



Utilities as a Cost of Affordable Housing

MHC members know that a home without heat or lights is not safe, decent housing. In our 2008 *State of Metropolitan Housing Report*, MHC focused on utilities as a cost of affordable housing and our focus was on making homes energy efficient, whether rental or owner-occupied. One way MHC continues work on this issue is by intervening in cases involving LG&E which go before the Kentucky Public Service Commission (PSC). Being an Intervener does not mean opposition- it means that we represent an interest that is significant and not fully represented by other parties.

Last summer, MHC was an Intervener during the sale of LG&E to PPL and our perspective was heard and reflected in the final outcome. The settlement between PPL and all Interveners provided several new or extended provisions to assist the most vulnerable ratepayers. Of the 11 issues raised by MHC, PPL offered to undertake activities responding to 9 of them. A brief summary of the issues presented by MHC, along with a description of how the settlement from that intervention addresses those issues, can be downloaded from the MHC website at http://metropolitanhousing.org/pdf/mhcdoc_248.pdf. MHC has been granted Intervener status for two cases now before the PSC which involve LG&E and the amount people will pay on their bills.

One case is on increasing the amount of money collected for Demand Side Management (DSM). DSM is an industry term for reducing the amount of energy used in a home by a variety of approaches that include: weatherization, more responsive thermostat controls and education about how to reduce individual usage. By reducing our electricity use, we can delay (or avoid) the creation of new power plants, which helps all of us because the cost of new plants is passed on to customers. LG&E adds a DSM fee as a percentage of every ratepayer's bill each month funds LG&E DSM programs.

The other case is about the Environmental Surcharge that LG&E anticipates because of work on current power plants to make sure they meet environmental standards in byproducts released into our environment. That cost was talked about in the news because it could lead to a rate increase of up to 19% over time.

MHC looks not only at affordability but scrutinizes for fairness. We see that areas with high concentrations of poverty are also high concentrations of people protected by fair housing laws. But they are also just plain high concentrations of people. We know this from MHC's *State of Fair Housing: Impediments & Improvements* report, where we saw that multi-family zoning and

smaller lot sizes were in these areas. MHC wants to make sure that DSM money paid in by ratepayers in these areas results in those neighborhoods receiving stellar DSM service. These are also areas where our non-profit developers work and invest. Some of these areas are directly affected by power plant emissions.

When people pay per unit of energy used- for instance, per Kilowatt Hour- an increase in that per unit cost substantially affects low-income people. Their homes are typically not the most energy efficient, so even with smaller square footage, they may not be using less energy to cool their homes. There is a term in economics that describes what we all intuit- that \$10 to a person with an income of \$100 feels different than \$10 to a person with an income of \$100,000 (the term is Diminishing Marginal Utility Theory). So we are being cautious. We know that low-income people have less money to invest in energy efficient rehab, so MHC advocates assisting those people. Then not only will bills be more affordable, but less energy will be used. A great outcome for our whole community!

If you want to see what is happening in these cases, the PSC posts all pleadings on line. Go to <http://psc.ky.gov/Home/Library?type=cases&folder=2011>. See case 2011-00134 for the DSM case and 2011-000162 for the Environmental Surcharge case.

Any MHC member can be more engaged in this issue. Just let us know by an e-mail or phone call.

Thanks to Kentucky Resources Council!

MHC gives special thanks to Tom Fitzgerald and the Kentucky Resources Council for representing MHC in these cases before the Public Services Commission. Learn about this non-profit's valuable work by going to www.kyrc.org.



Sheppard Square HOPE VI Redevelopment

On May 23, 2011, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded the Louisville Metro Housing Authority (LMHA) a \$22 million dollar grant for the redevelopment of Sheppard Square under the HOPE VI program, which funds demolition of "severely distressed" public housing sites and reconstruction of new, mixed-income communities on those sites.

Sheppard Square, located in Smoketown just south of Broadway, was built in 1941. The site now consists of 326 housing units - 170 2-bedroom, 132 3-bedroom, and 24 4-bedroom. LMHA plans to replace these units with a combination of 310 on-site subsidized and market rate homes and 144 off-site subsidized units. This fulfills the HOPE VI requirement to provide "one-for-one" replacement units for demolished public housing. On the Sheppard Square site, LMHA plans to construct will be 225 public housing rental units, 3 subsidized rental units, 59 market-rate rental units, and 23 market-rate homeownership units. However, the redevelopment will include 27 1-bedroom units in lieu of 2-bedroom units, further reducing our supply of affordable housing that can serve families.

Sheppard Square residents will be relocated to new housing beginning in September 2011, with everyone moved by September 2012. Residents are given three options for relocation: move to another public housing development, move to a scattered-site public housing unit, or use a Section 8 voucher. All residents will be offered relocation assistance and supportive case management for up to 5 years.

While this project is a remarkable investment in a historic urban neighborhood, it is not without controversy- the most immediate being the effects forced relocation could have on current Sheppard Square residents. Research has shown that HOPE VI relocation negatively impacts relocatees health and their access to and use of supportive social networks. Also, the new Sheppard Square public housing units will have much stricter income and entry requirements. If the Clarksdale/Liberty Green project is any indicator, Sheppard Square residents will not return. A 2011 evaluation of the Clarksdale HOPE VI project found that only 6.2% of relocated households returned to Liberty Green.

The Sheppard Square HOPE VI redevelopment also represents a significant diversion of affordable housing resources. According to LMHA, in February 2011 there were 24,934 households on LMHA waiting lists. In this time of great need, the HOPE VI project will limit our supply of subsidized affordable housing - not just by tearing down 326 units. LMHA has to offer relocatees three choices for replacement units. Because of this, unoccupied public housing units and Section 8 vouchers that could help other families in need are being unused until relocation is complete.

Louisville Metro Seeks Input to Improve the LIHEAP Process

The Louisville Metro Department of Community Services and Revitalization (Community Services) invited Community Ministries, Winter Help and advocates to help review the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) process to see how we can work together to be even more customer-friendly this year. LIHEAP helps low-income households pay their utility bill. One component of the program is called "subsidy" because you do not have to be behind in your payment to get help; income eligibility is the main criteria for getting assistance. It is available in November. A second component is "crisis" and that helps people who are late in payment- it is a very limited amount of funding and is not available until January.

Part of Mayor Fischer's approach is to create a customer-service oriented and innovative government. This will be the first full LIHEAP round under the new administration. Community Services has requested ideas that would make LIHEAP fully utilized and provide better access. MHC was part of this group and we will advocate for changes on the state and federal level. We will be asking you help with advocacy as needed.

The one thing we all agreed on was to simplify the process of getting an appointment for LIHEAP. Last year people had to go to a site just to get an appointment. Then they had to come back for the appointment. Whether through technology and/or more places that can set up appointments, we all wanted to offer alternatives to two trips.

MHC appreciates that the Department took on this review and started this early enough to make changes.

Keep an eye on <http://www.louisvilleky.gov/CAP/LIHEAP.htm> to check for updates on the LIHEAP program.

Additionally, the \$167,020,025 Sheppard Square redevelopment has been allocated \$10 million in CDBG funds, \$3.78 million in federal HOME funds, and 5% of LMHA Section 8 funds- moneys that could support other affordable housing efforts.

The Sheppard Square HOPE VI redevelopment is underway. As concerned citizens, we need to ensure that the rights of Sheppard Square residents are respected, that residents are well informed, that the services provided to them are effective. We need to advocate for less stringent return criteria so we can be sure that this significant investment of community resources will serve the most fragile families in need that it can. If you are interested in attending Sheppard Square public meetings, they are scheduled to be held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month from 5:30-7:00 at Meyzeek Middle School.

Schedule of Events

August 16- Louisville Vacant Properties Campaign. Presbyterian Community Center, 701 S. Hancock Street, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

September 13- Fair Housing Coalition Meeting. New Directions, 1000 E. Liberty Street, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.

August 13- People- Not Poisons Environmental Justice Fair. The Carl Braden Memorial Center and Rubbertown Emergency Action (REACT) are hosting this fair, which will provide information about the many environmental causes of illness in our community. Features advocate for human rights advocate Michele Roberts. For more information, contact REACT at rubbertownstinks@gmail.com. Chickasaw Park, 1:00 - 5:30 p.m.

August 13- New Directions ReciproCITY Tour of Urban Gardens. A bus tour of community gardens and community-minded urban gardening projects in Louisville, featuring presentations by gardeners. For more information or to RSVP (required to attend), contact Lydia Comer at 719.7169 or lydiac@ndhc.org. Meet at New Directions, 1000 E. Liberty Street, 4:00.- 8:45 p.m.

August 13- Open House for Women Veterans. Information provided about health and benefits by representatives from Veterans Health Administration, Veterans Benefits Administration, Vet Center, Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs and other agencies. For more information, contact Rhonda Smith at 287-6898 or Rhonda.Smith2@va.gov. Robley Rex VA Medical Center, 800 Zorn Avenue, 12:00 - 4:00 p.m.

August 16, 23, & 30- Fifth Third Bank Free Financial Empowerment Training Workshops. For more information, contact Adam Hall at Adam.Hall@53.com or 562-5584. Trinity Family Life Center, 3811 Hale Street, 6:00 p.m.

August 22- New Directions Housing Corporation Neighborhood Roundtable. Will include updates about the Vacant and Abandoned Properties Summit from the IPL, Property Report Updates, and special guest Mary McGuire from IPL's new Vacant and Abandoned Properties Commission. For more information or to RSVP, contact Lydia Comer at 719.7169 or lydiac@ndhc.org. New Directions, 1000 E. Liberty Street, dinner at 5:30 p.m., meeting at 6:00 p.m.

August 24- Coalition for the Advancement of Regional Transportation (CART) Annual Meeting. Community Room, Highlands Shelby Park Library, Mid-City Mall, 1250 Bardstown Road, 6:30 p.m.

August 28- Dedication of Habitat for Humanity of Metro Louisville's New Headquarters. For more information, call 637-6265. 1620 Bank Street, 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.

September 10- Louisville Urban League "Doing the Right Thing" Youth Expo. A showcase of youth services designed to address youth achievement and promote Louisville's "college going culture.". For more information, contact Kevin Fields at kfields@lul.org or 585-4622. Fourth Street Live, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

September 13- Spalding University School of Social Work Information Session. Learn about Spalding's Bachelor's and Master's degree programs in social work. Additional sessions on: October 11, November 8, & December 13. For more information, contact Susan Grace at sgrace@spalding.edu or 588-7183. 2nd floor student lounge, Mansion East, Spalding University, Library Lane and Breckinridge Street, 5:00 - 6:00 p.m.

September 18- Dare to Care Hunger Walk. A fundraising event that supports Dare to Care Food Bank and the World Food Program. For more information or to register, go to <http://www.thehungerwalk.org>. Waterfront Park Festival Plaza, 12:30 - 4:30 p.m.

September 19-21- Coalition for the Homeless Louisville RxHomes Campaign "Registry." Volunteers needed to interview homeless people. These interviews will be used to identify those in greatest need and access housing to get them off the streets. To volunteer or for more information, contact Natalie Harris at or 636-9550 or nharris@louhomeless.org. Meet at Wayside Christian Mission's Hotel Louisville, 120 W. Broadway. Volunteer training, Sept. 18, 3:00-5:00 p.m., interviews, 4:00 - 6:00 a.m.

September 24- Moving Planet, Moving Louisville Beyond Fossil Fuels. A rally outside the Mayor's office to support reducing Louisville's transportation carbon footprint. For more information, contact Drew Foley at bdrewf@yahoo.com or 644-0659. 527 W. Jefferson Street, 4:00 - 5:30 p.m.

October 4- Louisville Metro TRIAD Senior Day Out. An event that allows seniors to gather information on services, access health screenings. Lunch (if registered in advance), music and dancing, door prizes, and Bingo! Will be offered. Call 574-5092 for additional information or visit www.louisvilleky.gov/HumanServices/OfficeforAging-DisabledCitizens for a registration form. Kentucky International Convention Center, 8:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

October 12-13- Kentucky Housing Corporation 2011 Kentucky Affordable Housing Conference. This year's theme is "Housing is the Key." Judge Jeff Choate is featured as keynote speaker. For more information, go to <http://www.kyhousing.org/conference/kahc2011.aspx> Lexington Convention Center.

November 10- 5th Annual Anne Braden Memorial Lecture. Features Dr. Michelle Alexander (author of *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*) The event is free & open to the public. For more information, contact Amber Duke at agduke01@louisville.edu or 852-6142. Speed Art Museum Auditorium, doors open at 5:30 p.m.



Help Strengthen the United Voice for Fair and Affordable Housing- Join MHC or Renew Your Membership Today!

As we look at the cuts to federal, state and local budgets, MHC asks for your support, both financially and in helping MHC increase membership. Our need is two-fold: MHC needs to replace funds that have been decreased; but equally important is that MHC wants to make our voice stronger as the same budget cuts affect policy in providing fair and affordable housing for our most vulnerable populations.

As an MHC Member you:

- **Support** the creation of long-term solutions to our community's affordable housing crisis.
- **Join** the diverse coalition of over 300 individual and organizational members which make up our far-reaching base.
- **Receive** our monthly newsletter and published reports on timely housing issues that touch the Metro Louisville region and beyond.
- **Advertise** your events in our printed and electronic newsletters.
- **Most important of all**, you will have your voice heard at this historic and critical time!

For membership questions, please call the office at (502) 584-6858 and speak with Curtis Stauffer.
To make an online donation, visit us on the web at www.metropolitanhousing.org.



Metropolitan
Housing
Coalition

P.O. Box 4533
Louisville, KY 40204-4533
Phone (502) 584-6858
Fax (502) 452-6718
www.MetropolitanHousing.org

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