

Virtual Public Hearing
Vermont HUD Consolidated Plan 2021 Annual Action Plan
February 8, 2021

Organizers: Julia Connell, Arthur Hamlin, Ann Kroll

Registrants: Ron Rupp, Rachel Batterson, Debbie Ingram, Nathan Cleveland, Sandrine Kibuey, Lily Sojourner, Thomas Kennedy, Maryellen Griffin, Lea Kilvadyova, Skye Morse

Welcome

Arthur Hamlin, Housing Program Coordinator - opened the hearing and gave an overview of the HUD Consolidated Plan from the handout provided. Arthur stated the purpose of the hearing is to hear from residents what they feel are the state's most pressing needs for housing and community development, economic development, and homelessness, ideas for programs or activities to be funded, and give feedback on the state's performance under the current plan.

Background

Arthur reviewed the schedule. DHCD generally publishes the draft plan for comment in mid-March. There is another public hearing in early April, followed by a 30-day written comment period after the hearing. Arthur encouraged people to continue participating in the development of the plan by visiting the DHCD website for updates.

Comments

Skye Morse, partner at M & S Development – does not have a particular comment but wanted to listen. They received a CDBG grant this year for housing and coworking space in Brattleboro. The project will be a major boost to downtown. Ann Kroll, Director of Grants Management asked if this is the project on Flat Street. Skye said that it was the project on Flat Street.

Maryellen Griffin from Vermont Legal Aid – annual plan comes at interesting time. The State used policy to maintain housing stability and keep rates of infection low. How do we build on this to promote housing stability and end homelessness in Vermont? Urgent to deal with homelessness; over 2,000 people in motels including 400 children. The plan is also a chance to address structural racism in housing patterns. Residential segregation is a major cause of health disparities especially in rural areas. Inclusive land use planning is also important to avoid land use mistakes made in other parts of country.

Arthur Hamlin – commented that last year's 5-year HNA shows disparate impacts in Vermont. There is room in the plan to address those issues and we should address them.

Ann Kroll – thanked Maryellen for comments. Coronavirus Relief Funding (CRF) was a windfall. The State took the opportunity to provide housing for homeless population, but many still not in a permanent situation. Lack of vacant units.

Lily Sojourner from VT Office of Economic Opportunity – funding they received from the plan is used in conjunction with other housing and homeless funding they receive. ESG is a small part but they make sure efforts to coordinate as much as possible. Much was learned over past year. Want to make sure to learn from that going forward.

Sandrine Kibuey from CVOEO Mobile Home Program – said others have summarized what she wanted to say. We have gone through hard year but have a chance to meaningfully address housing issues. The money that came to Vermont was welcome and used effectively. Hopes we can continue improving and addressing housing issues by locating money where most effective. Systematic change takes time and has to be bold. We want healthy, fair, and safe housing.

Arthur thanked everyone for joining the hearing and said the notes would be posted on the webpage. Ann added if anyone has any additional thoughts to email them to Arthur.

Skye Morse – commented that he would like to see 4% tax credit utilized more.

Ann Kroll - DHCD's special housing projects pilot seeks projects using less public money. Ann and Skye discussed the need to fully utilize the 4% credit.

Hearing adjourned at 4:35 PM.