

# COMMISSION ON RACE & ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY

## Minutes

**September 24, 2024**

### **Call to Order and Roll Call**

The fourth meeting of the Commission on Race and Access to Opportunity was held on September 24, 2024, at 1:00 PM in Room 129 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Killian Timoney, Co-Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

### **Present were:**

Members: Representative Killian Timoney, Co-Chair; Senator Amanda Mays Bledsoe, Co-Chair; Senators Karen Berg and Gerald A. Neal; Representatives George Brown Jr., Samara Heavrin, and Nima Kulkarni; and citizen members Kimberly Baird and Katima Smith-Willis.

Guests: Andi Johnson, Chief Policy Officer and Director of Regional Engagement, Commerce Lexington; Zach Worsham, Vice President, Winterwood Inc.; Johan Graham, Owner and President, AU Associates; Darryl Neher, Chief Executive Officer, Lexington Habitat for Humanity; Representative Emily Callaway, House District 37; and Mason King, Chief Executive Officer, Jubilee Jobs of Lexington.

LRC Staff: Brandon White and Logan Schaaf.

### **Approval of August Minutes**

On a motion and a second, the August 27, 2024, meeting minutes were approved by voice vote.

### **Discussion on Affordable Housing**

Andi Johnson, Chief Policy Officer and Director of Regional Engagement, Commerce Lexington; Zach Worsham, Vice President, Winterwood Inc.; Johan Graham, Owner and President, AU Associates; and Darryl Neher, Chief Executive Officer, Lexington Habitat for Humanity, discussed the state of affordable housing, barriers and challenges, and state-level policy recommendations. State policy recommendations include supporting local banks and urging regulators to recognize Community Reinvestment Act credits for affordable housing projects, renewing investment in the new market tax credit program to deploy capital to housing projects, creating a new Kentucky Low Income Housing Tax Credit, increasing investment in the Kentucky Affordable Housing Trust Fund/Rural Housing Trust Fund, and expanding access to state housing funds for workforce housing projects.

Responding to a question from Senator Berg, Mr. Worsham, Mr. Graham, and Mr. Neher

Committee meeting materials may be accessed online at <https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/CommitteeDocuments/345>

said they would not favor a policy requiring market-rate developers to reserve units for low-income renters, as it has been a complicated, inefficient, and ineffective process in areas where it has been tried.

Responding to questions from Senator Neal, the presenters discussed efforts to build affordable housing across the state and detailed the community collaboration process.

Responding to questions from Representative Kulkarni, the presenters discussed challenges in securing funding for projects and efforts to overcome these challenges.

Responding to questions from Representative Brown, the presenters outlined potential solutions to the affordability crisis, as well as neighborhood pushback on planned developments.

Co-Chair Mays Bledsoe praised the presenters and the efforts to increase affordable housing.

Co-Chair Timoney discussed the lasting effects of housing insecurity.

### **Discussion on Reentry**

Representative Emily Callaway and Mason King, Chief Executive Officer of Jubilee Jobs of Lexington, discussed reentry. Representative Callaway highlighted House Bill 124 from the 2024 Regular Session and said she plans to file the bill again in the upcoming session. The bill seeks to address barriers to workforce reentry faced by people convicted of a crime.

Senator Berg praised Representative Callaway's work on the bill.

Responding to a question from Representative Kulkarni, Representative Callaway discussed changes she is making to the bill.

Responding to a question from Ms. Smith-Willis, Representative Callaway said the bill relates only to employment and occupational licensing, but she would like to see it expanded to other facets of reentry.

Mr. King provided an overview of Jubilee Jobs' activities and their efforts to facilitate employment for people reentering the workforce after incarceration. He highlighted common reentry challenges and how Jubilee Jobs' programs address those challenges.

Responding to questions from Senator Berg, Mr. King said there are drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs in the prison system, but many people can fall through the cracks of these programs. He detailed the sources of Jubilee Jobs' funding.

Responding to a question from Representative Kulkarni, Mr. King said Jubilee Jobs of Lexington opened in 2009, and it is modeled after an organization that has been operating in Washington D.C. for over 50 years. He discussed the potential expansion of services that could come with increased funding.

### **Adjournment**

With no further business before the commission, the meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM.