

RAC

HOUSING, HELP, and HOPE for All

HAP RESIDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE NEWS

AUGUST 2009

About the Resident Advisory Committee

Our Schedule

The Resident Advisory Committee (RAC) meets at a minimum quarterly, or as needed, to cover major policy discussions. Our work schedule will follow the policy work of the agency, reflected by the agenda of the Board of Commissioners. One meeting each year will be dedicated to an issue selected by members of the RAC.

Our Relationship to HAP's Organizational Structure

We have integrated the RAC into HAP's organizational structure in the following ways:

- The Resident Commissioner on HAP's Board serves as the Co-Chair of the Resident Advisory Committee;
- Quarterly reports presented by a committee member will be given to the Board of Commissioners;
- The existing public housing Resident Advisory Board and the 504-Board will receive quarterly reports from the RAC.

Our Interaction with Residents and Participants

Members of the Resident Advisory Committee do not represent a specific subset of residents and are not authorized to deal with individual

resident complaints. As a first step, complaints, concerns or requests for help from residents must be made directly to the property/site manager.

The Resident Advisory Committee will listen to comments from HAP residents and participants regarding the policy under consideration at all RAC meetings. Outside of the RAC meetings, correspondence to the RAC can be directed to Caroline Fitchett at carolinef@hapdx.org or mailed to HAP at 135 SW Ash, Portland OR 97204-3540. Caroline serves as the staff supporting the work of the RAC.

Our Membership

Currently, 14 residents and Section 8 participants make up the RAC membership. These qualified individuals come together from very diverse backgrounds to serve the Housing Authority of Portland. They come from all three programs run by HAP, including public housing, affordable housing, and rent assistance (Section 8). Our membership represents the diversity of the people HAP serves. This includes low-income working adults, seniors, adults with disabilities, and families.



Recent RAC Business

HAP Education 101

It is no small task to learn about the operations of the Housing Authority of Portland. With a budget of \$100 million, waiting lists of more than 5,000 and managing housing programs that serve 14,500 low-income households, the RAC spent their first few months understanding HAP's history, its funding sources and its different programs.

RAC's 101 course included briefings by HAP's executive staff on public and affordable housing, rent assistance and Section 8, and the Human Resources Department. In June, HAP's Executive Director, Steve Rudman, sat down with RAC members to talk about the important role the committee serves. To find out more of what was discussed go to www.hapdx.org/RAC.

Storming and Forming – Learning How We Operate

As a newly formed committee, members created the RAC operations manual. Together the committee made decisions about the following topics: appointments to the RAC, member and officer job descriptions, meeting format and operations, terms of service, meeting schedule, principles of teambuilding, and the decision making process.

Cool Opportunities

Learning about Fair Housing in Portland

As part of the educational opportunities offered the RAC, members attended the Fair Housing Council of Oregon's Tour of Portland's Hidden Discrimination. This lively bus tour explored Portland's hidden history of housing discrimination, including lost ethnic communities. Members learned about past discrimination practices in Portland and about the protections offered under the U.S. Fair Housing Act of 1968. The Fair Housing Council of Oregon (FHCO) also educates tenants, home buyers, housing providers, advocates, governments and community

groups about fair housing rights and responsibilities and operates a hotline to respond to complaints from individuals who believe they have experienced housing discrimination. For information on the FHCO go to www.fhco.org or call 503.223.8295.

Dinner with HAP's Board of Commissioners

On June 16th, RAC members got a chance to establish working relationships with HAP's Board of Commissioners one-on-one. Prior to the June Board meeting, RAC members sat down for dinner and conversation with HAP's commissioners. After dinner, members stayed to watch HAP's June Board of Commissioners meeting.

RAC Members attend National Housing Conference

In July, the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, one of the nation's leading professional housing organizations, held its annual summer conference in Portland, OR. Alongside HAP staff, RAC members attended the four-day conference. Here are just a few of the seminars members attended: Strategies that Enhance Community Relations in Section 8 and Public Housing; Tools for Going Green and Reducing Energy Costs; and Collaborations to End Homelessness. Members found the conference very informative on the wide array of issues housing authorities deal with across our nation.

Word on the Street

This section will list announcements and events made at RAC meetings.

Free Health Insurance for Oregon's Kids – Really!

Thanks to the Oregon Legislature 80,000 new children and teens are now eligible for the Oregon Health Plan. The plan is that Oregon's low-income kids can now qualify for health insurance within two years.

To qualify or help someone else qualify, here's what you need to do:

Call the Department of Human Services Hotline 1.800.359.9517 between 8am – 4:45pm M-F.

Because government can be confusing, if you have questions, please call the folks at the Oregon Health Action Campaign 1.866.458.4457.

Free Summer Park Concert Series

The City of Portland Parks Department is hosting free concerts in parks across the city. McCoy Park at HAP's New Columbia is hosting 5 free concerts. To view all free events in Portland Parks please go to www.portlandonline.com/parks and click on Free Summer Events.

Resident Commissioner Position Open

The Housing Authority of Portland is accepting applications from public housing residents and Section 8 participants for the position of Resident Commissioner. One of nine of the commissioner seats is dedicated for someone participating in either the Public Housing program or the Section 8 program. Commissioner terms are four years. All applicants must be in good standing with the Housing Authority of Portland. Applications are due on Monday, Sept. 21st.

For more information go to www.hapdx.org

Come Participate in the RAC

The RAC meets up to four times a year. All public and affordable housing residents and all Section 8 participants are welcome to attend and provide public comment at the RAC meetings.

Upcoming RAC Meeting

Wednesday, September 16th 6:00 p.m.

Humboldt Gardens at 5033 N. Vancouver Ave. (in the Community Room)

To RSVP please contact Melissa Sonsalla at 503.802.8492

To reach RAC Staff Caroline Fitchett email carolinef@hapdx.org or call 503.802.8574.

Members of the Resident Advisory Committee

On the RAC we have 14 residents and participants who represent the diversity of the families HAP serves. At the privacy request of some members we have only listed the names of nine members.

- Anastasia Thompson, Northwest Portland
- Terry McLain, North Portland
- Millie Larson, East County
- Aloha Palmer, Northeast Portland
- O'dell Carmicle, Southeast Portland
- Alvaro Gongora, East County
- Myra Harrell Fleming, Northwest Portland
- Martha Perez, Northwest Portland
- La Tasha, East County

If you have questions regarding the Resident Advisory Committee you may contact Caroline Fitchett at 503.802.8574.



An Opportunity for Public Housing Residents and Section 8 Participants

Do you want to be the next Resident Commissioner? If so, read on.

What does the Resident Commissioner do for HAP?

He or she is a sitting member of HAP's Board of Commissioners, the body that oversees the Housing Authority of Portland and is responsible for establishing policy and approving HAP's annual budget. The Executive Director oversees HAP's day-to-day operations and implements policies and programs established by the Board. Terms are four years.

What qualifications do I need to be a Commissioner?

- ✓ All residents and participants must be in good standing.
- ✓ Demonstrated leadership and community involvement.
- ✓ A commitment to the mission of HAP.
- ✓ An ability to bring the resident and participant viewpoint to all board discussions.
- ✓ An ability to participate fully in board meetings.
- ✓ Ability to dedicate approximately 15 hours per month.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Monday, September 21, 2009

Please note this is a volunteer position. HAP will cover transportation to and from meetings and childcare. To download an application go to www.hapdx.org. Property managers and case managers have applications on file. If you have questions, please call Caroline Fitchett at 503.802.8547.

