

Austin Housing Finance Corporation Meeting Transcript – 05/21/2020

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I'm convene the hfc, Austin housing finance meeting, on may 21st, we have a quorum of the directors present, we're going to convene for the purpose of calling a speaker that has signed up to speak. Do we still have the speaker on the phone that wishes to speak on

[3:31:52 PM]

the ahfc item?

>> [Indiscernible]

>> Yeah.

[Indiscernible]

>> Mayor Adler: Why don't you go ahead. You have then three minutes. Go ahead, sir.

>> Give me one second here. I've been waiting on hold for so long.

>> Mayor Adler: Take your time. >> All right. I'm about to make it to it dais. I appreciate you all taking some kind of action after my email. I'm going to be quick. In regards to Austin housing finance corporation, number 8, ratifying an emergency contract in the amount of almost a million

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five, but also item 75 that was discussed earlier, I believe it's still on the notes that's pulled by mayor pro tem Garza. I kind of want to correlate both items together. They're extremely important to me. As I

denoted in my email to you all, I'm working construction gigs. I don't qualify for stimulus packages and other relief funds that are currently existing. But I know that that -- that a case activist and advocates like us, come to you to request that those funds be used appropriately. I do think it was in recent months that [indiscernible] Filed a civic action against you all for failing to observe the government codes directly as it pertained to the Idc, and I wanted that to be top of mind here. We specifically need you to prioritize any and all items

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regarding funding for direct deposits and prepaid cards for Austin's most vulnerable families. Even if that doesn't include me specifically, families like those that -- that I interact with, that I represent and stand for. Absolutely [indiscernible] Survivors, absolutely low income families that have to deal with food and security here in the city of Austin. Formerly incarcerated individuals. Travis county and Williamson county have had to let hundreds go in recent months that come back home and that's another mouth to feed at the table. We are asking you to open up the economy, which will increase the number -- we're asking you to consider what you're doing with the economy -- with the funds that were gained since governor Abbott wanted to open up the economy, that as we've seen, increases the number of covid

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case. I think someone asked for 70 million of those dollars to be allocated for vulnerable families earlier, and I would echo the same. I have to catch up on quite a bit that I've missed over the last year or so, but nothing has ever changed with me believing the dais doesn't intentionally keep the families east of 35 top of mind. So I am here standing for the east of 35 communities like 78702, colony park, Windsor hills, dove springs, because right now exists individuals in Gaston's place, in

[indiscernible], but live off William cannon and mistakes any, that need assistance, that need direct deposit --

[buzzer sounding]

-- Direct deposited funds for groceries, for maybe car repairs,

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before near sustainability. As we progress in months, you all will have to bring back these conversations, we have to discussion the project connect tax rate referendum and all the families that are -- that are least capable of emerging through the digital tired, I need you to keep on top of mine and make sure at least the majority of the funds are directed their way. Thank you again for allowing me to speak.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. While we're in the hfc matters, is staff here? I was going to give staff a chance to take us through the consent agenda real fast so we don't have to come back.

>> So there are a number of items on the ahfc agenda today and I can offer them all on consent.

>> Mayor Adler: I can't hear you. You need to speak louder.

>> Oh, I'm sorry.

[3:36:57 PM]

Can you hear me now, mayor?

>> Mayor Adler: Not well.

>> Hmm. Mandy, are you on the line? Are you able to call in?

>> Mayor Adler: How many items are there on the --

>> There are eight

[indiscernible] -- Consents.

>> Mayor Adler: Yes. All eight items are offered on consent, on ahfc. Is there a motion to approve these items on accident?

>> Pool: I'll make that motion.

>> Mayor Adler: Leslie pool makes the motion. Is there a second to that motion?

>> Renteria: I'll second it.

>> Mayor Adler: Mr. Renteria seconds it. Any discussion? Councilmember tovo.

>> Tovo: Mayor, at the housing and planning committee, we had an opportunity to talk about the funding that came out of the Austin housing trust fund for rent relief, and I'm super grateful to our staff for making -- making that allocation so quickly so that that money could be out and circulating

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among people who really needed it right away. I would just add the additional direction to number 8 that our staff, assuming those were eligible, reimbursable costs under cares, which it sounds as if they certainly are, that our staff seek to reimburse, to seek reimbursement for those costs, and that they replenish the Austin housing -- they replenish the Austin housing trust fund so we can continue to keep that Austin housing trust fund as full as possible because it offers us some flexibility that some of the cares funding may not. In particular, at the housing committee there was a conversation about extended

individuals who may be staying in extended stay hotels and some other living arrangements where we would want to maybe have some flexible funding available for rental assistance. If my colleagues support me, I would make that as formal

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direction, again, that our staff seek reimbursement for those funds and that they move toward reimbursing and replenishing the Austin housing trust fund, as soon as possible.

>> Mayor Adler: Okay. Does anybody have any objection to that instruction?

>> Casar: Just real quick?

>> Mayor Adler: Yes.

>> Casar: Councilmember tovo, you say to replenish it but from whatever source is less prudent; right?

>> Tovo: My basic intent here is that that is pretty flexible funding and some of the cares funding is less flexible, but is -- can be used, as I understand it, for rental assistance. And so I want to replace -- I want to replenish, to the extent that staff can, I want them to replenish the Austin housing trust fund. Is that -

>> Casar: Yeah. I want to replenish -- I think

[3:39:58 PM]

if, for example, the cares money is best -- I think the manager has expressed it also in city -- city legal and governmental affairs, that we are still sort of sorting out which dollars are best specifically for cares, given reminders and federal audits. So I don't know if I'm comfortable saying exactly which funds replenish it with, but I think the general intent is to try to replenish it when we can, makes --

>> Tovo: Yeah, thanks for that clarification because it might be better under FEMA rather than cares, so, yes, let me absolutely amend my direction to be -- to be reflective of that conversation.

>> Mayor Adler: Okay. And with that, councilmember alter?

>> Alter: Thank you. I just wanted to add to what councilmember Casar said because I think there's also - there's money that came out of the cares act that's going directly into, like, cdbg, et cetera. We had an item on the agenda on

[3:40:59 PM]

it, depending how things shake out, that may also be an appropriate source rather than the 170 million which we've been referring to as the cares money. So I like this direction, you know, from the most suitable fund.

>> Mayor Adler: Okay. With the understanding it comes from the most suitable funds. Any objection to that being added, appended as a direction? Hearing none, that's added.

>> Kitchen: Mayor, can you not see me? I had my hands up.

>> Mayor Adler: Ann, go ahead.

>> Kitchen: Yeah. I would just share what councilmember Casar and councilmember alter said, and I agree that our goal is to replenish as councilmember tovo is asking. But I would also want to say that direction is subject to what we ultimately decide with regard to our spending framework. We have not yet finished that process of discussing our spending framework. So I don't want to be -- I don't want staff to think that any direction we're giving right now

[3:42:00 PM]

is -- would override anything that we might ultimately decide as we look at the whole picture as part of our spending framework. So while I certainly want to replenish the trust fund as soon as possible, supporting that direction now does not mean that I might -- I mean, that's got to be subject to what we decide as part of our overall spending framework.

>> Mayor Adler: I think it would be, the specifics control over the general --

>> Kitchen: Okay. Just wanted to put that on the record.

>> Mayor Adler: Okay. Any objection? That is included. We have a motion to approve the consent agenda in front of us. Any discussion? Those in favor, please raise your hand. Those opposed? Looks like all the hands were raised. It passes unanimously. That concludes the Austin housing finance corporation agenda. It's 3:42, and that meeting is

[3:43:00 PM]

adjourned.