



**2017-2019 SPAG  
Notes: October 25, 2018 Meeting**

**Atlanta, GA**

Staff Liaison: Sylvia Bowen

[sbowen@nahro.org](mailto:sbowen@nahro.org)

[www.nahro.org/nahro-strategic-planning-advisory-group](http://www.nahro.org/nahro-strategic-planning-advisory-group)

**Presiding: Jennifer Bergman, Chair**

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SPAG began to talk about *future policy direction* as a follow up to conversations at the BOG Retreat in Austin. The housing and community development (H/CD) industry is undergoing a transition. We need to be engaged in the conversation, help drive it, and thus have better control over our future.

How do we frame the conversation? What are the terms of engagement? Should we have conversations at the grass roots level about “housing as a right? This is a complicated and courageous conversation to have. What does it mean? Eliminating homelessness? Affordable safe place to live? What else happens? What is the tipping point?

Some NAHRO members may prefer that we focus on nontraditional initiatives, i.e., advocacy for existing public housing and community development programs. We need to determine how to best engage this segment of the membership.

Funding drives what we do instead of the converse. At what point do we take a look at housing policy/platform and, as industry experts, say what do we need?

Change our messaging about the H/CD industry as:

- (a) Businesses that house families and create stability;
- (b) Powerful economic engines. Compile statistics about people we serve, other industries that benefit from the H/CD industry, jobs that are created, and the amount of income generated within the community.

Encourage industry partners to talk about the economic benefits of the HCD industry.

Encourage program participants to write letters to their members of Congress extolling their success and upward mobility.

Encourage people to tell their stories. Stories are inspirational and others will see possibilities for themselves. Share that the H/CD industry is one of several “systems” in place that enables people to grow, become self-sufficient and give back to their communities.

The FrameWorks Institute has produced research papers related messaging. One is “You Don’t Have to Live Here.” It describes evidence-based messaging recommendations that can be used to advance a strong, affordable HCD agenda. Members should read the above-mentioned paper (and perhaps the Institute’s other housing-related papers) in order to determine what additional information we may need.

Because we, as industry practitioners, are too close to the topic, it was suggested that we engage a facilitator who knows what is going on in the industry now and who can stimulate conversation and challenge our thinking on future policy direction. CEO Todman will put forth the names of potential facilitators for SPAG’s discussion/consideration. She encouraged SPAG members to put forth their own recommendations as well.

Staff will work with the Legislative Network on the development of a white paper, which will be shared with 2020 presidential candidates.

### **The M. Justin Herman Memorial Award**

SPAG Member Mike Gerber is this year’s recipient. His google search revealed that M. Justin Herman, through the lens of our current day values may not be the ideal namesake for NAHRO’s most prestigious award. Herman is currently associated with the negative assumptions associated with Urban Renewal. The question is why NAHRO’s premier award is still in his name? In his hometown, he is no longer cast as a hero (his name may be removed from a large public space in San Francisco).

#### **Comments:**

- Who inside of the “NAHRO world” feels ownership of the naming of the award?
- Re-examine the award’s selection criteria and scoring system.
- Determine what can be done in order to encourage staffs of small agencies that they too can compete for the award and encourage them to submit nominations.
- In addition to regions and working with regional directors, strongly encourage state chapters to disseminate information about all awards throughout their communications channels/platforms.
- National NAHRO should raise the profile of awards at the national level so that they appeal to members.
- Should we re-examine not only the Herman award, but all individual awards?

NAHRO should consider additional awards, i.e., for banks, developers, syndicators. We were reminded of the Business Council Partners Partnership Award, although it has been dormant for several years.

This issue will be referred to the Member Services Committee for its consideration.

It was reported the Professional Development Committee will ask the Member Services Committee to consider its criteria for a Professional Development award at its April 2019 meeting.

## Next Steps

- Next steps for shaping this conversation including possible facilitators to engage us in conversation about future policy direction and determine when to hold the conversation. **Options:** in conjunction with the Washington Conference in April: (a) the afternoon prior to committee day; (b) following the conclusion of the conference; (c) a stand-alone meeting.

CEO Todman recommended that we invite the authors of *“You Don’t Have to Live Here,”* including Tiffany Manuel, to have a conversation with SPAG and the Board.

### **In attendance:**

Chair Bergman. President Richie, Senior Vice President Shaw. Vice Presidents: Parham Green, Thiele, Snipes, Mahon, Rodriguez. B&A Chair Martin; LEG NET Chair Gerber. Others: Rick Leco, Buddy Oldfield, Duane Hopkins, Matt Pike, and Marty Ryan. Staff: CEO Todman and Liaison Sylvia Bowen.