**ITEM 3: Approval of the January 2024 Meeting Minutes**

Approval of the January Executive Board Meeting minutes

Attachments

1. Summary Minutes to Executive Board Meeting (January 11, 2024)

**A REGIONAL COALITION FOR HOUSING (ARCH)**

Summary Minutes to Executive Board Meeting

Date January 11, 2024 Hybrid Meeting

9:00 am

**Board Members Present:**

Carol Helland, City of Redmond, Director of Planning and Community Development

Diane Carlson, City of Bellevue, Acting City Manager

Nathan McCommon, City of Bellevue, Deputy City Manager

David Pyle, City of Sammamish, Director of Community Development

Maia Knox, City of Clyde Hill, Assistant City Manager

Alison Van Gorp, City of Mercer Island, Director of Development Services

Jared Hill, City of Woodinville, Intergovernmental Affairs Coordinator

Kurt Triplett, City of Kirkland, City Manager

Debbie Bent, City of Kenmore, Community Development Director

Wally Bobkiewicz, City of Issaquah, City Administrator

Kyle Stannert, City of Bothell, City Manager

Simon Foster, King County, HHCD Division Director, DCHS

Erin Fitzgibbons, City of Newcastle, Interim Community Development Director

**Board Members Absent:**

Steve Burns, City of Medina, City Manager

**Others Present:**

Lindsay Masters, ARCH, Executive Director

Diana Heilman, ARCH, Senior Administrative Assistant

Terrell Edwards, ARCH, Planner

Yelias Bender, ARCH, Senior Program Officer

Nicole Palczewski, ARCH, Housing Program Intern

Mike Stanger, ARCH, Senior Planner

Susie Levy, ARCH, Local Housing Programs Manager

Jen Davis Hayes, City of Issaquah, Economic Development Manager

Elsa Kings, ARCH, Housing Trust Fund Manager

Layla Khademi, NAIOP, Legal Extern

Cissi Xu, ARCH, Intern

Linda Hall, LPA, Consultant

David Ports, LPA, Consultant

Linda Abe, City of Bellevue, Affordable Housing Planning Manager

Adam Matza, ARCH, Rental Program Coordinator

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Carol Helland called the meeting to order at 9:11 am.

Introductions were made.

1. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Chair Carol Helland asked if there were any changes to be made to the January 11, 2024 agenda. No changes were made.

*Kyle Stannert moved that the agenda be approved. Seconded by Jared Hill. Approved 10-0*

1. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Chair Carol Helland asked if there were any corrections to the meeting minutes for December 2023. No corrections were requested.

*David Pyle moved that the minutes be approved as presented. Maia Knox seconded the motion. Approved 10-0.*

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

*No public comment was made.*

**5. REPORTS / ACTION ITEMS**

**5a) Draft ARCH Strategic Plan**

Carol acknowledged the work of the Strategic Planning Committee and asked for a reminder of who the Committee members were. Lindsay noted Kurt Triplett has chaired the committee and will be helping to guide the discussion, and Diane Carlson, Debbie Bent, Olga Perelman and Mark Hofman were also members. LPA consultants Linda Hall and David Ports have assisted through the process.

Lindsay shared a PowerPoint presentation to walk the Board through the process to date and the draft strategies for consideration. This includes foundational elements of ARCH’s identity, including ARCH’s mission, strategic advantages and strategy screen criteria. The mission has long included overarching strategies, to which this plan would include adding advancement of policies to build affordable housing faster. Our strategic advantages help us to clarify our lane and where we can be most effective. The strategy screen questions were used to help develop potential strategies and questions, and should be kept in mind by the Board as we think about whether these are the right actions for this time.

*Wally Bobkiewicz joined the meeting at 9:25 am.*

*Kurt Triplett joined the meeting at 9:35 am.*

Lindsay walked through the draft strategies, which were outlined as follows:

**Governance and Administration**

Elected Official Education and Engagement

Governance Change Analysis

Streamline Decision-Making and Approval Processes

Organizational Values / DEI

**Local Policy and Planning**

Support Member Requests and Convene on Key Issues. (Ongoing)

Advice on Surplus Land and Other Strategies

**Affordable Housing Policy, Legislation and Funding**

Targeted State and Regional Policy Efforts

**Program Implementation: Housing Investments, Preservation and Stewardship**

Some strategies were ***not*** recommended for inclusion in the initial strategic plan, but are worth consideration in the future. Lindsay shared a Strategy Matrix that placed strategies based on how they aligned with the Identity Statement and what potential impact they would have. A chart of potential actions for the next three years was displayed – some of this includes recommending new staff or consultant resources in the 2025 budget, ans potentially starting the streamlining and consultant study work this year. More information on the strategies can be found in the meeting materials and presentation.

The proposed steps for plan review and approval are as follows:

1. Today: Board feedback into draft plan
2. Week of Jan. 15: Staff incorporate feedback and circulates updated draft.
3. Week of Jan. 29: Staff update plan and develop a summary document that incorporates the multiple elements around ARCH’s Identity, Big Question and Priority Strategies (“Strategy Road Map”)
4. February 9: Board review and considers approval of updated draft.
5. Mid-Late February: Staff develop and activate a communication and outreach plan to notify key stakeholders.
6. March/April: Strategic Plan included in the Housing 101 event.

Lindsay opened the subject for discussion and welcomed thoughts from the Planning Committee.

Kurt Triplett, Planning Committee Chair, kicked off the discussion and reminded the Board that the touchstone for the effort was how to build more affordable housing faster. ARCH continuing to tread water won’t accomplish that. At the same time, we want to be proactive and pragmatic, but not provocative. We talked about the sweet spot of where to move things forward in a way that councils could listen to and give something specific and actionable. Particularly on the policy front, we are constantly reacting to state policymaking, and having someone with expertise to help advise, give suggested amendments and help with testimony would be very helpful. On the project front, there are opportunities we want to be able to pivot and support. Kurt invited comments from the other Committee members

Vice Chair Debbie Bent concurred with the summary and was interested to hear from other Board members. Diane agreed that there was so much engagement with this group through the 2 or 3 sessions that informed this. We had a lot of really big ideas and thoughtful participation to get to this tough job of narrowing down, and the staff did excellent work to help the planning team do that. Te recommendations put ARCH in a good position for the Board to have good options and good direction to move forward. Overall, it was a really good process and we have a good plan.

Kyle Stannert expressed his appreciation for the heavy lifting of the committee and thought the materials reflected the great work of the workshop. Two notes of caution – it would be easy to debate what strategies have the most impact, and it may not be as important to make that assertion as it is to express that we want to balance investments with a potential impact and seeing where it all goes. Middle size cities also don’t have staff like the ones proposed in the plan, and would be thinking of whether we could get by with outsourcing help on communications and intergovernmental/lobbyist work? We also want to keep with us the mindset of, if not now, when? Overall, balancing the must-have investments with what they might accomplish, and how to know when we are successful. Overall, this is a job well done.

Kurt shared more on the government relations position. There was a lot of discussion in the group that this is not a lobbyist, but more of a policy and government relations expert to inform government officials and help them understand the impact of policies and legislation so cities can be more successful. Kyle appreciated that explanation and noted it will be helpful to start laying the groundwork for this.

Wally echoed the comments about the work and thoughtfulness, but expressed concern about the staff member for advocacy or analysis. Issaquah’s councilmembers already belong to other affordable housing policy groups that provide competing direction, such as PSRC, SCA and King County. ARCH adding another layer doesn’t make sense. It would be helpful to consolidate the input from all these groups. The role of the Executive Director of ARCH needed to be discussed. Should the Director work more with elected officials and externally on communications, and what resources need to be added internally to take care of things in-house? The timeframe for governance and how elected officials are involved is too aggressive. We need more time to talk to Council and that won’t happen until February. Councilmembers might ask why ARCH is doing things on their own? This is an opportunity to bridge that gap, but we need to slow process down a bit to get early buy-in.

Kurt said that he views the Strategic Plan as an extension of the Work Program and as such we did not contemplate preapproval by each Council, but acknowledged this is a gray area and that’s why there’s an opportunity to check in. Getting sign-off on the recommendation doesn’t make sense because we haven’t made the recommendation yet. We should discuss further as the Board, as it would definitely be a tricky discussion if one council says no to a specific strategy.

Lindsay echoed that the Strategic Plan is the Board’s plan, but implementation would require Councils being willing to move forward with it. There will still be more work to be done after the plan is adopted to determine what happens when. The plan can be kept at a higher level with less specificity on timing. Regarding the groups that council relies on for policy advice, ARCH’s niche is really as the affordable housing expert for ARCH cities, with a focus on funding and policy issues that impact getting development done on the ground. It seems this technical advice is often missions, however it will be good to consult with Council members to see if this resonates. The Executive Director does play a role in communications and engaging with elected officials, but having another dedicated staff person to support that work would be a significant value add.

Carol agreed with the Director’s comments and acknowledged it can be challenging to manage input from many sources. The King County Affordable Housing Committee and GMPC are really charged with holding us accountable as they approve our Housing Elements and check on implementation progress. A government affairs expert could help us navigate that. PSRC is the same, they have a checklist we have to respond to, and Commerce may even have a role in the future. Most jurisdictions rely on their planning directors to navigate all the legislative updates, and that resource could be very helpful coming from ARCH, understanding ARCH is not speaking on behalf of cities but was supporting cities in understanding the consequences of things that were proposed. Cities would still decide how to act.

Lindsay said this also connects back to proactive educational engagement so there was some foundation of understanding and support for affordable housing and related policies rather than solely reacting to a policy issue.

Carol wondered if the process outlined is too fast or too slow. We all expressed that the issue is urgent and asked the Board what was the right timeframe in order to be able to provide feedback into this process so the Strategic Plan could be finalized.

Kurt heard that Board members might need a few more weeks. Kyle pointed out that the AWC conference falls at the same time as the scheduled February Board meeting. Carol asked Lindsay what the consequences would be of finalizing of the Strategic Plan later in February or March. Lindsay said the Board will soon be tasked with developing the 2025 Budget to operationalize the Strategic Plan, and if we delay too long we could get out of sync with when cities are developing their budgets.

Wally said it doesn’t sound like others have concerns about timing, but wants this to be successful and it’s important not to have elected officials surprised and thinking ARCH is getting ahead of the Councils and asking for more money to lobby us.

Alison Van Gorp said they have been updating their Council on a regular basis, but they have not seen the content, and it would be helpful to have some education on what the Board has been doing the last six months, and a high-level preview would be helpful to get input and see if there are significant concerns. We need some way for that education and give a chance for input.

Diane said they talked about this in the steering committee and it was understood to be important to have time for everyone to have conversation with their Councils, and it might look different for different cities. It’s important to take that time as long as it’s a reasonable time, and it will be more successful if we all go through that step. We also need to have good points to communicate what the plan intends and what is doesn’t intend so we are clear and consistent in how we communicate it to our elected officials.

Debbie said each Board member is responsible to keep their Council updated, and agreed it would be helpful to have a high-level overview as a reminder why we are doing this, and show the link between this and what the Council would be approving in the form of the Work Plan. The Councils need to understand that some of these strategies may have implications for the Work Plan and Budgetgoing forward.

David agreed and said one concern is Councilmembers may want to backtrack when it comes time to deal with what it means for the budget and what value new services bring. One of the challenges is we are already required to do this by 1220. King County and PSRC are already reviewing these plans, and we will have already passed that point and created the necessary policies in 2024 before this role will be created. David added that additional time to communicate with the council and build a foundation for a budget ask later in the year is definitely helpful, and we should use a template memo so we are consistent in communication. February is a stretch, March is more realistic.

Carol asked if the comment on being mandated by 1220 to implement the requirements meant that the time and need for the governmental affairs and policy position had passed? David said it depended on what the role would be. Is the role focused on getting cities to provide the capacity and make opportunities available in our comprehensive plans, or is it trying to coordinate and connect cities and communities to projects and funding? That role would be a definite win, the policy role is more challenging because it depends on the politics in that city and their objectives at the time.

Jared echoed with David’s points about having a clear position on what this is. Most if not all of ARCH’s priorities are in our own legislative agenda, it will be interesting how that plays out as we communicate those with our legislators. If we are already doing that advocacy, part of that role may have already been fulfilled.

Kurt deferred to Lindsay and the Chair on the timeline. In response to other points made, it’s important to remember this is a draft recommendation from the committee for Board discussion. We need to be clear about what we are checking in with our councils about. The process we launched a couple months ago asked Board members to let Councils know we are doing this, that we are gathering their input and the Board will work on a recommendation. We are very clear that the deciders are the Councils. The key is to check in with your folks to know if these are the right recommendations so we can come back and make a decision, which councils can then edit or deny. We’re also hearing the need for more clarity on the governmental affairs position and how it differs from HDC or other advocacy groups. The strategy is both for someone who can help take advantage of opportunities and someone who could help us refine legislative policy. We all know how there can be a vision and mandate set out, and then the implementation is riddled with challenges. We have to have a way to coordinate legislative feedback to make sure things are working for the ARCH cities.

Carol thanked Kurt for the summary and said it would be useful to think about questions that were provided to the Board for discussion. It sounds like there is consensus that everyone should have time to check with their key stakeholders to frame their positions on those key questions. A tentative timeline was to look for a decision on the ARCH recommendations in March. The information provided may be enough for communication, but sounds like it would be helpful to include more context on the goals and budget implications in a cover letter, and the Council’s opportunity to play a role in the budget and work plan.

Wally reiterated his concerns that Councils will not support something they didn’t have a hand in making.

Carol concluded that the Board hasn’t really answered the questions that have been asked of us. It was requested that Lindsay send the slideshow to the Board with the questions attached so the Board can be accountable to form positions on those questions prior to next month. Could Board members have conversations not in a meeting but in one on one settings to get feedback? The Strategic Plan would be put on the agenda for February on a day to avoid AWC days. Carol asked what other materials are necessary for conversations with Councils?

Maia asked for more information on the resource implications associated with additional staffing.

Carol said they could include information from last budget discussions regarding salaries and contribution changes for each jurisdiction.

Lindsay said we could include something in the memo about the process of putting the budget together and share an example of a staff position. We may also hear about the HUD grant this month, and there could be other grant opportunities in the future. We want to highlight that those are future conversations but also important context to consider now. Lindsay agreed we have what is needed for next steps.

**6) OTHER BUSINESS**

**6a] Verbal Updates –** *These items were postponed till the next meeting.*

* Middle Housing Planning Coordination
* Reminder: Scheduling Council HTF / Budget Approvals

**7) ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned at 10:35 am.