



Charlotte City Council
Great Neighborhoods Committee
Summary
September 15, 2021

COMMITTEE AGENDA TOPICS

- I. Source of Income Ad Hoc Advisory Committee Update (Informational)
- II. Neighborhood Equity and Stabilization (NEST) Update (Informational)

COMMITTEE INFORMATION

Committee Members Present:	Malcolm Graham (CMGC), Tariq Bokhari (virtual), Julie Eiselt (CMGC), Victoria Watlington (virtual), Braxton Winston (virtual)
Committee Members Absent:	n/a
Staff Resources:	Shawn Heath, City Manager's Office Pamela Wideman, Housing & Neighborhood Services Julia Martin, City Manager's Office
Guests:	Kim Graham, Greater Charlotte Apartment Association, Ad Hoc Committee Co-Chair Mark Ethridge, Ascent Realty, Ad Hoc Committee Co-Chair
Meeting Duration:	12:00 – 1:20 PM
Video available online:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=po7laDTCBI

MEETING MATERIALS

All meeting materials are available online at https://charlottenc.gov/CityCouncil/Committees/Pages/Neighborhood_Development.aspx

- 1. Presentation – Source of Income Ad Hoc Advisory Committee Update
- 2. Presentation – Neighborhood Equity and Stabilization (NEST) Update

DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

Council member Graham called the meeting to order and asked everyone to introduce themselves. Shawn Heath provided an overview of the meeting agenda. The Committee watched a video on the recent opening of the Roof Above Levine Men's Shelter that was made possible by City funding support.

Source of Income Ad Hoc Advisory Committee Update

Mark Ethridge and Kim Graham, Source of Income Ad Hoc Advisory Committee Co-Chairs, were present to provide an update on the work of the ad hoc committee. To provide perspective on the charge of the ad hoc committee, Mr. Ethridge shared data from 2017-2019 on households with vouchers that were unable to obtain housing within their allotted time. Mr. Ethridge pointed out that the charge of the ad hoc committee, as given to the committee by the Mayor and City Council, is not to solve the affordable housing crisis, nor is it to create a legal opinion as to whether source of income should be a part of the fair housing ordinance. The ad hoc committee's charge is simple and pragmatic - to increase the acceptance of Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs) and other rental subsidies in the marketplace, including in areas of high opportunity in our community.

The ad hoc committee has been meeting since May 2021. Most meetings have included testimony from INLIVIAN and other rental subsidy providers about the way the voucher/subsidy programs work including program successes and obstacles. Two subcommittees have been formed: 1. data and research and 2. education and communications. Over the

next month, these subcommittees will merge and the ad hoc committee will then spend the majority of the time from October to December building upon the work of the subcommittees to ultimately create final recommendations for City Council.

Mr. Ethridge discussed the progress of the ad hoc committee, including developing a work plan and timeline, creating subcommittees to conduct the work on the committee, reviewing information on what other housing authorities and municipalities are doing around landlord incentives and HCV program enhancements including INLIVIAN and other Moving to Work (MTW) housing authorities, conducting a comprehensive study of the HCV program in Charlotte and its nuances, receiving information on INLIVIAN program enhancements and opportunity areas, meeting with Charlotte Family Housing and Socialserve, two local subsidy providers, and creating an interactive data mapping tool to yield effective data and metric setting for expansion of rental subsidy acceptance especially in high opportunity areas. Through the data mapping, the ad hoc committee will be able to take a data-driven approach to identify opportunities for the highest success to encourage more landlords to accept more rental subsidies.

Mr. Ethridge explained that the ad hoc committee is looking at tangible issues that landlords have with voucher/rent subsidies, the capacity that subsidy providers have to address these, and where ancillary support may be needed. Landlords are focused on two things with vouchers/subsidies: 1. economic viability and 2. what happens when something goes wrong. Programs such as the Lotus Campaign exist in the philanthropic space that alleviate voucher/subsidy process and risk mitigation issues through things like security deposits and risk mitigation funds. In a finite world of public sector and federal government support these may not be possible in specific programs like the HCV, but there may be solutions to try to address them through other means such as through coordination with the philanthropic/private sector. The ad hoc committee is looking at these on a comprehensive basis to identify realistic ways to bridge the gaps to get to a 100% success rate and change the map of where vouchers are accepted to include higher opportunity areas. Mr. Ethridge reminded the committee that Charlotte has a very low vacancy rate of approximately 2% in established apartment communities where rents are within the range that can be supported by a rental subsidy/voucher. As such, the number of units that are applicable is likely in the hundreds. The data mapping will help identify these.

Neighborhood Equity and Stabilization (NEST) Update

Pamela Wideman shared that the work of neighborhood equity and stabilization is not new but is instead a critical, embedded component of the work that staff and City Council has been doing for years. Since 2017, more than ten enhancements have been made to programs and policies to further strengthen neighborhood equity and stabilization and help residents avoid involuntary displacement. This historical and ongoing work will provide a foundation for the work that is ahead of us, including working with the appointed NEST Commission.

An internal cross-departmental staff work team has been assembled to focus on the work of neighborhood equity and stabilization. This includes developing an engagement strategy for the three neighborhoods that were identified through the displacement risk dashboard earlier this year: Washington Heights, Hidden Valley and Winterfield.

Julia Martin shared an update on the engagement strategy. Staff are developing a survey for outreach to the approximately 10,000 households in these neighborhoods. Prior to launching the survey, staff will conduct outreach to the neighborhood leaders of each neighborhood so that they will be informed in advance and can be advocates for resident participation in the survey. The survey will be launched in early October 2021; residents will receive a postcard inviting them to take the survey. The survey will include a mechanism that allows a two-way engagement with residents, where information can proactively be shared based on the unique responses of residents, such as information on job training resources if a resident responds to the survey indicating that this is a need that they have. Survey results will help us understand how to prioritize and develop program enhancements as well as develop new programs and services.

The NEST Commission, once appointed, will be convened as soon as possible. The Great Neighborhoods Committee will receive regular updates on the work of the NEST Commission as well as the survey results and next steps.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will occur on October 20, 2021.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 1:20 pm.