



Department of Human Services

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Family Resource Network (FRN) Regional Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 11, 2023
3:00-4:30pm, MS Teams

Attendance

Present

- Robin Bohannan
- Darlene Bushue
- Susan Caskey
- Elizabeth Crowe
- Dr. Perla Delgado
- Mandy Perera
- Simon Smith
- Karin Stayton
- Johnny Terrell
- Julie Van Domelen

Absent

- BVSD (Vacant Seat)
- Danielle Butler
- Marc Cowell
- Suzanne Crawford
- Lexi Nolen
- Christina Pacheco

Staff Present

- Georgina Becerril
- Bill Cole
- Katrina Harms
- Kari Hunt
- Joni Lynch
- Gwen Mossman
- Whitney Wilcox
- Jim Williams

Guests

- Deb Callies

- Jorge De Santiago
 - Kurt Firnhaber
 - Crystal Launder
 - Jennifer Leosz
 - Molly O'Donnell
 - Anne Tapp
-

Welcome and Introductions

The Family Resource Network (FRN) Regional Council Meeting was called to order by Julie Van Domelen. Julie welcomed new members to the Regional Council and introduced members of the Regional Housing Partnership (RHP) Steering Committee. The focus of the meeting was to provide information about the FRN and RHP, as well as identify opportunities for coordination on housing-related initiatives.

Overview of the Family Resource Network

Julie Van Domelen and Whitney Wilcox presented an overview of the FRN, a collaborative structure involving over 30 nonprofits, government entities, and school districts. The FRN aims to leverage the collective strengths and resources of these organizations to improve outcomes for children and families. The FRN partners facilitate access to essential resources such as safe housing, healthcare, education, food, and transportation. Collaboration within the FRN helps coordinate services, identify gaps and barriers, and prevent duplication of efforts.

Housing security was identified as a priority in the FRN's 2023-2024 work plan. Goals include coordinating services for families at risk of homelessness through the Family Homelessness Subcommittee, providing short-term rental assistance and legal support to prevent evictions, and advocating for housing policies at local and state levels in collaboration with the RHP.

Current FRN initiatives include increasing funding for temporary housing for unhoused children and families, distributing housing navigation maps to facilitate resource access, developing a dashboard to monitor emergency rental assistance demand and financial resources, aggregating affordable short-term unit openings, and advocating for policies alongside the RHP.

Overview of the Regional Housing Partnership

Bill Cole, the Boulder County RHP Manager, provided an overview of the partnership. The partnership consists of staff from various agencies and municipalities focused on coordinating efforts to preserve and create affordable housing across Boulder County. It includes an Executive Steering Committee and Advisory Committee and aims to share updates on housing retention, development, and best practices throughout the county.

Current initiatives of the RHP include tracking multifamily properties accessing housing choice vouchers, sharing information on down payment assistance and homeownership programs, expanding homeownership and rehabilitation initiatives, and organizing a housing summit in November 2023.

The County's affordable housing goal is to reach 12% affordable homes by 2035, requiring the preservation or development of 18,000 affordable units. For more details and resources, please refer to the [Home Wanted](#) page.

The group responded to the following questions asked by FRN members prior to the meeting:

- The group considered updating the [2017 Report](#) and saw potential in utilizing the Housing Summit for this purpose.
- A countywide Affordable Housing Trust Fund continues to be discussed, and a potential affordable housing tax is being considered by the Commissioners in May 2023.
- Funding for affordable housing through Prop 123, a state ballot initiative, would be allocated based on local need and require jurisdictions to increase affordable housing by 3% annually.
- Community Lands Trusts provide deed-restricted and remain affordable housing for the long term.
- RHP has had some initial discussions about converting empty office buildings into affordable housing projects.

Additional discussion included:

- Katrina Harms shared that [Nederland's Housing Needs Assessment](#) is underway. She is interested in exploring ways to add affordable housing in unincorporated areas.
- Julie highlighted the increasing challenges faced by families due to inflation and housing costs, and she asked how the FRN could support RHP in affordable housing efforts.
- Kurt Firnhaber talked about the lack of market rate affordable housing and expressed hope for new resources and inclusionary housing ordinances. He also mentioned the 1,000 affordable housing units in the pipeline or going through entitlements in the City of Boulder.

Identifying Opportunities for Coordination and Collaboration

The group discussed potential areas for collaboration and coordination between RHP and FRN.

- Kurt emphasized the need for a significant source of funding for affordable housing. In 2017, the cost of an additional 800 homes was approximately \$25 million per year, and that amount is much higher now. He requested FRN's help in building community support for this work.
- Jim Williams highlighted the importance of increasing visibility and suggested revisiting the Home Wanted campaign with input from jurisdictions and FRN partners.
- Molly O'Donnell discussed the community's support for the "Yes, In My Backyard" initiative in Longmont and the ongoing campaign to educate community members about housing and its impact.
- Bill emphasized the importance of preserving existing affordable housing, particularly in mobile home parks. He said anything FRN partners can do to encourage the improvement of the parks would be very helpful.

- Elizabeth Crowe called for the nonprofit sector's support in informing campaigns on the front-end and connecting with the community to share stories and opportunities.
- Robin Bohannon shared insights from countywide behavioral health planning, where housing was identified as a significant issue tied to mental health and social resilience.
- Longmont is working on increasing the number of family-centric units in their portfolio, potentially bringing in an Early Childhood Education center into the new 75-unit project.
- Julie talked about previous experiences nonprofits and networks have played in letter writing campaigns and providing public testimony. She encouraged people to reach out and so they can organize their networks to participate.

The group also discussed ideas the FRN had about opportunities to collaborate with the RHP.

- Julie expressed the importance of considering families with children in affordable housing projects. She acknowledged that it might pose challenges but inquired about the possibility of directing a specific subsidy towards this population. Mollie shared that Longmont's upcoming project will have a family focus, with 28 out of their 462 units designated for families. They are incorporating 3 and 4-bedroom units and considering adding flex spaces to 1-bedroom units to better accommodate families. They are also exploring the inclusion of a community service, such as an early childhood center, to support families.
- Kurt mentioned that new affordable housing developments in Boulder have received significant community support, making a substantial difference. He suggested that FRN members share information about new affordable housing projects in their respective communities.
- Julie proposed implementing a mechanism to support this work effectively. She suggested that people send their requests to Whitney, who can then share them with the wider FRN membership. Julie acknowledged the difficulty of tracking this work and highlighted the need for a formal process to facilitate information sharing.
- Katrina informed the group that Nederland recently rezoned a high-density housing lot for commercial use. She asked that RHP connect with Nederland to help in reversing the rezoning decision. Katrina expressed interest in discussing housing in the mountain region with RHP.

Whitney will incorporate the suggestions into the work plan and collaborate with Bill on next steps.

Approval of March 2023 FRN Regional Council Meeting Minutes

Julie called for approval of the minutes from the March 2023 FRN Regional Council meeting. Robin motioned to approve, and Elizabeth seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Nominations for New Members

Julie and Whitney presented nominations for new members: Anne Tapp (SPAN), Jackie List (Safe Shelter), Jorge de Santiago (El Centro AMISTAD), and Jen Leosz (MHP). Robin moved to approve the addition of these four members, seconded by Elizabeth. The nominations were unanimously approved. Julie welcomed the new members and expressed gratitude for their commitment.

The meeting was adjourned.