

Syracuse Housing Strategies Corporation

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

MINUTES

Board of Directors Meeting
September 22, 2025
2:00 p.m.

A regular meeting of the Syracuse Housing Strategies Corporation (the “***Corporation***”) was convened in public session on September 22, 2025, at 2:00 p.m., in the Van B. Robinson Common Council Chambers, City Hall, 233 East Washington Street, Syracuse, New York.

Board Members Present: Hon. Benjamin Walsh, Hon. Helen Hudson, Pat Hogan, Patrona Jones-Rowser, Karen Schroeder, Katelyn Wright, Don Radke

Excused Members:

Staff Present: Michelle Sczpanski, Mike Cannizzaro

Others Present: Hannah Garty, George Lynch, Cimone Jordan, Sue Katzoff

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Walsh called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Mayor Walsh acknowledged the board members present and noted the excused absence of members Caldwell, Simpson.

III. PROOF OF NOTICE

Mayor Walsh acknowledged that notice of the meeting had been duly and properly provided.

IV. MINUTES

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. Resolution to Approve a Wavier of Competitive Bid for Legal Services Incurred from January 2025 to Date

Authorization of waiver of competitive bid for professional legal services through Jean Everett/Bousquet Holstein for an amount not to exceed 30,000. Waiver covers costs of services rendered from date of organizational incorporation to date prior to formal authorization of FY25 operating budget. Jean was identified by Corporation Counsel as preferred vendor based on existing agreement with the City of Syracuse as its outside bond counsel. Total costs incurred for SHSC to date (approximately \$24,000) is within amount budgeted for legal services for the FY25 operating budget as adopted. An RFP for future services was put out 8/13/2025. Responses are due back 10/3/2025 and a recommendation for expected to be put forward for board.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Walsh asked for a motion to approve the Resolution to Approve a Waiver of Competitive Bid.

Member Hogan made the motion. Member Wright seconded the motion. **ALL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE RESOLUTION TO APPROVE A WAIVER OF COMPETITIVE BID.**

2. Resolution to Amend the Fiscal Year 2025 Operating Budget.

Ms. Sczpanski notes that this is not specific to legal services but to a couple of other costs. As discussed previously at the Finance Meeting a few weeks ago, there is an adjustment to the amount on total line items for directors and officers, and liability insurance. The final amount that came back exceeded the approved amount by \$175.

Ms. Sczpanski notes that with the project applications the budget will have to be increased. There are a total of 9 applications and 42 participants. Currently there is less than a \$10,000 cushion of what was originally authorized for the program. Ms. Sczpanski states that they would not like to approve any applications that would result more than the total amount for the program that the board has authorized.

Ms. Sczpanski recommends bumping up the line for the budget \$50,000 to the direct services line, working out to a \$55,000 difference total, accounting for the additional admin costs that would be under the umbrella of agreement with Home Headquarters.

Mayor Walsh asks Ms. Sczpanski if the first change is relative to DNO and liability insurance, adding an additional 175, across both insurance lines. Ms. Sczpanski said yes and that the funds come from licenses and fees.

Ms. Sczpanski highlights the last page provided in packet, Version 9.22.2025, stating that it shows where additional funds would be taken from.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Walsh asked for a motion to approve the Resolution to Amend the Fiscal Year 2025 Operating Budget.

Member Hogan made the motion. Member Schroeder seconded the motion. **ALL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 OPERATING BUDGET.**

3. Resolution to Approve Block Challenge Program Policy Amendments.

Ms. Sczpanski notes the current terms for the BCP as authorized that we have the ability to do administrative approvals if the application received are in compliance with the terms of the program as adopted by the Board. In the event that any applications submitted are considered a waiver deviation from those adopted policies they would be brought to the Board. Ms. Sczpanski notes that the amendments are things that need their language to be cleaned up to ensure everything is consistent across everything that has been discussed with the Board thus far.

Ms. Sczpanski states that these amendments were discussed at the most recent committee meeting.

a. Amendment 1 – Eligibility Waivers for Line-of-Sight Proximity.

Ms. Sczpanski notes that this needs the most clarifying. She states that the current terms of the program state that at least every team member should be able to see at least one other team member from their front door. Ms. Sczpanski notes that they want to amend the guidance that line of sight can be determined administratively without it having to come back to the Board.

Member Hogan and Member Schroder states that it is a fine idea.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Walsh asked for a motion to approve Amendment 1 – Eligibility Waivers for Line-of-Sight Proximity.

Member Hogan made the motion. Member Hudson seconded the motion. **ALL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED A RESOLUTION ADOPTING AMENDMENT 1 – ELIGIBILITY WAIVERS FOR LINE-OF-SIGHT PROXIMITY.**

b. Amendment 2 – Defining Eligibility to Participate Based on Occupancy/Use.

Ms. Sczpanski notes that the current terms state any participating team member must be a residential use of a property. She states that there have been two instances in Tipperary Hill where commercial businesses and a church have sent inquiries regarding their ability to participate in a team with other residential members. Ms. Sczpanski notes that at the committee meeting it was discussed, and everyone was in clear agreement that any churches or religious uses would be ineligible for this program in understanding of separation of church and state. She states that there was a split opinion around the applicability of commercial uses. Ultimately, they landed on wanting to keep BCP residential.

Member Schroeder asked how this amendment fits in with mixed use properties. Ms. Sczpanski answers that she thinks mixed use would be considered as it has a residential dwelling component and that it complies with the terms as they exist.

Member Schroeder asked if residential with use variance for commercial properties would be eligible. Ms. Sczpanski answered she would have to take a closer look but if it is being used as a residential structure, and the ability to be a residential dwelling based on building code, the program would consider the application.

Ms. Sczpanski clarifies that that this amendment is talking about structures that strictly operate as a commercial business with no mixed-use component. One of the commercial applicants is a neighborhood bar along Avery Ave, surrounded by residential properties. She states that at the committee meeting the board members think the purpose of this program is for residential properties and at this point it should be kept that way.

Mayor Walsh asked the Board if they are generally comfortable with that. Member Hogan answers that he is.

Ms. Sczpanski states that a vote on this is not necessary because of the way the terms are currently written. Mayor Walsh moved to the next amendment.

c. Amendment 3 – Reimbursement Maximums for “Shared” Projects.

Ms. Sczpanski states the impetus of the amendment is the program received an application from two neighbors who have a legally shared driveway based on their property plans as adopted and they were inquiring if they would both be eligible for a reimbursement or effective to one as it is technically one driveway.

Ms. Sczpanski notes that the team is asking if they could approve an application that would have such a situation if the team met with one of the two requirements. They would either add an additional participant to their team, or they would also in addition to the shared project pursue another add-on item to their project scope. Ms. Sczpanski notes that there was a recommendation for that specific example technical shared driveway agreement. Member Radke notes that the shared driveway agreement should be filed with the deed otherwise there will be insurance issues. He also notes that frequently these types of driveways are not shared but abutting driveways.

Ms. Sczpanski states that in the case of this example, they would need four more participants or add another project component.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Walsh asked for a motion to approve Amendment 3 – Reimbursement Maximums for “Shared” Projects.

Member Hudson made the motion. Member Wright seconded the motion. **ALL BOARD MEMEBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED A RESOLUTION ADOPTING AMENDMENT 3 – REIMBURSEMENT MAXIMUMS FOR “SHARED” PROJECTS.**

d. Amendment 4 – Project Pacing Across Multiple Rounds/Contributions Towards Future Match.

Ms. Sczpanski explains that the current rules of the program state that a homeowner may participate up to three times in a five-year period. Currently, for every dollar a participant spends, they get a 50% reimbursement, up to \$2,500, regardless of if they spend more than they can be reimbursed.

Ms. Sczpanski notes clarification is necessary in the event a participant hits \$5,000 threshold and if we would allow them to consider documented project costs in excess as a contribution towards

their future homeowner match.

Ms. Sczpanski notes the example provided in the Executive Summary packet states for example:
Round 1: Homeowner spends \$10,000 on siding and is reimbursed \$2,500.
Round 2: Homeowner spends \$3,000 for windows and is reimbursed \$2,500.

Ms. Sczpanski states that this would create an incentive for homeowners to complete larger projects that they otherwise would not and to encourage completing projects in full.

Mayor Walsh clarifies that the subsequent requests are for separate projects. Ms. Sczpanski answers that it would be for a new project, but previously documented expenses would be considered.

Member Schroeder asks if in the first round a participant paints their house, could the participant repaint their house in round two if they dislike the color? Ms. Sczpanski answers that it would need to be a demonstrably different project component.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Walsh asks for a motion to approve Amendment 4 – Project Pacing Across Multiple Rounds/Contributions Towards Future Match.

Member Hudson made the motion. Member Jones-Rowser seconded the motion. **ALL BOARD MEMBER PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED A RESOLUTION ADOPTING AMENDMENT 4 – PROJECT PACING ACROSS MULTIPLE ROUNDS/CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS FUTURE MATCH.**

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

Block Challenge Program Implementation Update – Ms. Sczpanski notes that they had previously touched on many of the updates during the budget discussion. So far there has been great participation and interest with over 100 inquiries.

Mayor Walsh asked Ms. Sczpanski to break down the current applications of the BCP. Ms. Sczpanski answers that of the nine applications received, seven are from Tipperary Hill, one from Far Westside, and one from Salt Springs. She expects that several larger teams in Salt Springs will submit applications within the next few weeks. At this point, Ms. Sczpanski is not concerned about distribution of resources across the neighborhoods, but something to keep an eye on.

Member Jones-Rowser asked if there is a maximum number of applicants/teams and Ms. Sczpanski responded, no, the more the merrier and if needed implementation of capacity could be considered.

Homeowner Renovation Program - Ms. Sczpanski notes additional next steps, which can be found in packet, and the timeline for the Board to work through in the coming months. She states that within the next two months there should be 80% draft terms on program guidelines. Ms. Sczpanski states there should be a balance between what the Board feels comfortable with in concept, use that to gauge interest in residents, and work through the areas where there may be sticking points.

Ms. Sczpanski notes that it would hopefully create a good position to work through the adoption of terms, complete related outreach, finalize the program terms by January, and get applications open for the larger home renovation programs in February of 2026.

Ms. Sczpanski notes finalizing terms for larger grant programs as they have received several inquiries on projects that would be over \$100,000. Residents have asked if there will be a similar program of future homeowner match for larger homeowner renovation programs. Ms. Sczpanski provides the guidance she is currently giving those residents is to tread cautiously, understanding that there are no current programmatic terms fully adopted at this point. She notes that at the most recent committee meeting, the Board thinks guidelines can be provided in the adopted homeowner larger substantial rehab programs and accommodate the same principal. Ms. Sczpanski notes setting a timeline for July 2025, if there is evidence of significant project expenses and implementing a three-year cap.

Ms. Sczpanski notes no action needed.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Mayor Walsh asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Member Hogan made a motion. Member Schroeder seconded the motion. **ALL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 2:40 p.m.**