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Commissioner Joseph Todd, Vice Chair
Representing South King County

Commissioner Andrea Caupain
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Commissioner LeRoy Laney III
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Commissioner Dorian Waller
Representing Pierce County

Commissioner Zellynda Perkins
Representing Pierce County

Commissioner Dr. Yolanda Geolingo
Representing Thurston County

Commissioner Sheila Stanton
Representing King County

Commissioner Stacy Estes
Representing Central Washington

Executive Director Edward O. Prince

Commission on African American Affairs Public Meeting Minutes Friday, November 17, 2023 | 1:00 pm - 4:00 p.m. | Tacoma City Council Chambers, Tacoma, WA

Members present: Chair Kendricks, Vice-chair Todd, Bailey, Perkins, Stanton, Estes, Executive Director Edward Prince, Program Manager Charlotte Kerney, Executive Assistant Keahna Umpstead. Quorum established.

Absent: Laney, Geolingo

1:00pm – Meeting called to order by Chair Kendricks

1:02pm – Roll Call

3:33 pm – Motion to approve previous meeting minutes by Chair Kendricks
Point of order by Vice Chair Todd - Motion seconded to correct and accept minutes by Commissioner Bailey.

Chair Kendricks called for vote.

Voice vote – no objections. Motion carried. September 2023 commission meeting minutes approved.

1:10pm – President and CEO, Dona Ponepinto – Presenting on United Way of Pierce County

Working to address the interconnected issues that affect the children and families in Pierce County Community by investing and developing programs that address the root issues of poverty.

- 1 in 3 households struggle with poverty.
 - 107,000 families in Pierce County struggle to meet a survival budget, let alone a stability budget.
 - Survival budget – requires they must earn at least \$32.20/hr. or \$5,902/mo. and doesn't allow for savings.
 - Stability Budget – Requires families to earn at least \$53.75/hr. or 8,955/mo. and includes pitting 10% of those earnings into savings for emergencies, home ownership, or funds for additional education.

Goal:

To lift 15,000 households out of poverty by 2028 and into self-sufficiency.

Vision:

An equitable and inclusive Pierce County Community where everyone has access to opportunities and resources needed to thrive and achieve at their highest potential.

Values:

The power of Community, Diversity, and Inclusion

ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constricted, Employed) households Program - represents the growing number of households who are above the Federal Poverty Line, do not qualify for many government assistance programs, and who are working yet cannot afford necessities to remain stable and self-sufficient.

- Of the 3 million households in Washington, 1,026,988 (34%) had income below the [ALICE Threshold of Financial Survival](#) in 2021. These included both households in poverty and ALICE households.
- When looking at poverty in WA there are 299,696 (10%) households in poverty yet when looking at ALICE households there are another 727,290 (24%) of households who are also in poverty just not under the federal poverty line that gives the reported 10%.
 - Demographics of households' hardship
 - Native American/Native – 49.5%
 - African American/Black – 48.6%
 - Hispanic/Latino – 39.4%
 - Asian – 36.6%
 - Multi-Racial – 30.8%
 - Caucasian/White – 28.7%

South Sound 211 Hotline – UWPC free hotline that connects people to hundreds of services and programs around Pierce, Thurston, and Lewis Counties including utilities, transportation, behavioral and physical health, housing, employment, legal assistance, and more.

- South Sound 2022 Impact
 - 76,529 overall individual contacts
 - 7,270 Individuals connected to rent assistance.
 - 3,201 individuals connected to transportation.
 - 5,041 individuals connected to shelter.

Center for Strong Families – A program focused on helping families take control of their finances and improve their bottom line.

- 2022 Impact
 - \$1,972 average monthly net income increase.
 - \$6,042 average increase in short-term savings.
 - 536 individuals connected with employment and or financial education coaches.

UWPC Community Impact Investment 2023

- Associated Ministries
 - Family Permanent Housing (Rapid Rehousing)
- Cares of Washington
 - Education & Training
- Centro Latino SER
 - Family Support, Stabilization and Advocacy
- Emergency Food Network
 - Food Distribution
- Helping Hand House
 - Homeless Prevention Pathways
- Korean Women's Association
 - Economic Stabilization Program
- LASA (Living Access Support Alliance)
 - Homeless Prevention Pathways
- Lindquist Dental Clinic for Children
 - Uncompensated Care Fund "the fund"
- Making A Difference Foundation
 - Eloise's Cooking Pot Home Delivery Program
- Multicultural Child and Family Hope Center
 - Tacoma Recovery Cafe'
- New Phoebe House Association
 - Holistic Recovery for Mothers Behavioral Health
- Nourish Pierce County
 - Bulk Purchases of Nutritious Food
- Peace Community Center
 - Hilltop Scholars: High School Graduation & College Completion
- Shared Housing Services
 - Youth Host Home Program
- St Leo Parish
 - Job Training Partnership
- Tacoma Community College
 - I-BEST ECE ELL Program (certificate for early childhood education for English language learners)
- Tacoma Community House
 - Employment & Training for Limited English speakers
- Tacoma Urban League
 - Black Empowerment Center
- The REACH Center
 - Changing System, Empowering Youth
- The Salvation Army, Tacoma Corps
 - Jarvie Lodge
- YWCA
 - Domestic Violence Shelter

Discussion – Through community partnerships UWPC has been able to begin to chip away at some of the entrenched social problems that impact poverty in our community. Some of those key partnerships are the Guaranteed Income Initiative – Growing Resilience in Tacoma (GRIT), Hunger Free Pierce County, Pierce County Coordinated Transportation Coalition, Pierce County Early Childhood Network, Pierce County Coordinated Entry, Pierce County Workforce, Ride Unties and WA211. These partnerships along with Volunteer events like Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Service Month, Everything but the Turkey Food Drive, Summer of Action and more have allowed UWPC to invest \$6.5 million into the community in 2022 alone, \$356 million into Pierce County over the last 100 years of its inception and moved 7,800 families from crisis to self-sufficiency since 2017.

2:05pm – Washington State Representative of the 37th Legislative District, Chipalo Street – Legislative Update on 2022 Legislative Session and run-up to 2023 Legislative Session

The big themes in the 2023 Legislative Session were around housing and homelessness but not enough focus on the rental populations that make up 40-50 percent of the housing populations in Streets 37th District as represented by the most recent census that is also reflected in many other Washington State Districts.

- Historic investments in the housing trust fund to a one-time funding pot of \$400 million that is a source of funding for affordable housing. Hoping in this upcoming session in 2024 to locate a reoccurring source of steady funding by increasing the real-estate excise tax.
- Substance Abuse Issues
 - Street along with other Seattle Legislatures voted to decriminalize drugs because of the criminalizing of drugs leading to a continued high number of incarcerated individuals which is the most expensive and least effective form of treatment for substance abuse.
 - Increase in substance abuse funding by \$60 million during the 2023 Leg. Session
 - This funding went towards diversion treatments such as substance abuse and mental health centers.

Discussion – Substance abuse funding in theory should also be going towards assisting those with treatments who find themselves already incarcerated due to substance abuse and/or possession however in the hopes of diverting those who are not yet in the prison system most of this funding was put into diversion treatments. However, it is going to take some time to see the impact of these funds as they are allocated, and facilities work towards capacity building and the making of more space for those seeking treatment.

Equity in Cannabis Act – Took steps to mitigate the issues that took place during the initial legalization of Marijuana and recreational store licenses in Washington State.

Equity in Homeownership Act – Small increase in a pool of money to help those that have traditionally been affected by redlining that will work to help assist in offsetting closing costs and other fees that relate to purchasing a home.

Juvenile Point System - Made it so that the points Juveniles earn during sentencing is not allowed to be used towards adult sentencing.

- Potential follow-up bill in 2024 to make this retroactive for those already within the system.

Representative Steet's 2023 bill pertaining to work release for those who were not awarded bail to help them not use jobs and begin the cycle of poverty as they are waiting trial as denial of bail does not mean someone is guilty.

2:50pm – Core Team Member, Gregory Davis, and Tacoma Market Lead, Kevin Hunter – Program Overview on the Black Housing Initiative.

A multi-sector effort that applies the Center for Community Investment (CCI) capitol absorption framework in five U.S. Cities, including the greater Seattle Area. Convened by Civic Commons to target racial inequities at the core of the housing ecosystem with initial funding from JPMorgan Chase. With the city of Tacoma alone reporting a loss of more than 50% of black homeowners in the central neighborhoods since 2007 and 42% of black households in WA state having zero net worth, BHI is focusing on three key areas to target racial inequities at the core of the housing ecosystem (funding, cost reduction, zoning and regulatory reform, and large-scale acquisition of land and value capture) with the goal of obtaining 1,500 new first time black homeowners by 2027.

1. Growing the pool for homes available for purchase.
2. Supporting Black households who want to buy a home and obtain a mortgage.
3. Improving the collaboration among public, private, and nonprofit organizations to create a more efficient and effective "ecosystem" for Black homeownership.

Civic Commons-BHI Work in Action

- We Belong Here Initiative (WBH) – helps develop relationship between people and institutional from all sectors. These partners are committed to the values of belonging, love, and justice as efforts to bring about systems change through community driven, cross-sector partnerships. This Initiative helped to create the Black Home Initiative (BHI) Network comprised of nonprofits, private companies, philanthropy, governments, and associations that make up the region's ecosystems.
- Scorecard for Shared Prosperity – a data driven dashboard that uses publicly available data to measure five dimensions of prosperity; Individuals, Households, Communities, Economy, and Democracy.
- Network Weaving – Focusses on building relationships across ecosystems to achieve shared priorities.

Discussion – A BHI homebuyer is a descendant of enslaved Africans, is a first-time homebuyer defined by the WA. Dept. of Commerce Definition has an income at or below 120% area median income where they live and work, is receiving supports from one or more of the BHI Network Partners and can purchase in the Puget Sound Region with an appropriate Mortgage. As of 2019 Black or African Americans make up only 35% of homeowners in WA State and BIPOC rates are lower at every income level.

BHI Seven Point Plan - The plan outlines seven focus areas and was implemented in South Seattle, South King County and North Pierce County as a pilot demonstration Initiative in 2021.

1. Marketing and outreach
2. Pre-/post-purchase counseling
3. Purchase supports and tools.
4. Credit and lending
5. Policies and practices
6. Sustaining existing homeowners.

Discussion – The difference between other attempts at combating the housing crisis for Black home buyers is that BHI recognizes that to combat the centuries of discrimination that lead to these inequalities it will take a network of individuals and community organizations to impact positive change. Which is why BHI is setting out to build this ecosystem to be able to tackle a problem that has for too long been confronted in a siloed approach.

BHI Line of Sight

- By July 2024
 - A strongly aligned impact network delivering on their shared priority outcomes.
 - New products – including loans, housing, and resources are underway
 - Strategies to sustain existing homebuyers
- By 2032
 - 3,000 Black LMI homeowners
 - Sustained and meaningful progress along a trajectory that leads to the elimination of disproportionality in Black homeownership rates, breaking down of systemic barriers that have stood in the way of Black peoples access to home ownership.

3:47pm – Public Comment – No Public Comment

3:50pm – Meeting Adjournment

4:00pm – Meeting Adjourned