

Syracuse Housing Strategies Corporation

One Park Place
300 South State St., Suite 700
Syracuse, New York 13202

MINUTES

Board of Directors Meeting
May 27, 2025
2:00 p.m.

A regular meeting of the Syracuse Housing Strategies Corporation (the “***Corporation***”) was convened in public session on May 27, 2025 at 2:00 p.m., in the Common Council Chambers, City Hall, 233 East Washington Street, Syracuse, New York.

Board Members Present: Hon. Benjamin Walsh, Patrona Jones-Rowser, Katelyn Wright, Robert Simpson, Karen Schroeder and Donald Radke.

Excused Members: Helen Hudson, Patrick Hogan, Rasheada Caldwell.

Staff Present: Michelle Sczpanski and Conor Rourke, Esq.

Others Present: Hannah Garty, Luke Avery-Dougherty, Cimone Jordan, Michael Cannizzaro, Kaylin Hubbard, and George Lynch.

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Member Wright called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Member Wright acknowledged the board members present.

III. PROOF OF NOTICE

Member Wright acknowledged that notice of the meeting had been duly and properly provided.

IV. MINUTES

Member Wright asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the April 29, 2025 board meeting and the May 16, 2025 Governance Committee Meeting.

Member Simpson made the motion. **ALL OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 29, 2025 BOARD MEETING AND THE MAY 16, 2025 GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING.**

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. Governance Committee Report

Ms. Sczpanski stated the Governance Committee met on May 16, 2025, to discuss what preliminary programmatic terms might look like. One challenge discussed at that meeting was the uncertainty as to when 2024-2025 funds will be allocated to the program and that Empire State Development (**ESD**) funds are not able to be used for administrative costs.

Member Wright asked Ms. Sczpanski when the allocation of funds may occur. Ms. Sczpanski stated the request letter had been submitted to the Common Council to be put on the agenda for the June 9, 2025, Common Council meeting at the latest. This allows the backend contracting to be executed by the end of the fiscal year.

Member Wright stated that some of the members spoke after the Governance Committee meeting and expressed that if there is anything they can do to share information or speak with Common Councilors, they would be happy to do so.

Member Wright asked Member Jones-Rowser if there is any specific information members need to share with the Common Council. Member Jones-Rowser stated there is something that needs to be updated. Ms. Sczpanski stated that she has not received an update but will circle back.

Member Radke asked Member Jones-Rowser if she was aware of any Common Councilor having issue with the pass-through with the Syracuse Urban Renewal Agency (**SURA**) so the Corporation can receive funds. Member Jones-Rowser stated that she does not believe there is an issue with the Councilors just that they want to ensure everything lines up so it is done in the correct legal manner. Ms. Sczpanski stated that the pass-through with SURA plan was initiated upon advice from the City Corporation Counsel as well as the Board's outside counsel. Member Radke stated that it is his impression that if the pass-through does not occur by the end of June the funds will not be allocated. Member Jones-Rowser stated she does not believe that will be an issue. Member Wright stated that if there is anything members can do to advocate for the Council to allocate the funds to let them know.

Member Wright stated that a question that arose during the Governance Committee meeting was that while flexible dollars are needed to purchase insurance, can ESD funds be used to pay for administrative costs of an outside contractor. Ms. Sczpanski stated she was still waiting for a definitive response on that but in conversations with ESD they were reluctant to approve. Ms. Sczpanski stated ESD did not want to contribute to the administrative costs of the Syracuse Housing Strategy Corporation.

Member Jones-Rowser asked if the four potential staff positions would be City employees or contractors. Ms. Sczpanski stated the staff would be City employees, more specifically, they would likely be employees of SURA. Member Jones-Rowser asked if any of the staff will be current employees. Ms. Sczpanski stated the positions would be open to all applicants and City employees could apply. The responsibilities of the staff positions would be similar to what Neighborhood and Business Development is currently doing.

Mayor Walsh arrived and Ms. Sczpanski summarized the meeting up to that point.

Member Wright asked if ESD would send a contract over. Ms. Sczpanski responded in the affirmative.

Ms. Sczpanski stated she circulated a document containing preliminary budget items. The document contained a projection of projects over ten years. Ms. Sczpanski stated they should create a projected number of projects to be completed.

Member Wright asked if the \$27,100 per project figure was the Corporation's contribution or the cost of an entire project. Ms. Sczpanski stated \$27,100 is the average cost per project.

Ms. Sczpanski stated that Charles Buki's projections show there will be a different capacity to pay amongst the different neighborhoods.

Member Jones-Rowser asked what repairs were taken into account when creating the projected costs, property or structure work. Ms. Sczpanski stated repairs to structures were the main focus. Member Jones-Rowser listed potential improvements to properties. Ms. Sczpanski stated those improvements were taken into account and infrastructure and code enforcement items are not included in the projections.

Member Wright asked what percentage of projects would be larger versus smaller amounts. Ms. Sczpanski stated roughly one-third of the projects would be mini grants in the beginning but would eventually be eighty percent larger and twenty percent smaller grants.

Member Jones-Rowser asked if any of the properties fell into historic neighborhoods. Ms. Sczpanski stated a few properties in the Elmwood section and a small section of Strathmore. Member Radke suggested seeking a national designation as historic districts.

Mayor Walsh asked if consideration has been put into including pre-development and permitting assistance being as services provide by the Corporation. Ms. Sczpanski stated that has been considered

Member Schroeder mentioned administration based on SHARP whereby Home Headquarters would be the back office doing loan closings and loan officer duties, with the City handling customer contact and approvals. Ms. Sczpanski asked if that would be dependent upon income qualification. Member Schroeder answered in the negative and stated it is all based upon the funding source and lending component.

Member Wright stated there is a significant amount of funding in the State's budget for land banks and that HCR is looking to get land banks to offer new services, such as offering grants and loans to middle-income homeowners.

VI. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, Mayor Walsh asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Member Simpson made a motion. Member Wright seconded the motion. **ALL**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED A MOTION TO
ADJOURN THE MEETING.**