



2021-2023 Commissioners Committee Minutes
Wednesday, September 21, 2022 – 9:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.

Marriott Grand Ballroom Section 8, 2nd Floor, Lobby Level

Marriott Marquis San Diego Marina

333 West Harbor Drive,

San Diego, CA, 92101

Staff Liaison: La Tonya Rajah Irajah@nahro.org

<http://www.nahro.org/content/nahro-commissionerscommittee>

Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Lucille Boss called the meeting to order. Having established a quorum, Ms. Boss welcomed everyone to the first in-person meeting in three years, thanked the commissioners for valuing the people who value us – agency staff, residents and community – and they, in turn, demonstrate that same feeling back to the commissioners.

Welcome & Leadership Remarks

President Patricia Wells, Senior Vice President George Guy, and CEO Mark Thiele thanked the committee members for their service, commitment, experience, and impactful work that enhances their agencies, residents and communities. They also extended gratitude for the committee’s commitment, as NAHRO leadership, to set goals/objectives and diligently work to accomplish them. The committee was encouraged to reach out to President Wells, Senior Vice President Guy and CEO Thiele if anything is need to assist the committee in executing their mandate to meet the goals and objectives they have set forth.

- Tess Hembree, Legislative Affairs Director thanked the committee for the productive feedback on targeted messaging for commissioners and for participating in the August Advocacy Campaign. Although members did not meet the goal of 50,000, efforts garnered 27,000+ letters.
 - 2021 - 43,000+* | 2020 - 12,500 | 2019 – 8,500
 - *Tess noted the figures were due to the monumental efforts of Ivory Matthews, former Executive Director of the Columbia, SC Housing Authority. Ms. Matthews is now in Oregon and due to the political climate there, could not galvanize letter writing as she did in South Carolina last year. Tess encouraged Commissioners by noting that if Ms. Matthews can galvanize that type of response, every agency should do the same.
- Lame Duck Session: after the mid-term election legislators return to Congress, they will wrap up legislative session before the election.
- This is an opportune time for advocates to stress views for program funding needs. NAHRO will work on how to measure the number of participating commissioners during the advocacy campaigns. The data indicators used for the advocacy letters do not include titles in addition to concerns:
 - Some who complete the letters have a problem with being identified with their agency which may tie into political issues. Ensuring those who send the letters can be confident in exercising their First Amendment right to free speech in a professional manner is critical to communication.
 - Currently data cannot be captured without a common field (there are multiple titles for commissioner, chair, chairman, chairperson, chairwoman, resident commissioner, board commissioner, Chair, Vice Chair, etc.); recoding existing and new titles would be a time-consuming task for staff.
- In order to test new strategies, NAHRO is planning to soft launch an advocacy commissioners page with a second action center link which commissioners will use. This would be a way to express message differently and capture the participation data missed in the past.

- Tess appreciates the insight and knowledge shared with her during the subcommittee meeting calls and is working to adopt those ideas to make our advocacy efforts stronger and better.

Q&A

Q: Is there a problem with commissioners' data around the country or certain places?

A: This year, NAHRO moved to a new database and in doing so, found that data may be missing or incorrect. NAHRO will have to put processes in place so that the system can accommodate requirements.

Q: Has the problem with address being rejected in the Advocacy Action Center letters been resolved?

A: It is an ongoing problem which is being reviewed by the application developers at this time. The letters are being sent and data collected. Ms. Hembree apologized for the inconvenience this may have caused anyone.

Comments/Discussion:

- Renee Smith, Advocacy Subcommittee Chair, noted that there are additional ways to express opinions in addition to sending advocacy letters. Ms. Smith developed a Commissioners Advocacy training module that will be launched soon, which provides hands-on applications in diversity, education and more.
- Beginning at the local level, build the contacts and relationships with congressional leaders and in your community to learn what is important and relay those concerns. Determine if the congressional leaders have local offices. Others may receive the letter but if the political official hears of the issue, they may move to address it directly.
- Ms. Hembree agreed local access to political representatives can provide staff a copy of communications as well. It's important to send volumes of letters on a specific topic to raise a flag on the issue and may become a part of policy discussions. It is also important to forge relationships with staff who may become a local, or state representative. Site visits allow representatives to see the community and are more impactful than letter writing alone.
- Renee Smith advised the Resident Leadership training has been launched in California and was well received.
- To make Hill Day more productive for commissioners who have established a relationship in their state or local community, pair a commissioner or housing official with congressional reps/staff who don't support the programs to share information and on programs, etc.

Business

I. Approve Minutes | July 11, 2022

Ms. Boss called for a motion to approve the July 11, 2022 minutes.

Action item: Approval of July 11, 2022 minutes moved by Zella Knight, seconded by Joe Grisson. Motion carried.

II. Commissioners Booth

Ms. Boss reminded those who had not signed up for Commissioners Booth duty to do so.

III. First-Time Attendees

Ms. Boss reminded attendees to support and attend the First-Time Attendees Overview.

IV. Commissioner of the Year

Chair Lucille Boss advised the 2022 Commissioner of the year is Dianna Payton, Chairwoman of the Housing Authority of East Baton Rouge Parish in Baton Rouge, LA.

V. Photography

Ms. Boss reminded Commissioners to take photos throughout the conference and send to Ms. Rajah following the conference.

Strategic Objectives | Subcommittee Discussions

I. Overview & Accomplishments | Lucille Boss

Chair Boss commended the committee on their work with the goals and objectives noting that the committee began to establish its goals prior to the suggested goals of the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee (SPAC) that were approved by the Board of Governors. She asked that the committee review the objectives for changes, removals or additions and provided the status as attached to the agenda packet.

Adrian AJ Jones, Commissioners Committee Vice Chair uplifted head of household and primary caregiver education. Summer education lag during pandemic took a toll on children and made it evident that many parents were unable to assist their kids. Vice Chair Jones encouraged Commissioners to share best practices to be utilized at the national level as we assess the survey data. In supporting advocacy, each agency can create a letter writing event, and work with educational boards to send advocacy letters tailored to respective concerns and empower residents and community members.

Discussion for Committee Objective Assessment –Learn/Assess/Communicate/ Act

What is being done to address advocacy training, specifically voter empowerment and resident advocacy?

Advocacy Training

- Renee Smith: To further advocacy training, she created the 3-hour training which is now ready to launch by NAHRO and is adaptable. Reminding commissioner colleagues that they advocate with individuals and their community. New commissioners are mentored by commissioner colleagues.
- Brenda Honeycutt: Regional training was held and attendees learned how to download apps allowing access to local, state and national representatives and to send direct messages. The chapter also met with elected officials.
- Zella Knight: Resident Council training is important to educate and empower members so they can elevate to Commissioner status. She noted two commissioners came from the resident council and are attending the National Conference.
- Nikki Vazquez: During the National Conference, there is a session regarding election season (How PHAs and resident councils can lawfully get involved) and encouraged committee members to attend that session.

Voter Empowerment

- Char Reavis: expressed concern about addressing voter registration without favoring one party over another.
- Carleen Cumberbatch: PHAs may provide consistent, general voter education information (polling information, how to register to vote, early voting, mail-in ballots, election information, etc.) and refrain from voter sponsorship, candidate, or endorsement discussions.
- Fred Banuelos: PHAs can begin the process of voter registration awareness when the residents sign their lease by asking if they are registered to vote, and if not, if they be interested in learning how to do so.

Q/A:

Q: Need to hire an ED. Seeking an economical way to do so and need to know about legal ramifications as the ED is retiring but agreed to serve month to month until the new ED has been selected but has not advised the agency staff of ED status. A template on how to proceed would be helpful.

A: General Counsel would be the point of contact on this issue and do not be frugal in the ED selection process.

II. Advocacy | Renee Smith

MAJOR OBJECTIVE: to work with Legislative Network Advisory Committee (LNAC) & NAHRO's Legislative Affairs Department to establish measurable goals and work with all Commissioners to meet goals.

Ms. Smith noted all objectives, with exception of the certification discussion (1/2023), is either in progress or completed. Renee asked for training topics the committee feels would be of benefit to commissioners. She expressed interest in working on a board retreats and evaluations training. Suggestion to have a session primarily for a deep dive into the evaluation process to include data analysis and interpretation of strategies. Additional suggested topics are:

- ED Hiring
- Governance
- How to manage the organization
- Commissioners to serve on other boards/conflict of interest/ tax credits, housing developments
- Who manages the board?
- Facilitator to inform boards and yearly retreat

Ms. Smith also mentioned an interest in creating a "social determinants of health" session for a 2023 conference.

III. Communication | Char Reavis

MAJOR OBJECTIVE: Communications Subcommittee to work with Legislative Network Advisory Committee (LNAC) to:

1. establish measurable goals, expand NAHRO's reach, improve advocacy effectiveness and sphere of influence by building and reinforcing outside partnerships through joint advocacy and social media campaigns.
2. build stronger regional and state-level communication networks to share, coordinate and expand NAHRO's legislative work and advocacy campaigns.

The majority of the goals have been completed or await the results of the commissioner survey for baseline data with the exception of collaboration with Housing America to communicate activities in the agency, community chapters and regions. Ms. Reavis noted additional committee action/conversations:

- Commissioners Handbook needs addendum pages on board governance and social determinants of health.
- Discuss Journal of Housing and Community Development article topics. Currently one article is in progress and a schedule will be set for additional articles. Chair Reavis encourages committee to submit topics:
 1. Hiring New Executives
 2. Resident Councils – Zella Knight

3. How to be better communicators in our agencies, communities, state and region.
 4. Public speaking
 5. How many residents are not paying more than 30% to their housing.
 6. Are residents with criminal histories receiving housing?
 7. Resident local community involvement voting mentor
 8. Residents are getting into high income scattered site housing?
- Link successful trainings to the Commissioners resource page.

IV. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion | Zella Knight

MAJOR OBJECTIVE: Work with DEIAC and Professional Development (PD).

1. develop additional external relationships with "non-traditional" organizations and
2. establish measurable goals for all Commissioners to meet.

The majority of the objectives are tied to the survey for baseline results to move forward. Ms. Knight mentioned one of the subcommittee meetings where the topic focused on Next Gen professionals in Goal E - who they are and learn how to engage and collaborate with them to galvanize action. We need to begin the focus by adding these questions to the survey for clarity and then we can begin to tackle, health, education, social and criminal justice. Perhaps we need to send out invitations to Department of Education Secretary, Health and Human Service Secretary. Ms. Knight noted that an executive order was sent to all agencies regarding a DEI Action plan., to include HUD and OMB. Regional efforts with regard to diversity, equity and inclusion are in order.

Tiffany Mangum, Chair, Educate, Innovate, Elevate and Act subcommittee of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee visited the committee. Her subcommittee is a monthly platform for professionals to convene virtually to engage in conversation and receive information and insight on various equity issues. One of her subcommittee conversations with our liaisons (Fred Banuelos, Carleen Cumberbatch and Zella Knight) was how can commissioners effect change and policy using data analysis. In October, they will meet the first Tuesday, of the month, 12:00 pacific time -3:00 – eastern time.

Topics include:

- tenant screening – how is resident screening procedure created and hear of personal experiences
- criminal background
- criminal justice

[Ms. Mangum](#) encourages members to join them in the conversations reach out to her.

V. Full Committee Goals | Lucille Boss

Updates for 2023

- Consider Environmental Social Governance (ESG) (in the corporate world – environmental - climate change, social -what to say and not say- reputational risk), and governance (how the board is managed).
- Commissioners Handbook improvements targeting governance.
- Discuss the Commissioner’s role in governance and interaction with agency (Commissioner onboarding)
- DEIAC Policy Framework: Listing of the social determinants of health, what is appropriate for advocacy, distinction between governance role and management (housing agency)
- Add diversity, equity and inclusion strategies to update the Commissioners handbook recruitment plan. Note: The commissioners handbook, Chapter 9, page 83 covers- chapter

coverage, commissioner responsibilities, resident participation, policy to maximize involvement, key points.

- Ensure that commissioners training does not conflict with committee meetings.

Committee Member Announcements

N/A

Closing Remarks

Adjourn

Attendance:

NERC – Richard Laferte, Nicole Vazquez, Sam Bergami
MARC – Fred Banuelos
NCRC- Grant Henry, E. Renee Smith, Gary Valentine, Joe Grisson
SERC – Carleen Cumberbatch, Brenda Honeycutt, Johnny Johnson
SWRC – Gary Allsup
PSWRC – Lucille Boss, AJ Jones, Zella Knight
PNRC – Char Reavis, Joycelynn Straight, Karina Mason Rorris
MPRC – Phil Bernal, Barb Cleland, Thomas Jefferson
Staff Liaison: La Tonya Rajah

Guests:

President Patricia Wells
Senior Vice President George Guy
CEO Mark Thiele
COO Salome Aringo
Michelle Thurston- Homes for Good, Cottage Grove, OR
Carol Branham-Nevada, MO,
Patti Preston, HA of the City of Kirksville, MO
Luciano Benjamin, Harrisonburg VA RHA
Danny Fleming – Harrisonburg VA RHA
Michael Hart –Lucas Metropolitan Housing Authority, Toledo, OH
Alicia Gant - Lucas Metropolitan Housing Authority, Toledo, OH

Meeting Materials Resources

- Commissioners Committee [Goals & Objectives](#) and Subcommittee [Progress Report](#)
- Commissioners Mentors (as of [August 20, 2022](#))
- Commissioners Committee Survey [flyer](#)
- *Available online only:*
 - o Strategic Planning Advisory Committee (SPAC) Goals & Objectives ([As of September 2022](#))
 - o Commissioners Committee Goals & Objectives work-in-progress [chart](#)

Next meeting November 7, 2022, 1:00 – 2:00 p.m., ET

SUBCOMMITTEE PROGRESS REPORT – GOALS/OBJECTIVES 2022

GOAL A: Maintain NAHRO's position as the preeminent organization for the development and implementation of responsible housing and community development policy by vigorously advocating for legislation, regulations, core programs, and innovative initiatives.

ADVOCACY SUBCOMMITTEE

MAJOR OBJECTIVE: to work with Legislative Network Advisory Committee (LNAC) & NAHRO's Legislative Affairs Department to establish measurable goals and work with all Commissioners to meet goals.

In Progress 9/2022-Legislative Affairs staff working on ways to track commissioner participation during August Advocacy Campaigns.

Completed- 9/2022- The August Advocacy campaign - 1,038 participants sent over 27,000 advocacy letters.

In Progress -Post-2022 National Conference - Discussion will ensue with LNAC regarding the advocacy plan, currently in development with a few committee members who also are LNAC members.

GOAL B: Strengthen NAHRO's role as the leading resource in developing the professional expertise and credibility of housing and community development practitioners.

ADVOCACY SUBCOMMITTEE

Work with LNAC to develop a modern program to train and educate NAHRO members on advocacy basics and to establish measurable goals.

Completed – 8/2022 -Advocacy training – awaiting roll out of training.

Completed – 9/2022 Resident Leadership Training has begun.

In Progress - 10/2022 Legislative Network chair to discuss collaborative efforts. Program should include training for Leg Net Leadership team who represent all NAHRO regions, and other Leg Net members, allowing these members to not only be experts in advocacy, but to act as mentors and trainers for their colleagues.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY SUBCOMMITTEE

MAJOR OBJECTIVE: Work with DEIAC and Professional Development (PD).

3. develop additional external relationships with "non-traditional" organizations and
4. establish measurable goals for all Commissioners to meet.

Outreach to sectors/organizations outlined in the NAHRO Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy Framework (Ex: criminal justice; education, such as TK-12, colleges, universities, non-traditional higher ed institutions; access points for healthy food, dental and medical care).

In progress: -Review results of Commissioners Survey to collect information and set baseline for additional discussion and action - Review results of Commissioners Survey to collect information and set baseline for additional discussion and action –

In progress Develop talking points regarding NAHRO and PHAs to share with non-traditional partners (still formulating baseline via commissioners survey). Target date- December, 2022.

In progress Collect and share demographics (staff leadership, commissioners). Consider adding optional questions to conference registration, and/or adding to Commissioners Survey. Review results of Commissioners Survey to collect information and set baseline for additional discussion and action – Target date- December, 2022.

GOAL C -Expand NAHRO's reach and improve its effectiveness by building and reinforcing traditional and non-traditional partnerships, both with NAHRO's regions and chapters, and with outside organizations.

COMMUNICATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

MAJOR OBJECTIVE: Communications Subcommittee to work with Legislative Network Advisory Committee (LNAC) to:

3. establish measurable goals, expand NAHRO's reach, improve advocacy effectiveness and sphere of influence by building and reinforcing outside partnerships through joint advocacy and social media campaigns.
4. build stronger regional and state-level communication networks to share, coordinate and expand NAHRO's legislative work and advocacy campaigns.

Completed. 9/2022 Resources webpage will be updated after National Conference with commissioners at work video). Showcasing video at 2022 National Conference.

In Progress Revisited with LNAC, post-2022 National Conference, to develop communications to Federal & State legislators (Commissioner-specific language for action center templates, and to encourage robust funding for supportive services).

Completed. 8/2022 Tess Hembree advised language can be changed to reflect a Commissioner-focused letter.

In Progress - Engage more Commissioners – talking points for local commission meetings. Review results of Commissioners Survey to collect information and set baseline for additional discussion and action – Target date- December, 2022.

Not Yet Started – As we approach Housing America month, the subcommittee wishes to incorporate Housing America month efforts in communication and advocacy. Outreach achieved with Housing America Advisory Committee (HAAC) and work begins after the 2022 National Conference.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY SUBCOMMITTEE

Establish measurable goals. Promote academic achievements of public housing residents through connections with non-traditional partners, based on NAHRO Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy Framework.

In progress Deadline: Spring, 2023. Review results of Commissioners Survey to collect information and set baseline for additional discussion and action – Target date- December, 2022. Improve internet/digital access in low-income areas.

In progress Universal access to pre-school. Review results of Commissioners Survey to collect information and set baseline for additional discussion and action – Target date- December, 2022.

In progress Highlight the impact that under-resourced schools have on education gaps and upward mobility, and advocate for equitable funding for neighborhood schools. Survey to collect information and set baseline for additional discussion and action – Target date- December, 2022.

In progress. Establish formal partnerships with continuing/higher education institutions to ensure residents (children and heads of household/parents/guardians) have access to educational opportunities and resources. Review results of Commissioners Survey to collect information and set baseline for additional discussion and action – Target date- December, 2022.

GOAL D: To ensure NAHRO’s continued financial stability by expanding revenue sources, exploring new business opportunities, and maximizing efficiency.

No goals set for this goal, however Chair Boss wishes to mention in the event objectives would be pursued.

GOAL E: Strengthen NAHRO as a thought-leader by improving communication, networking, information exchange, and knowledge transfer with and among members, partners, and stakeholders, and by enhancing the experience of members and next-generation professionals.

ADVOCACY SUBCOMMITTEE

Commissioners Track Group will create substantive, relevant topics, and sessions for the National Conference.

Completed for 2022. Propose 3-5 sessions via calls for proposals and/or submissions by the Commissioners Committee (consider sessions not selected including, but not limited to: budgeting/“is there money for this?”; COVID-19 lessons learned; educational empowerment; etc.). Submitted three sessions, two of which were accepted.

Not Yet Started - Promote NAHRO Certification Program. Will contact Professional Development Director regarding the program. Will begin after the 2022 National Conference.

COMMUNICATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

Commissioner of the Year - Ensure there is at least one nominee from each region for the award (may consider re-submitting last year's submission if person not awarded.)

Completed. 2022 did not ensure one nominee from each region but results of July, 2022 efforts to encourage regional presidents promotion of commissioner of the year resulted in 10 applicants in 2022 the most number of applicants ever.

Not Yet Begun – Collaboration with Housing America to establish measurable goals. Increase participation and visibility of Housing America month and campaigns though and by local, state and regional platforms. Will discuss with Housing America Chair and Liaison to further this task 10/2022.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY SUBCOMMITTEE

Collaboration with DEIAC. Assign/delegate representatives to roundtable discussions with national standing committee leadership members to:

1. discuss ways to advance DEI,
2. increase participation by Next Gen Professionals, and
3. encourage cross committee goal alignment.

In progress - Summer/Fall, 2022. A minimum of one discussion per year with national standing committees which will produce cross-committee goals and initiatives to advance DEI and increase participation by Nex Gen professionals in policy discussions relative to advancing DEI. Work continues into 2023.

In progress - Review results of Commissioners Survey to collect information and set baseline for additional discussion and action – Target date- December, 2022.

In progress - DEIAC representatives report to Commissioners committee, regional representatives, state representatives, and BOG. (Have any of the DEI subcommittee members. Review results of Commissioners Survey to collect information and set baseline for additional discussion and action – Target date- December, 2022.

GOAL F: Advance diversity, equity, and inclusion as crucial to healthy communities.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY SUBCOMMITTEE

Work with DEIAC and Professional Development (PD) to establish measurable goals, provide tools for our members to advance diversity, equity and inclusion in their communities, including HR recruitment, board and staff development tools, communication tools, DEI planning for succession and sustainability.

In progress – Deadline: Fall/2022. Review results of Commissioners Survey to collect information and set baseline for additional discussion and action – Target date- December, 2022.

In progress - **Work with DEIAC and PD** to develop additional external relationships with non-traditional organizations and establish measurable goals for all of the commissioners to meet. *(Also under Goal B).*

In progress- Deadline: Spring/2023. (Washington Conference) **Work with Housing America Advisory Committee** to establish measurable goals for academic achievements of public housing residents through connections with non-traditional partners, based on the NAHRO DEI Policy Framework.

NO GOAL ASSIGNED - FULL COMMITTEE

Discuss and create targeted empowerment mini campaigns to engage agencies, residents and communities. No timeline - will reassess once survey results are available.

- Voting empowerment to encourage residents, support community efforts to register and vote.
- Educational empowerment – workshops to focus on the importance of voting rights, the impact of voting and education of elected bodies, local activism, law enforcement training, careers in law enforcement, legal studies, etc.
- Financial empowerment

In progress – Reassess status once survey results are available.

Clarify and strengthen relationships between national NAHRO and its partners, regional councils and state chapters.

In progress – committee members are currently working in this regard.