

Howard County Council

Racial Equity Task Force



Meeting: Land-Use and Housing Policy Subgroup Meeting

Start Time: March 9, 2021 4:05 PM

End Time: March 9, 2021 6:12 PM

Task Force Member Attendees:

Jessica Coates
Suzanne Haley
Phillips Engelke
Ian Kennedy
Jonathan Edelson
Peter Engel
Isabella Battish
Vonda Orders
Taneeka Richardson

Task Force Members Not Present:

Herbert Smith

Council and Facilitator Attendees:

Lauren Marra
Felix Facchine
Colette Gelwicks
Kelli Berg

Presenters:

Jeff Bronow, Department of Planning and Zoning
Kelly Cimino, Department of Housing

APPROVED Minutes:

Jessica Coates, Subgroup Chairperson, opened the meeting with a roll call and confirmed that a quorum of subgroup members was present. Ms. Coates moved to approve the meeting minutes from the Land-Use and Housing Policy Subgroup meeting on February 9, 2021. Jonathan Edelson, Task Force member, seconded the motion to approve minutes. The minutes were unanimously approved by the subgroup members. After minutes approval, Ms. Coates made a point of personal privilege to condemn the hateful testimony that was given during the Task Force's Public Hearing on March 4, 2021.

Ms. Coates and Lauren Marra, Task Force facilitator, began the meeting by reviewing meeting objectives with subgroup members. After the check-in, Kelly Cimino, the Director of the Howard County Department of Housing and Community Development, gave a presentation on the Department of Housing, including information on its funding sources, Moderate Income Housing Unit (MIHU) program, housing assistance, and COVID-19 relief funds.

Following the presentation, Task Force members asked Ms. Cimino questions and provided comments about her presentation. Ms. Coates began the discussion by asking about federal HUD funding and how the Department of Housing conducts outreach to different communities in Howard County. Mr. Edelson

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and Phil Engelke, Task Force member, raised questions, comments, and concerns about the County's fee-in-lieu law for certain affordable housing requirements. Ms. Cimino responded to the questions and provided additional information on different outreach efforts of the Department, as well as when fee-in-lieu is or is not permitted as an alternative to constructing moderate income housing units.

Following the discussion on Ms. Cimino's presentation, the subgroup heard a presentation from Jeff Bronow, the Research Division Chief for the Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning. Mr. Bronow presented information on Howard County's Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO). Specifically, Mr. Bronow shared information on the history of the APFO law since 1992 and outlined the three different tests that new developments must pass before moving forward. Mr. Bronow also noted recent changes to the APFO ordinance in 2018 that resulted in more stringent school capacity requirements under the APFO law.

Following the presentation, Task Force members asked questions and made comments about the information. Vonda Orders, Task Force member, asked which school zones were open and closed to development and whether there are exemptions to the APFO law. Mr. Bronow shared that the school capacity test is usually the determining factor on whether a development proceeds, and he noted that senior housing is exempt from APFO. Peter Engel, Task Force member, highlighted that most areas where multifamily development is allowed are currently closed to new development. Mr. Edelson and Mr. Engelke both observed that the Board of Education has a significant role in determining school capacity decisions through redistricting. Suzanne Haley, Task Force member, asked how much land in Howard County is available to be developed, particularly in western Howard County. Mr. Bronow shared that roughly 2% of land is undeveloped in Howard County, and most of that land is in the rural west.

After the APFO presentation, Task Force members reviewed general themes and discussion points that several subgroup members had prepared for the meeting. Ms. Orders shared information on categories of work that have emerged over the last several subgroup meetings, including: narrative change, planning for changing the PSA, changing zoning in eastern and western Howard County, school & neighborhood integration, and other areas of research and exploration. Subgroup members provided feedback and reflections on the information provided. Ms. Haley expressed concerns that there is a lot of resistance to changing housing and zoning policy, especially in the rural west. Several members agreed and expressed support for continuing to research and develop recommendations to expand housing options throughout the county. Ian Kennedy, Task Force member, shared his work with the Columbia Housing Center and expressed that there is a need to change the narrative about housing in Howard County and encourage new investment within Columbia neighborhood. There was general agreement among subgroup members on the categories of work and themes that were presented.

Following discussion on themes and categories of work, Ms. Marra shared that the subgroup's next phase of work is recommendation development. Isabella Battish, Phil Engelke, and Ian Kennedy volunteered to refine the draft recommendations together ahead of the April subgroup meeting. Ms. Marra recapped the meeting and shared that she would be sending additional information on how to access public testimony via email. Ms. Marra also confirmed the date and time of the upcoming subgroup meeting on April 6, 2021 from 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM.

Ms. Coates thanked members of the subgroup for participating and adjourned the meeting at 6:12 PM.