

Attendance:

Tiffany Stuflick, Chair

Sharon Gray, Vice Chair

Susan Levy

Gail Friedman

Mary Gillogly

John Foley

Staff:

Jason Smith, Chatham County

Jack Watson, Central Pines

Lindsay Whitson, Central Pines

Guests:

Richard Angino, Third Wave

Andrea Wiley, CPCA

Chair Stuflick brought the meeting to order. Introductions were given around the table, and Jason Smith gave background on his prior roles and what his role would be moving forward. He states that the county has made an effort to take the position that Leah had before and elevate it to a director position so that there can be a standalone housing division. Housing before was fragmented amongst courts, DSS, the county office, etc. The idea behind the change in the role was to centralize all that under one roof. Jason was already working with DSS to manage that.

He worked for 24 years in the New Hampshire prison re-entry position. Worked with people with different backgrounds coming out of prison and went to the senate to advocate for bills that affected re-entry.

Then went into a nonprofit that was an hour north of Boston, similar to here it was starting to see overflow from the city driving up housing costs. He managed six programs involved with homelessness, RRH, Street Outreach, and Transitional Living, and managing a drop-in center. During his time the nonprofit went from having a drop-in center to having a shelter. The shelter was created right at the end of his tenure.

After working at the organization with the drop in center, Jason worked for Volunteers for America at a position funded through the VA. One of the frustrations there was that it felt like you were just punching numbers, rather than being concerned with the services provided.

Then saw Chatham County posted for DSS, Jenny Christiansen said she wanted to develop some programming, and needed to start a prevention program.

It'll take a bit of time before all the balls in the air are figured out, as well as staying tethered on the program side. The goal will be to look at the role that Jason left and replace himself with someone who does not look like him. Because it doesn't diversify the team. Right now is a learning process at the county, to figure out the pieces and parts in the air and then decide how to backfill the manager position in DSS. It's not going to be able to stay as singular as it has been.

Tiffany and Sharon introduced themselves as the new chair and vice chair. Sharon retired recently from a career in real estate. She currently assists in teaching the trade part time, and has been on AHAC for about a year. Tiffany's background is mostly military, have lived in the area for 8 years, and in Chatham for 3. Most of what has been done in military was going after problems, identifying and fixing them.

Tiffany invited feedback on; how she approached the chair position. She wanted to come up with suggestions from AHAC for guest speakers as well. A running goal going forward will be to have guest speakers at each meeting.

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Brian Thompson prepared a suggested path forward for assisting Third Wave moving forward. The detailed path is attached. Richard Angino provided some context from Third Wave's perspective: The Retreat at Pittsboro came out of discussions at prior AHAC meetings. Third Wave found a plot in Pittsboro that had an empty urban infill. They worked with Habitat, talked about how to creatively get people in there. The rents for Retreat at Pittsboro, low for 1 bed is 540. highest is 780. for 2 bed is 600 to 880. It is about half of market rate. The problem with AH is that there's not a lot of margin. These are designed to run with about 20k of cashflow. These are designed to throw off cashflow. The water meter issue or anything else.

AHAC unanimously voted to endorse Brian Thompson's suggestions to the Board of Commissioners on how to proceed in assisting Third Wave.

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Andrea Wiley was invited to share Central Piedmont Community Action's mission and programming. The goal is to provide clients with a pathway towards self sufficiency. One aspect of that is money management training. When people apply and bring in eligibility documents, once they are approved, they must agree to work on getting employment or elevating their careers. They set goals and work with a case manager for two years before graduating. Part of that is financial literacy. To qualify, clients must meet 125 percent of poverty guidelines. This program is unique because it works with the entire family.

Then there is weatherization. That helps not just homeowners but renters with the comfort of their home. If your electric bill is high because of poor insulation, or your water meter is low, then they'd help you with that. Putting in new windows, heating and air, etc.

CPCA also runs community engagement events that give a space to bring resources to where people are. Last year, they did a back to school event partnered with Rock City church. They came to the fairgrounds; all the kids were out and about. We put all supplies that kids would

need to go back to school, to see the kids' faces and grab a bag and get what they need for school, was absolutely worth it.

This year, they are partnering with Chatham County fairgrounds and second bloom boutique, they have given clothes to people that need them. Outside the easter egg hunt, they are going to have Ben and Jerry's. Most importantly, inside the fairgrounds CPCA will have the Fit for Work bunny hop shop, it's everything you'd need to go to an interview. Shoes, suits, ties, dresses, etc. One of her clients got a job as a case manager, but she didn't have the clothes for the position.

Finally, Andrea talked about Rapid Rehousing (RRH). Many clients seeking help through rapid rehousing have barriers-- the more they have, the more unlikely it is that they'll achieve stable housing. One example of a non-financial barrier are eviction records. With that on a clients' record, it is difficult to find someone who will accept their application to rent. With RRH, part of that would be the client moving through Coordinated Entry system. We talked a while back about HMIS, it's a database that literally records the homeless population that is reported to the state. With HMIS, we put in information, it breaks down household demographics for the region. Chatham works with PRACC-- Person, Rockingham, Alamance, Chatham, and Caswell to report these numbers.

Other members of AHAC had questions about what all is provided through Rapid Rehousing. Andrea explained that ideally, there'd be a stockpile of landlords and properties lined up and ready to accept clients. But that is not the case. We have a housing coordinator and navigator, who is looking to find properties and see if they are willing to accept the program. Unfortunately, due to Chatham County's Housing Authority, people are worried about accepting vouchers. We have to reassure them that they have autonomy over who will be coming in. Based on a bed/bath count, you can give a list of clients to the landlords and they can choose among them which they want to do.

Last year, the RRH program had 104 people that were serviced. One was considered an unaccompanied minor. The rest, think this year we've had 33 unsheltered households for PiT count, that was for Chatham. These numbers are underrepresented. That's 33 people that were identified in PiT. Lots of people won't be forthcoming, for any reason. Melissa has done a wonderful job at outreach, going out and finding these individuals.

Some members of AHAC also wanted to know why there is not a local homeless shelter. Alamance is the only member of PRACC that has a shelter. There's a lot of people who don't want to move. They have children who are in school, they have to get to and from church, etc.

Jason explained that when we say shelter, lots of communities don't want to talk about it. But there's a lot of problems with creating a shelter that don't appear on their surface. For instance, fire code is much more stringent as soon as a building is meant for people to sleep in it, and getting a building into compliance can be expensive. Many communities don't have the money to sustain a shelter and then have to close it. A drop-in center, a resource center to get people's basic needs. That helps you know the scope and numbers that you're dealing with. You can then see the number of people you'll need. You can see the number of beds you need. A drop-in center doesn't need a lot of space, is lightweight administratively, and it tells you how much you need. That's not to say we don't need a shelter, or that we don't want one. But funders are going to want to know how many people are you serving? You also won't get the same pushback from the community based on a resource center or drop in center.

AHAC also asked if there was funding for Hotel Vouchers. Andrea explained that CPCA's issue with hotel vouchers is that without an end goal it's like throwing money out the window. Lots of people have barriers to permanent housing that need to be addressed. You can't get people to even apply to different places. Same way with LOVE Chatham. CPCA uses their emergency funding for other things. if you have a water bill that is in arrears, we can take care of that with emergency funding, etc.

Jason mentioned that there's 60k of emergency funding that needs to be spent by a qualified agency before July 1. They need to be spent by eligible "front door providers". LOVE Chatham is planning on spending some of their funding on hotel vouchers.

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Jack brought a draft of a flyer with affordable housing information and asked for AHAC's feedback. The general consensus was that information that would be disseminated in physical paper form should focus entirely on services: where do I go to get assistance, and do I qualify? Much of the information in the draft of the pamphlet is good to have available, but can be housed online. Richard recommended looking at the City of Winston Salem's affordable housing 101 page for a template of how to display data about the region.

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John updated AHAC about the Request for Approval for Belmont Place – pending development behind Lowe's is where Belmont Place is, BP has an existing portion of their planned 600 units set aside for affordable housing. The development is mixed-use, some townhomes, some single-family. The developer came to the board to increase density and ask for an additional 800 units. They were using their existing pledged units as the only source of affordable housing, which was built eight years ago.

So, the board said no, if you want to build here, you need to double the number of AH units – so the developers must meet the 10% threshold. The developers agreed. Pittsboro staff is going to discuss how to change their ways of negotiating with developers. Pittsboro has nine developments underway. *We never reached out to these developers as AHAC and discussing and connecting with these developers before they submit their plans for approval. We need to talk to the Planning Department in Chatham County and the municipalities before they get to the approval stage in front of the municipal/county boards.

John brought this up as a model of what AHAC could make a difference with. If the developers are coming in and proposing development by right, then we can not turn them away. However, Pittsboro trades affordable housing for density and that trade is appealing to developers because it cushions their margins.

Tiffany suggested that we invite the Planning Department to a conversation for how to insert AHAC into the planning process. AHAC has previously invited the planning department to give some background on the UDO, but this would be focused on what AHAC can do in developer negotiation. We can ask Jason, "how do we at AHAC go about being more involved in this process – the Commissioners have asked us to be a part of AH development and be more involved in this process and more involved, so how can we do this." How can we be the ones helping to negotiate?

Either a Planning Department staff member from Chatham County attends each of the AHAC meetings and if they say no, then we need to invite a member of the Planning Board since they

serve as an advisory board to the Commissioners and are working on behalf of the developers and for developers.

If Planning Department staff cannot attend each AHAC meeting, maybe we will ask them to at least write a staff report.

Lindsay mentioned a new Manufactured home grant called PRICE. The grant would have to be approached regionally, since the minimum amount that can be applied for is in the millions and it requires significant match. The due date for PRICE is in June and there is a public hearing requirement.