

Equitable Housing and Development Committee

Longfellow Community Council

(Draft/Approved) Monthly Meeting Minutes

Date: January 11, 2023 | 6:00 P.M–7:00 P.M

Present: Galen Ryan (Co-Chair), Marina Balleria (Co-Chair), Wanja Kuria (Staff), Katherine Banbury (presenter), Becca Brackett, Lisa Boyd, Sarah Robinson, Andy Hestness, Soren Stevenson, Mitchell Sullivan, Steve Anderson

Recorder: *Wanja Kuria*

Approve Agenda and Minutes

Notes/Comments

(Introductions, Call Meeting to Order and Review Agenda, Presentation on Renter Organizing Efforts, Discuss Committee Meeting Structure, Discuss Grant Application, Adjourn)

Agenda approved

Presentation on Renter Organizing

Led by: Katherine Banbury

Read a comprehensive summary of Dominion tenant organizing efforts [here](#)

Mill Lofts works in Longfellow is a dominium property she's a dominium resident of 4 years which is how she got Dominion is the #1 provider of affordable housing in Minnesota and they receive lots of public funding.

Dominium buildings are income regulated but the housing is neither affordable nor sustainable for its tenants. In St. Paul, affordable housing is considered 60% of the average median income (118k) which means 48k in income would be considered low income. This is absurd and low income folks don't make anywhere near that much money. Dominion has done so much harm to their tenants: increasing rent by 8% despite the St. Paul rent control measure, increasing rent by 12.5% for non-St. Paul tenants, discriminating against Section 42 tenants, accepting HUD funds for parking improvements while also charging tenants for those improvements, and many other things.

Millworks Lofts is working with Katherine and Homeline to get organized because they're experiencing issues with shoddy building maintenance and rent increases, among other things. They're building out in coalition with other Dominion tenants in the greater metro area.

Ask: Help with doorknocking, support when meeting with tenants to share about the organizing work going on, help with creating and distributing flyers, food, and meeting materials. door knocking is the need right now. tenants don't always know

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If interested in joining this work, please reach out to Katherine Banbury via [email](#)

Discuss Committee Meeting Structure:

Led by: Marina Balleria

LCC staff has proposed that our committee move to a working-group based structure. This would allow for fewer meetings but more effective and project based work.

Working groups composed of interested committee members would identify work they are interested in pursuing and meet as regularly as they need and in whichever format was most conducive for them to complete the work. A month prior to the full committee meeting, working groups would submit materials to the committee to look over in preparation for the large group meeting. This would give folks enough time to look over information and come prepared.

The whole committee would meet quarterly to hear reports and/or presentations from each working group, ask questions, vote, etc. This structure might appeal to community members more as they would be able to hear information about the work we're doing and weigh in, much like a forum. Meetings could be recorded and posted online for community members to access anytime.

Working groups can determine procedures on how they plan for presentations, how volunteers can help/participate, etc. LCC staff would support working groups by making/facilitating connections, but they would not be running any part of it.

The committee can continue to discuss alternative processes for streamlining grant proposals so as to alleviate the board from having to process so many grant applications. Grants relevant to EHDC could be processed and funded by the committee.

Potential projects to build working groups around

- Fundraising for [Rental Assistance](#) (with Julia at PPNA)
 - Apartment Door Knocking
 - [Free the Deeds](#)
 - Mark Brandt's Edmund Blvd. Renaming Project
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**Discuss Grant
Application**

Led by: Galen Ryan

Jasmine Epps Flowers is applying for a grant to purchase, create, and distribute supply bags/kits mid-January to unhoused neighbors in Longfellow. The total cost to assemble 240 bags would be \$3600. Jasmine would work collaboratively with organizations like Avivo and Mpls Homeless Response Team to ensure the bags are being distributed to those in need.

Several committee members expressed feeling rushed to make a decision about a grant application they only just received without much time to thoroughly discuss it. There were questions about why the committee needed to approve this so urgently, whether the application is an urgent response to a particular issue or whether it was just an idea. Folks suggested maybe this is something they can consider and discuss more thoroughly with Jasmine between now and the next meeting (2/1).

Sarah offered to connect with Jasmine and bring the committee's questions to her for discussion. Sarah offered to loop the rest of the committee in after getting more information from Jasmine.

The decision to approve or deny the grant will be pushed to the 2/1 meeting.

Adjourned at 7:00 P.M

Summary of Meeting and Committee Work: *EHDC is working to identify renter and homeowner resources; developing SOWs that can utilize NRP funding; identifying new funding opportunities for housing equity; and developing strategies to support city-wide advocacy for housing equity policies.*