. BUSINESS MATTERS

- a. Michael Monaco Community Services Coordinator for Piedmont Housing Alliance (PHA) presented information regarding PHA's eviction prevention program
 - i. See attached PowerPoint presentation
 - ii. Commissioner questions
 1. Are residents directed to resources for court costs for evictions?

- a. Prior to COVID PHA would waive late fees and court fees
 - b. PHA absorbs those costs
 - 2. What are the legal fees for evictions and about how many people are affected?
 - a. \$57 for court filings – PHA would cover
 - i. This applied to 12 to 15 people in eviction prevention in 2020
 - b. Not all tenants in eviction prevention had an open court case but most had late fees – PHA would waive these
 - 3. How many units does PHA manage within the City of Charlottesville?
 - a. About 340
 - 4. Did any of the tenants who were evicted have an attorney?
 - a. Unknown
 - 5. Of the 45 families in eviction prevention did any have attorneys?
 - a. Some people had representation through Legal Aid
 - b. The exact number is unknown but could be determined
 - 6. What are the costs associated with getting evicted and what do they pay for?
 - a. Legal fees cover filing with the court
 - b. PHA does not provide financial supports to residents for legal representation
 - iii. Committee Chair offers the public the opportunity to ask Michael questions
 - 1. None.
- b. Commissioner updates regarding outreach to potential partners
 - i. Shantell
 - 1. Plans to contact CLIHC
 - a. Emily Dreyfus and Elaine Poon are aware of the work
 - ii. Tobiah
 - 1. Invited Michael Monaco
 - 2. Contacted Emma Goehler at DSA
 - a. Committed to pushing Council to provide legal support to tenants facing evictions
 - b. Asked for suggestions as to how DSA can support the HRC's efforts
 - iii. Mary
 - 1. Attended Council budget meeting on 3/17/21
 - a. There was \$117K set aside in the budget
 - b. Councilor Snook noted that there had only been a handful of eviction trials, so he thought the amount should be smaller
 - 2. Reached out to Jake Gold about the actual number of eviction cases
 - a. Number of eviction cases, not just those that make it trial, was 700 average per year prior to the pandemic
 - 3. Reached out to John Pollock about calculating costs
 - a. Works at the National Right to Counsel

- b. Has helped other cities develop right to counsel programs
 - c. Several decisions can lead to budgeting decisions
 - i. Is there an income cut-off?
 - 1. 200% of poverty level or below
 - a. Average 80% of tenants in other cities with right to counsel programs met this criteria
 - ii. What is the predicted default rate?
 - 1. 50% is typical for other cities
 - a. In Charlottesville that would mean about 350 (out of 700) cases would still be successfully matched with lawyers
 - b. Assuming 20% of people would be over the income threshold, that would be about 300 cases
 - 4. Asked Legal Aid Justice Center (LAJC) how many lawyers they thought it would take to handle 300 cases
 - a. LAJC suggested that 1 lawyer could handle about 100 cases
 - b. This means 3 full-time lawyers
 - c. \$120K = salary + benefits + overhead
 - d. Total cost = \$360K
 - i. This did not include outreach or other coordination
 - 5. Did not contact Central Virginia Legal Aid Society (CVLAS)
 - a. Assumes that the numbers would be similar
 - 6. Other cities include subsidy terminations in their plans
 - a. Including administrative proceedings that terminate vouchers
 - b. Could include those types of cases, as well
 - c. Would need to ask for that data from CRHA
 - i. How many subsidy terminations happen outside the court system?
 - 7. Takeaways
 - a. \$117K is not enough for the initial year
 - b. \$360K may be a good starting point
 - c. Cases may go up or down depending on outreach and situation
 - d. LAJC may be willing to accept the funding and do the work
- iv. Todd
- 1. Emailed Kaki Dimock
 - a. Asked about the support system
 - 2. Emailed Dr. Kathryn Howell
 - a. Awaiting a response
 - 3. Emailed Dr. Barbara Brown-Wilson

- a. RVA eviction lab could potentially help with data
 - b. suggested collaboration between Equity Center, Eviction Lab, DSA
 - i. For data and policy examples
 - c. Potential actions
 - i. Write a letter citing the evidence for a higher amount
 - 1. Seek support from other organizations
 - 2. **Mary will draft the letter by Friday**
 - 3. Total amount should be more than \$360K to account for outreach and coordination
 - ii. Speak at the April 5 Council budget meeting
 - 1. **Shantell will request that other speak in support**
 - a. DSA
 - b. CLIHC
 - c. PHA
 - d. CRHA
 - e. PHAR
 - f. TJACH
 - g. RVA Eviction Lab
 - h. Equity Center
 - i. City Human Services
 - iii. Mention in letter that RVA Eviction Lab, DSA, and Equity Center might support data collection to show the impact of the work
 - 1. **Todd to ask RVA Eviction Lab for case results with and without lawyers**
 - iv. Continue to speak with Human Services about potential assistance with outreach and connecting people to the program

5. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

- a. PUBLIC COMMENT
 - i. None.
- b. COMMISSION RESPONSE TO MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC
 - i. None.

6. NEXT STEPS

- a. **Mary will draft the letter to City Council by Friday**
- b. **Shantell will send a summary email to all listed in 4.c.ii.**
 - i. **Send on Thursday ahead of letter**
- c. **Todd will ask RVA Eviction Lab for case results with and without lawyers**

7. ADJOURN

- a. Meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Piedmont Housing Alliance
Eviction Prevention Program

Background

- First incarnation of program: January 2019 – March 2020
- Intended to prevent evictions at Piedmont Housing Alliance-managed communities
- Primary focus on rent-related eviction

Demographics

- 67% of all households qualify as Extremely Low-Income (<30% AMI)
- 91% of all households are under 50% AMI
- In 2019, 67% of move-ins were formerly homeless

January 2019 to March 2020

- In total, 45 households were enrolled in EPP
- 20 households “graduated”
- 4 households were evicted

Tools to prevent eviction

- Continuing court cases as far as possible (up to 9 months total)
- Eliminating outstanding late/atty. fees
- Financial assistance from community partners (AIM, Network2Work)
- In-house housing counseling team

Post-COVID

- EPP repurposed to rent relief/assistance
- Sought or provided assistance to over 300 households (out of 600)
- Outside assistance from statewide Rent Relief Program & C'ville City RELIEF fund

Now

- Using next three months to prepare for end of moratorium
- Enroll/re-enroll households at risk in EPP
- Focus on payment plans & financial assistance for households at risk

Gaps

- Reliant entirely on outside funding
- No capacity for housing counseling for each EPP client
- In-house MSW or similar services professional needed