

**HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY**

10400 Detrick Avenue  
Kensington, Maryland 20895  
(240) 627-9425

**Special Session Minutes**

**December 11, 2023**

A Special Session of the Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County was conducted via virtual platform on Monday, December 11, 2023, with moderator functions occurring at 10400 Detrick Avenue, Kensington, Maryland beginning at 7:04 pm. Those in attendance were:

**Present**

Roy Priest, Chair  
Frances Kelleher, Vice Chair  
Pamela Byrd, Commissioner  
Robin Salomon, Commissioner  
Linda Croom, Commissioner

**Absent**

Jeffery Merkowitz, Commissioner  
Richard Y. Nelson, Commissioner

**Also Attending**

Chelsea Andrews, President/ Executive Director  
Kayrine Brown, Senior Executive Vice President  
Aisha Memon, Senior Vice President of Legal Affairs/General Counsel  
Ken Silverman, Vice President of Legislative Affairs  
Eric B. Schnurer, Strategic Plan Consultant

**IT Support**

Aries Cruz  
Irma Rodriguez

**Commission Support**

Jocelyn Koon, Senior Executive Assistant

Chair Priest opened the meeting with welcome remarks and an introduction to the Special Session of the Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County. Chair Priest introduced Commissioners Kelleher, Croom, Salomon, and Byrd. Commissioners Merkowitz and Nelson were necessarily absent. Chair Priest highlighted the importance of each Commissioner having the opportunity to present their comments on the Strategic Plan and opened the floor to the Commission for their feedback.

Chair Priest introduced Vice Chair Kelleher to provide her feedback on the draft Strategic Plan. Vice Chair Kelleher asked for more substantial information to be provided in section one of the Strategic Plan in regards to the current state of HOC. Vice Chair Kelleher asked to implement a resource analysis that looks at the finance situation, debt capacity and administrative cost, etc. which shows where HOC stands as well as provide information on the resources HOC expects to have available over the next five years to deploy for strategic initiatives. Vice Chair Kelleher also commented that the need for information about current and future staffing needs as well as the current technology situation should be addressed. Some additional notable highlights included: 1) challenges facing the County and more information on the evolution of HUD and its direction; 2) the shift from public Housing to RAD; 3) the shift in the Housing Choice Voucher Program where targeted vouchers are put out for certain sub-populations; and 4) including cost benefit analysis. Vice Chair Kelleher also highlighted the three topics that will help to expand affordable housing: 1) eliminate exclusionary zoning; 2) requiring housing developers to offer a certain percentage of their product at an affordable price; and 3) making housing vouchers an entitlement for those who qualify for some level of poverty such as those at 30 percent AMI or less. Vice Chair Kelleher further deliberated on the adjustments needed to be made in the Strategic Plan's goals based on her assessment.

Commissioner Salomon agreed that the Strategic Plan should provide information on where HOC is getting their resources in order to accomplish the goals. The Commission deliberated on removing references to race and primarily focusing on housing and low and moderate income customers solely. Vice Chair Kelleher highlighted the historical data was misquoted and should be corrected to highlight the groups of people who were not included. Commissioner Byrd highlighted on page 9, black households were singled out and inquired why was this topic was singled out if there were no strategic initiatives created to address the issue.

Commissioner Croom highlighted the Strategic Plan should address lowering the waitlist number. Commissioner Kelleher mentioned quantifying the goals and having a number to aspire for is important. Commissioner Salomon commented the importance of the waitlist goal is to look at how many people are being moved off the waitlist to be housed.

Chair Priest commented the section of the Strategic Plan that mentioned the challenges facing Montgomery County needed further information on how HOC should strategically address the conditions over the next five years. Chair Priest also mentioned he would like the core values connected to the Strategic Plan and more context should be provided. In addition, the Chair agreed that financial resources need to be addressed in the Strategic Plan. After further deliberation, Chair Priest asked to have an annual meeting to discuss HOC's progress in relation to the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Vice Chair Kelleher asked that a document is created by the Commission that shows the feedback that was given during the Strategic Plan meetings and what should be incorporated in the Strategic Plan. Vice Chair Kelleher also noted that a vote was never made in regards to accepting the goals and values of the Strategic Plan.

Chair Priest called for a motion. Commissioner Salomon made a motion to accept the goals and values as presented in the Strategic Plan. Commissioner Byrd seconded. Affirmative votes were cast by Priest, Byrd, Salomon and Croom. Vice Chair Kelleher voted nay. Motion passed 4 to 1. Commissioner Merkowitz and Nelson were necessarily absent and did not participate in the vote.

Chair Priest mentioned all feedback provided by the Commission will be addressed and incorporated in the final Strategic Plan.

The closed session was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chelsea Andrews,  
Secretary-Treasurer