**Note Taker:** Jill Wohl

**Date**: 06-03-2020

**Session Name:** Opening Plenary

Since mid-March when the full brunt of the coronavirus pandemic hit, HPN has held more than 40 virtual meetings with members on a variety of topics, all focused on responding to the crisis. At this opening plenary we will start pivoting to a greater focus on *recovery and change* – resetting our path forward by applying what we are learning from this crisis to create a more resilient, more equitable, stronger affordable housing industry.   
  
We will hear insights from leaders of HPN members on forward-looking ideas that have emerged or been crystallized by the pandemic. In the coming months, we will continue to bring together our network to share ideas around responding and adapting to the crisis, but during this plenary let’s reflect on how to seize this key moment in time to work for systemic change.

* 52nd member meeting, first virtual meeting
* 70 member orgs and 200 individuals registered
* Acknowledge 3 outgoing board members: Kate Monte Durban, Gil Piette, Joan Carty
* New board members add diversity (gender, race, geography): Ismael Guerrero (Mercy Housing) Greta Harris (Better Housing Coalition, Richmond VA), Priya Jayachandran (NHT), Kevin Nowak (CHN Housing Partners), Nancy Wagner-Hislip (Reinvestment Fund, Philadelphia)
* Welcome new CEOs – Kathy Williams, NeighborWorks Columbus (GA); Kara Hay, Penquis (ME)
* Acknowledge Peter Gagliardi from Way Finder on his retirement. He attended the very first convening in 1990 that led to the creation of HPN and attended about 80% of the ensuing 51
* Robin and Tom acknowledge social unrest and opportunity to use our platform for change

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| **1. Ideas Shared**  Very brief bullets on key ideas discussed. | - Reflections on George Floyd tragedy and civil unrest  - Positive signs  - Recovery, resilience, equity/Enacting change  QUOTES  “Grief is the space between what we want and what is.” (Deidre Schmidt of Common Bond quoting mental health consultant engaged for staff)  Frederick Douglas: “If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation are men who want crops without plowing up the ground; they want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a physical one, and it may be both moral and physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. “  Martin Luther King Jr (Letter from a Birmingham Jail): “I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Counciler or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action"; who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a "more convenient season." Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will.”  “Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief. Do justly now. Live mercy now. Walk humbly now. You are not obligated to complete the work. But neither are you free to abandon it.” (quoted from the Talmud in a statement on assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. by Sen. Robert F Kennedy) |
| **2. Discussion**  Level of detail of the discussion to be captured will be based on the needs of the planning team for the session. | Reflections on George Floyd tragedy and civil unrest:  - Multiple murders of black Americans (and COVID) highlight longtime inequities and structural racism (“white supremacy is embedded in what we do”)  - Member org staffs, residents, communities struggling to process horrors and respond  - Positive power of embedded mental health support  - Pain, trauma more acutely experienced by POC  - White shame/guilt: ask open-ended questions (“How can I help?”)  - More listening (“In stillness there’s depth and space for listening”)  - Urgency to lift up communities of color in solution building  - We’ve been here before – unless we change, we’ll be here again  Positive signs:  - Protesters more diverse than civil rights era and more supported by general public;  - Younger generation galvanizing against racial injustice  - “Mainstream” voices echo calls to dismantle white supremacy, explicitly support Black Lives Matter  - Pandemic forcing us to address persistent problems (e.g. digital divide) and explore new solutions (phone, Zoom, etc.)  - Call to action: affordable housing can be a platform for change    Recovery, resilience, equity/Enacting change:  - Community building and courage: need courage to do better, to address tactical and systemic disparities  - “Space and grace’ to reflect, time to process impacts on self, family, community followed by respectful conversations about feelings  - “Develop principles of community” to lift up humanity, value every human being  - Model behavior: E.g. orgs (board/staff) reflect communities served, inclusivity  - Need to broaden partnerships, unconventional partnerships  - Different ways of doing things  - No short cuts, difficult work |
| **3. Next Steps and Follow-up Tasks**   * Identify next steps * Follow-up tasks:   + Members   + HPN staff | Supporting racial justice work across the network, including diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts |
| **4. Future Peer Exchange Topics**   * Future session ideas * Further peer exchange (webinars, MemberExchange, etc.) | Affordable, anti-racist housing as a platform for recovery  Solving for inefficiencies (Cynthia Parker’s example of 7+ yrs, 13 proposals to assemble capital stack)  Inspirations from the International Housing Partnership  Slack 101/Slack as a tool for social change |