

HOUSTON LAND BANK
BOARD OF DIRECTORS POLICY WORKSHOP MINUTES
August 27, 2020

Board Chair Matt Zeis called the meeting to order at noon Central time and called the roll of members. Members present included Chair Zeis; directors Mario Castillo, Curtis Lampley, Laurie Vignaud, Victor Mondragón and Toni Jackson; Ex-Officio Director Christa Stoneham; and advisory board members Nick Foran, Elijah Cummings and Vincent Marquez. HLB legal counsel Gracie Saenz was also in attendance, along with HLB CEO/President Anne Gatling Haynes and HLB staff Darice Harris and David Benson.

Ms. Haynes reviewed a PowerPoint presentation (attached) highlighting recent history of HLB policies and proposed adjustments to the current policy document.

Mr. Mondragon suggested policy language that would require participants in virtual board meetings or workshops to have their cameras. Ms. Jackson noted that this is not required by law and that it could place an onerous requirement on board members seeking to join by telephone.

Ms. Stoneham inquired about the level of detail regarding procurement methods and processes. Ms. Haynes responded that such detail is typically included in procedures. She noted that staff has prepared a matrix highlighting responsibilities/methods/processes of various procurements likely to be undertaken by HLB. Mr. Castillo also referenced the matrix as helpful; staff agreed to share the matrix with the Board prior to consideration of the proposed policies.

Mr. Lampley suggested a requirement that staff proceed with procurements including, but not limited to, property acquisition only after receiving Board approval. He indicated that a bulleted list of procurement methods and procedures or a “transaction summary” would be helpful in understanding HLB’s approach to procurements.

Mr. Zeis pointed out that policies set parameters within which staff are to execute their responsibilities. Ms. Haynes explained various efforts staff has undertaken to communicate activities to the Board and said she is open to specific suggestions for improvement.

Mr. Foran asked about opportunities for Board input regarding strategy. Ms. Haynes referenced the upcoming board strategic planning session, which is anticipated to be an annual occurrence. Ongoing guidance is also received from the City and from the Board’s Executive Committee, she added, explaining that there are multiple levels where the board weighs in but that her desire is to get the approach right to engage all interested board members appropriately.

Mr. Foran used the example of proposed development on a piece of property where Board members might suggest options for laying out the property to accommodate certain purposes and maximize its use. Ms. Haynes indicated that such decisions have been a topic of conversation with regard to density, and that staff also work with the Programs Committee on decisions around lot sales, including holding back properties deemed unsuitable for single-family residential development because of size or proximity to busy streets, for example.

Returning to Mr. Lampley’s suggestions, Ms. Stoneham asked whether a process map might be helpful. Mr. Lampley indicated he would provide specific examples as to how board approval should be paramount to HLB actions.

Mr. Mondragón asked whether Mr. Lampley was seeking to require Board approval before initiation of staff effort on procurements above a certain dollar threshold or perhaps on certain types of transactions such as land acquisition. Mr. Lampley responded that Board approval overrides any dollar thresholds.

Mr. Marquez suggested adding committee chairs to the Executive Committee. Mr. Zeis said the issue would be addressed in the upcoming strategic planning sessions.

Mr. Lampley complimented Mr. Castillo and HLB staff on their efforts to bring a proposed policy document for Board review and consideration.

Mr. Castillo reiterated compliments for staff and advised that meeting notes are to be shared with the Board and that he is to follow up with Mr. Lampley regarding the latter's suggestions.

The meeting adjourned at 1:04 p.m. Central time.