

Meeting: Monthly Housing Justice Forum – Racism and Housing

Date: 6.23.20

Time: 7 pm – 9 pm

Location: Zoom

Moderator: Sonja Berndt

Introduction (Sonja Berndt)

Scripture Reading (Pastor Camille Wooden)

Isaiah 61

Rebuild, Restore, Renew

- There needs to be work of restoration and renewal in Pasadena
- My father asked me to pull weeds in Texas and some weeds were difficult to pull out. The work of racial injustice is like these weeds –difficult and problems are connected
- The work is hard but needed- do not grow weary in good doing because in due season you will reap
- God's work and He will empower!

Moment of Silence for Reflection (Sonja Berndt)

- Reflect on how you can be a part of the solution and the various forms of racism we are being asked to address

Rules for Zoom (Anthony Manousos)

- Please make sure you are muted except during breakout sessions at 8:30
- If you have a question enter them through the chat

Homeless Housing Subcommittee (Anthony Manousos)

- This month's exciting news is that a new coalition is developing in Pasadena to address the homelessness crisis. We at MHCH were invited to join this effort in a conference call with Mike Kinman, rector of All Saints Church; Rabbi Joshua Grater, director of Friends Indeed; Anne Miskey, director of Union Station; Teresa Eilers, organizer for Everyone In, and others. We agreed to work together to urge elected officials to make housing a priority. We agreed on a three-pronged approach: Safe Haven (churches working with service providers and making space on their campus for homeless people), Safe Parking, and Safe Shelter (promoting both short and long term solutions: building affordable/homeless housing on church land, motel conversion to homeless housing, pallet and tiny homes, trailers, etc.). We plan to build a coalition of congregations and service providers to influence our elected officials to adopt emergency measures to address this impending housing crisis.

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Church Liaison Subcommittee (Bert Newton)

- Our liaison program is more than a year old but still developing. A liaison is someone who organizes their faith congregation's participation in Making Housing and Community Happen.
- The goal is to have 20 liaisons in 20 faith congregations in Pasadena.

- We now have around 20 people in about 20 different faith communities who have stepped forward to take on the role of a liaison. While most of the liaisons have not completed the formal process of becoming an official liaison - a process which includes formal recognition by the community's leadership, completion of a liaison form, and a of very small financial donation – all of these volunteers are actively organizing and/or attending trainings that we provide.
- Our trainings so far have included how to do one-one interviews, how to tell your housing story, an overview of the Pasadena Housing Element, and the specifics of the proposed overlay zone.

ADU Subcommittee (Anne Marie Molina)

- The ADU Subcommittee's current goals are to hold an ADU educational seminar in Pasadena, run an ADU design competition, and to launch an ADU pilot program. Our committee is working hard on these goals and making significant progress.
- We are excited to share that Jill Shook spoke with Bill Huang, Pasadena's Housing Director, and there is a tentative July "role out" for the ADU pilot program.
- The ADU Subcommittee held our last meeting on June 19th and our next meeting will take place in July – the date is TBD. Contact Anne Marie for more information, or if you are interested in joining the committee
- Our committee asked for the fees to be dropped or lowered in the case of affordable ADUs and the mayor and CC were favorable.

Congregation Land Subcommittee (Jill Shook)

- The Congregational Land Subcommittee has been advocating for an Overlay Zone in Pasadena that will allow churches to build affordable housing on their land by up zoning church land and allowing residential use
- On July 8th, the Overlay Zone will be on the agenda at the Pasadena Planning Commission for discussion.
- Currently, Phil Burns is working on an article on the Overlay Zone to be published locally as a means of creating public awareness.
- Our committee is working to craft a proposed amendment to the Overlay Zone that will give churches the freedom to build, perhaps by making housing an accessory use to a religious assembly.
- Additionally, the RFP for New Life Holiness Church was distributed to seven developers and is due on July 15th. We are hoping to find the correct development partner for this church.
- Finally, our committee is actively seeking funding for its highly skilled advisors.

Executive Director Report (Jill Shook)

- We are proposing an overlay zone for the city of Pasadena so that churches can build on property
- 26 churches in the pipeline interested in building affordable housing on church land
- Current zoning doesn't work for most churches, so we're advocating for more density and residential use
- New Life Holiness Church in Pasadena has 48 units planned with and RFP send out to seek a development partner – it will be interesting to see who gets the deal, but the land is zoned for commercial. If we can fix the zoning, we can save up to 1 year in the time to develop it and up to \$100,000 or more on the project.

- Tyrone Hampton, Vice Mayor of Pasadena and the Mayor are both think building affordable housing on church land is an excellent idea.
- We are working to secure funding for our team and writing an article to help promote the idea for Overlay Zone in Pasadena and beyond.

Tom Peters-meyer Safe Parking Subcommittee

- Our committee has been talking to Trinity Lutheran Church and Pasadena Church in Pasadena about sponsoring a safe parking program. However, Pasadena does not have Safe Parking on the list of permitted activities for churches, so we are working on changing this.
We started a list of criteria we desire for prospective security guard services including references, company experience
- Simultaneously, we are looking for funding from foundations.

We are putting together a package of items to be able to present to our prospective churches:

- PowerPoint "What is Safe Parking"
- Lot Evaluation/Assessment form,
- MOU/contracts
- Parker Assessment/intake form
- Rules

Community Land Trust Subcommittee (Connie Milsap)

- The Community Land Trust Committee has been engaged in a 4-week webinar from Grounded Solutions, a national organization connecting experts with the knowledge and support needed to promote affordable housing solutions.
- Jill Shook and Connie Millsap have had a couple of introductory Zoom meetings with Potential new committee members. Our subcommittee's goals are to continue furthering our CLT education while working to build a strong team for our committee.

North Fair Oaks Empowerment Initiative

- Our committee advocates to bring attention to N. Fair Oaks Pasadena, a neglected area of our city. Our goals for the initiative are affordable housing, to slow traffic, increase employment and beautify, not gentrify and have an employment center.
- We recently received an \$18,000 donation and will use these funds to hire a Community Organizer.
- After posting an ad for the position, we received six resumes. Our committee reviewed the submissions, then selected three candidates to move forward. We will interview those candidates on Monday. Please pray as we discern who is the correct person to take on this role.
- We are deeply concerned about many of the 88 people in Pasadena who lost their lives due to COVID were residents of North Fair Oaks. One nursing home was so affected by the virus the city removed its license and relocated the residents. City Councilmember Tyrone Hampton shares our concern for this situation.

Beverly Bogar (Three Minute Housing Story)

- Her dad worked odd jobs and was always saving money - a coworker helped her dad rent a house for the family. It was a culturally diverse street

- Mom had to explain racism to Beverly Bogar after someone called her the n word
- They lost their home after three years – her parents separated
- Worked in mortgage banking for 14 years and bought a house, many of her neighbors relocated due to gentrifications you can see her full story on our blog: www.makinghosinghappen.net

Educational Program

Dr. Jill Shook

History of Racism and Housing

- 1991 Jill moved to Pasadena to study under Dr. John Perkins
- My beginnings of housing injustice go back to 1994 with STARS kids—a program Jill helped to start at Lake Ave Church. She was amazed at the power of affordable housing to break the cycle of poverty. When kids that were moved into Agape court (affordable housing) all graduated from college – housing changed lives and created a sense of community

An Overview of Racism in US Housing Policy

- During the gold rush constitution had a free-soil provision for whites while banning slaves to own land
- 1862 Homestead Act granted free land, but only for citizens – Blacks, Mexican, and Native American were excluded
- Building codes introduced in 19th and 20th century – investigated deaths and diseases and realized building ventilation was important
- 1913 – Mortgage interest deduction enacted - but this only helps wealthy homeowners, but doesn't trickle down
- When Zoning came in it changed everything, but started to be used to exclude minorities
- 1920's City began to use zoning so the city could be separated by race, created racial covenants so that people of color could not buy homes in parts of communities.
- Liquor stores were put in the Black areas
- Neighborhood associations enforced racial covenants
- Blacks were not able to get mortgages or purchase homes anywhere besides Northwest Pasadena

1934 Homeowners Loan Corporation

- Banks would not provide homes to people in “red lined” area

1930s A push for homeownership – for whites in La Canada

1944 GI Bill

- Most blacks who benefitted from the GI bill were barred from it being used for home purchases

1934 – The Federal Housing Administration

- Institutions sought to eliminate prejudice and discrimination and racial covenants, but not enforced, records destroyed.

1949 Federal Housing Act: A Decent Home and Suitable Living for Every American

- Money provided for “slum clearance” and “urban renewal” but in reality this cleared out African American communities under false pretenses

1956 Interstate Highway Act

- Highways usually cut through African American black business districts

In Pasadena, our Black population has decreased by 20%

John Kennedy (Pasadena Council Member)

- Father born in 1907 and mom born in 1923 decided to move away from the deep South to California and Pasadena
- 7 sisters and 2 brothers – family has seen a lot of what Jill talked about in her presentation
- I remember when integration began in Pasadena - determined that schools would be desegregated and received unequal education
- At Cleveland elementary athletic equipment and libraries were updated and approved before the white children came to his school in this north west Pasadena school.
- White parents demanded a special school within the school and mainly white children were allowed to go to the “resource room”
- Parental involvement is the number one issue related to children’s education
- Lois Richard (Black) ran for city council and ran against John Crowley (White). Lois lost when the vote went citywide to represent that area. So there was a move to make elections by districts so people of color would have a chance to win.
 - o John Crowley worked with State senator to save fireman/police retirement fund when this money would have been used for the community to build affordable housing
- We cannot forget the racist platform that Pasadena’s fathers adopted to ensure that a certain group of people who be treated less than first class citizens
- Mexican have also been discriminated against within Pasadena, the elite in Pasadena have always placated other groups, but never fully funded what was needed to replace what was taken
- Human Betterment Foundation – New USC president decided to remove Rufus VonKlensment because he sat on the board of the human betterment foundation – rooted in white supremacy, eugenics and determining certain genes, sterilized lower income, mentally disabled and more.
- We can’t forget in the foundation on which this city was built – racism
- What we need to do?
- We need to apply appropriate pressure to the leadership on Fuller seminary to ensure that affordable housing covenants continue
- Land Grants as part of reparations to bring about equitable development
 - o When enslaved black people gained freedom they were promised 40 acres and a mule and promised troops would ensure justice but that promise was broken, and whites were provided land grants and given a leg up in trying to enjoy the fruits of America, it was never provided for African American (but for some like Andre White’s family who is on the board for MHCH)

- There must be a way for this city to deal with it's original sin by giving up some of their white privilege, but we need to have honest discussion
- We need to reprioritize what's important to Pasadena – take a look at the budget to see if there's a way to reduce the budget to what's critically important - Public Education and housing people of Pasadena
- Hold everyone on City Council accountable to do this work

Breakout Sessions

Questions:

1. Are you now more aware of how you've benefitted or been hurt because of systemic racism?
2. What do you see as possible solutions to address systemic racism?