

JOE LOMBARDO  
Governor

Dr. KRISTOPHER SANCHEZ  
Director

STATE OF NEVADA



COMMISSION MEMBERS  
Gabriela Wyett, *Chair*  
Demetrius Ware, *Vice Chair*  
Nic Steele, *Member*  
Juanny Romero, *Member*  
Anabel Navarro, *Member*  
Jon Lau, *Member*  
Nina Gallagher, *Member*

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY  
NEVADA COMMISSION ON MINORITY AFFAIRS

*The central advisory body advocating for and providing a voice to Nevada's minority community."*

**MEETING MINUTES**

Name of the Agency: Nevada Commission on Minority Affairs

Date and Time of the Meeting: March 14th, 2024, at 9:30am

Location: Hybrid meeting – Nevada State Business Center and remote technology system

**1. OPENING**

A. Call to order & Roll call

The meetings call to order at 9:31am by Chairwomen Gabriela Wyett

**Commission Members in Attendance:** Gabriela Wyett, Demetrius Ware, Nic Steele, Juanny Romero, Anabel Navarro, Jon Lau.

**Commission Members Absent:** Nina Gallagher

**Guest Speakers In Attendance:** Rhonda Tolbert, Lisa Foster, Kathy Freeman, Katie Coleman, Nia Girma, Dagny Stapleton.

**Department Leadership & Staff in Attendance:**

Marcel Schaerer, Deputy Director, Department of Business and Industry, Michael Detmer, Deputy Attorney General, Attorney General's Office, Angie Rojas, Management Analyst Commission on Minority Affairs.

**Members of the Public Present:**

Gilda Espinoza, Ashley Garza, Yolanda Perez, Elijah Wyett, Julio Jimenez, Isabela Wyett, Michelle Ayala, Dan Holland, Wayne Turner, Jake Mathews, Elyse Monroy, Sabrina Schnur, Ezekiel Martin, Erika Hernandez, E. Marie Hughes, Lizette Guillen, Norma Kea,

- B. Silent Meditation & Pledge of Allegiance, conducted by Chair Wyett
- C. Land Acknowledgements, conducted by Chair Wyett

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT (1<sup>st</sup> Period)**

None

**3. COMMISSION BUSINESS**

- 1) Approval of February 8th, 2024, meeting minutes  
Commissioner Ware moved to approved, Commissioner Navarro seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

**4. NCMA ACADEMY SERIES – GUIDE TO HOMEOWNERSHIP (FOR DISCUSSION ONLY)**

- A. Introduction of roundtable discussion topics, and guest speakers  
Vice Chair Ware did a quick intro and welcoming to guest speakers
- B. Neighborhood Housing Services of Southern Nevada-  
Kathy Freeman, the Chief Operating Officer for Neighborhood Housing Services in Southern Nevada, discusses the comprehensive services provided by her organization, ranging from homebuyer education to foreclosure assistance and property management. She highlights the key personnel in their homeownership team and their collaboration with community partners. Kathy's presentation focuses on the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on credit repair processes, emphasizing its role in analyzing credit reports and offering customized solutions. She underscores the importance of utilizing free tools like annualcreditreport.com and cautions against subscription-based services. Kathy discusses the benefits of AI-driven credit repair, its potential for fast and accurate analysis, and the importance of asking tailored questions to maximize its effectiveness. Furthermore, she addresses concerns about AI technology, particularly its accessibility for minority and unbanked populations, and outlines efforts to bridge the digital divide through initiatives like computer literacy classes for seniors.
- C. Commissioners had the opportunity to ask questions

During the meeting, the following question was raised by Chair Wyatt regarding the utilization of AI technology for credit repair, particularly in relation to different age demographics: "What kind of outreach have you done to try to target these communities?" "Additionally, do you have any outreach initiatives that cater to Spanish-speaking individuals?" It was addressed that the organization is currently in the early stages of outreach efforts. Active involvement within the community has been emphasized, with ongoing events being organized to engage with stakeholders.

D. American Pacific Mortgage

Lisa Foster, a branch manager with American Pacific, with over 35 years of experience, discusses their dedication to advancing homeownership, particularly for minority and low to moderate-income individuals. They emphasize the importance of preparing individuals for the home buying process, highlighting the significance of credit, savings, and stable employment history. The manager underscores the need for proactive financial management and dispels myths surrounding homeownership qualifications. Moreover, they express concern about declining black homeownership rates and stress the importance of community outreach to promote homeownership as a means of building generational wealth. They outline the mortgage application process, emphasizing the importance of initial underwriting to ensure financial security before house hunting. Overall, their presentation underscores the importance of informed financial decision-making and community engagement in achieving homeownership goals.

E. Commissioner Steele thanked Lisa Foster for their in depth presentation. The discussion started with a question from Commissioner Steele where he stated the following "Are prices artificially deflated or inflated for Hispanic and black homebuyers, and how can this be addressed?"

F. Nevada Housing Division

Ronda Dilbert from the Nevada Housing Division presented information about the Home as Possible program during the meeting at NSBC Tahoe Room. The program provides down payment assistance to homebuyers, aiming to increase awareness through outreach and education efforts. Various programs under Home as Possible were discussed, including those targeting teachers and first-time homebuyers. Ronda explained the structure of the assistance, highlighting its forgivable nature and potential for layering with other programs.

- G. Commissioners and attendees engaged in a discussion about program details, eligibility criteria, and lender cooperation, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of available homeownership opportunities.
- H. Nevada Housing Division  
Jeneeah M. Girma, expressed gratitude to the commission for their past involvement in housing initiatives, particularly their encouragement in enhancing minority efforts. She highlighted the increase in African American homeownership from 8% to 12% due to intensified outreach efforts and collaboration with lenders and nonprofits. Concern was raised about the limited representation of minorities in lending and real estate careers, hindering further progress in minority homeownership. Derma introduced the Make Homes Possible coalition, aimed at promoting African American homeownership and increasing it by 25,000 over the next 10 years. She explained the coalition's collaborative approach, offering comprehensive support from credit counseling to home purchase preparation. Initiatives, such as educational workshops and monthly calls, aimed at demystifying the home buying process, were discussed. Plans to expand outreach efforts to involve additional agencies and community figures beyond lending fields were mentioned.
- I. During the presentation, commissioner Steel raised several inquiries regarding the efforts to enhance African American homeownership. One attendee questioned the limited representation of African Americans in lending and real estate careers, suggesting it might impede progress in minority homeownership. Another inquiry pertained to the loan caps, particularly for the teachers' program. Jeneeah M. Girma clarified that loan caps are determined based on income guidelines and eligibility criteria. Additionally, concerns were expressed about potential lender hesitancy to accept second mortgages. Girma explained that the program collaborates with approved lenders who are committed to finding suitable solutions for clients. These discussions highlighted the importance of addressing barriers to homeownership and increasing awareness of available resources and programs.
- J. Rural Housing  
Katie Coleman, the representative from Nevada Rural Housing, provided an overview of their agency's history and jurisdictional structure. They highlighted their role in administering homeownership programs and other initiatives, including rental assistance and home repair programs. Additionally, they discussed their involvement in developing and managing affordable housing developments across rural areas of the state. The focus then shifted to their homeownership programs, which were compared to

those offered by the Nevada Housing Division. Emphasis was placed on the importance of raising awareness about these programs to ensure they are not "the best-kept secret." Coleman expressed a commitment to collaborating with other agencies to increase public awareness. Finally, a high-level overview of the agency's homeownership programs, particularly the "Home at Last" flagship program, was provided, emphasizing similarities with other state programs and the process for prospective homebuyers.

K. Community Land Trust from Clark County

Debbie Stapleton, the Community Development Administrator for Clark County, outlined the Community Interest Initiative, focusing on affordable housing. The county has invested nearly \$200 million in affordable housing, primarily in multi-family units. They are establishing a community land trust to facilitate homeownership for low to moderate-income individuals, with plans for 240 homes. Assistance will be provided for down payments and closing costs. Stapleton emphasized outreach efforts to minority communities for equitable access. She welcomed collaboration and engagement to raise awareness about the program. During the discussion, questions were raised about monthly mortgage payments and challenges faced by younger generations in embracing homeownership, with participants acknowledging generational differences.

L. Round table with all guests

Chair Wyatt thanked the guests for their presentation and guided the conversation towards the roundtable. Before starting the roundtable, Katie discusses the remaining \$1 million in funding available for the Home at Last \$25,000 Down Payment Assistance Program until the end of the year. They emphasize the urgency to utilize these funds and encourage interested individuals to take advantage of the program. The roundtable discussion started with a question from Commissioner Navarro. Commissioner Navarro asks for a calculator to determine the monthly payment for someone purchasing a house under the program being discussed. The response indicates that they don't have a calculator on hand but suggests that this calculation would typically be done with a lender during the home buying process.

M. Commissioner Navarro asked about the perception among millennials regarding homeownership, highlighting concerns about affordability and whether monthly payments would exceed a significant portion of their income. Guest acknowledged the generational shift in attitudes towards homeownership, particularly among younger demographics, who may view it as anchoring them in one place. They suggested that the issue of affordability

and monthly payments could be addressed through various housing programs and support mechanisms.

## **5. PUBLIC COMMENT (2<sup>nd</sup> Period)**

- A. Sworn Volunteer Gilda Espinoza provided an update on Calendar events, underscoring their ongoing significance and the importance of commissioners' community outreach efforts to increase exposure.
- B. Attendee from US bank addressed comment regarding Down Payment Assistance (DPA) programs available and the idea of consolidating them into a centralized resource, similar to what has been done on a national level. The suggestion was to create a one-stop shop where housing professionals could easily access information about available DPA programs. It was noted that while such platforms exist at the national level primarily for housing professionals, there's an opportunity to make a similar resource accessible to the public at the state level in Nevada.
- C. Attendees expressed excitement about the progress in affordable housing initiatives, reflecting on their experience dating back to 1969. They recalled facing resistance while educating realtors and lenders about down payment assistance programs but emphasized the importance of such collaboration in serving the community effectively. The speaker commended the current trend of municipalities working with realtors and lenders to educate the public on housing programs, noting that it should have happened years ago.

## **6. NEXT MEETING**

April 10th, 2024

## **7. ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Ware moved to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Steele seconded. The motion was carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 11:27am.