

NEST Commission Members present: Angela Ambroise, Nadia Anderson, Mitch Gibson, Kim Graham (Co-Chair), Monique Humphries, Vicki Jones, Marta Tatje, Justin Harlow (Co-Chair), Roma Johnson

Members absent: Melissa Gaston, Naiyar Ghaswala, Tonya Jameson, Roma Johnson, Kathleen Maloomian, Kimberly Timmons-Hampton, Vanessa Allen

Guests: Apryl Lewis, Action NC, Ismail Qaiyim, Housing Justice Coalition CLT; Chelsea Trunk, Housing Justice Coalition CLT

City Staff present: Housing & Neighborhood Services: Shawn Heath and Rebecca Hefner; Planning, Design & Development: Alysia Osborne and Robyn Byers

Meeting Time: 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Materials *[meeting materials will be made available online at [Neighborhood Equity and Stabilization \(NEST\) Commission \(charlottenc.gov\)](#)]:*

1. Meeting Agenda
 2. Housing Justice Coalition Platform
 3. Presentation – Tax Assistance Recommendation
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Justin Harlow opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Members and guests introduced themselves.

Housing Justice Coalition

Ismail Qaiyim shared that the Housing Justice Coalition CLT (HJC) believes that housing is a human right - something that everyone needs and should be able to access regardless of the ability to pay for it. HJC seeks to work towards this through concrete policy work and any additional things that would make housing more accessible. Mr. Qaiyim shared that HJC understands the challenges that come at the state level as well as what the city can and cannot do. Mr. Qaiyim and Apryl Lewis highlighted several items that HJC believes are important, and encouraged NEST members to review HJC's resolution/platform in its entirety. HJC items that they highlighted include:

- land banking with an immediate focus on the area of the Silver Line
- mandating community benefits for large scale projects that receive public incentives
- cooperative housing
- enhanced assistance from the city's Community Relations department including increased knowledge of landlord-tenant laws, creating an office of tenant/renter assistance, tenants' rights education, etc.
- tracking data / housing metrics around ejection filings
- updating voucher system to be more accessible
- financial and material support for social housing
- right to counsel for tenants
- funding for keeping people housed
- actions to curtail corporations from buying homes
- prohibiting city demolitions of owner-occupied homes

Ms. Lewis shared about the current displacement of tenants at a local Econo Lodge, and noted that it is an example of why assistance with tenants' rights is important. Mr. Qaiyim shared that HJC believes this type of displacement event is likely to happen at other locations as future development / redevelopment occurs.

In closing, Kim Graham acknowledged that housing justice is a multi-layered issue. She thanked the HJC representatives for their passion and for attending the meeting. She noted that the NEST commission together with staff would review the HJC resolution, and will let HJC know if there are any questions.

Community Area Planning

Alysia Osborne provided a brief overview of the proposed community area plan process that will result in fourteen plans, refinements to the policy map, and a list of infrastructure/amenities/programs in key focus areas. She explained that this work is an iterative process that will include neighborhood-level engagement. The goal is to complete the fourteen plans in the next two years.

Tax Assistance Pilot Recommendation

Justin Harlow shared that the Program Improvements and Policy Gaps (P&P) work stream has developed a proposed property tax assistance pilot program. He noted the forthcoming County property tax revaluation that will roll out in 2023.

Rebecca Hefner shared background of the state tax relief programs that are administered by Mecklenburg County, provided examples of how each program works, and shared data related to the number of estimated households that could receive tax assistance but are not currently able to access it. She also shared that staff has data about the number of households with tax delinquencies.

Mr. Harlow walked the commission through the tax assistance program proposed by the P&P work stream. He noted that the desired goal is to present the recommendation to City Council for consideration in the current budget cycle. The proposed program would expand income eligibility beyond what is offered by the state programs and expand the age eligibility to include eligible homeowners 55 years of age and older. The proposed pilot program is anticipated to cost between \$5 and \$8 million.

The commission discussed the desire to allow the program to include assistance to eligible households with delinquent property taxes.

MOTION AND VOTE. Mr. Harlow made a motion to approve recommending to the City Council (via the Housing, Safety and Community Committee) the creation of a new tax assistance program for eligible homeowners aged 55 and above and earning up to 80 percent of the area median income, to include delinquent property tax assistance. Angela Ambrose seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion. The recommendation will be presented to the Housing Safety & Community Committee in January 2023.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the full commission is scheduled for February 8, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:05 p.m.