

**Human Rights City Alliance General Meeting-Monday May 16**  
**MEETING NOTES**

- **All are welcome to our next general meeting- IN PERSON Thursday June 23, 6:00-8:00 PM @**  
Human Services Building 1 Smithfield St. Downtown Pittsburgh, Homestead Grays Room

**1) Following up visit by Housing Rights Leader:** We helped host visit by global housing expert, former [UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Right to Adequate Housing](#), Leilani Farha to meet with city officials, housing advocates, students and other residents. We compiled [this report on the visit](#), highlighting insights and recommendations from our discussions with Ms. Farha, who now leads global housing rights organization, [The Shift](#). We will be working with other community partners to follow up on 2 recommended actions. *If you're interested in being part of either effort, please contact us at [pghrights@riseup.net](mailto:pghrights@riseup.net).*

- **Developing a Human-Rights based Housing Strategy:** Although recognizing the need to provide more affordable housing and protect existing affordable housing, the city has no plan for doing this. Instead, developers are able to propose their visions for the city while we struggle to win back some space to ensure that all Pittsburgh residents can remain at home here. There are models we can learn from and we'll put forward a draft housing strategy with human rights at the forefront.
- **Developing creative strategy for using the law to challenge systemic discrimination in housing:** We'll be working with friends at Pitt's newly created Center for Civil Rights and Racial Justice to explore possible avenues for following up the incontrovertible evidence that the City's housing policies have been disproportionately denying Black residents their human right to housing.

**2) Indigenous Peoples Day-Pittsburgh:** We've been invited to join a growing network of folks working to advance Indigenous Peoples Day in Pittsburgh. To find out how you can get involved, please contact: Benjamin ([benjaminbordwell@gmail.com](mailto:benjaminbordwell@gmail.com)) or Symone Saul [symonemsaul@gmail.com](mailto:symonemsaul@gmail.com).

**3) Annual Human Rights Cookout-Sunday, August 28** To join the team of social event planners with this fun social activity that helps connect us with groups around the community, contact us at: [pghrights@riseup.net](mailto:pghrights@riseup.net)

4) **Bringing Human Rights into Mayor Gainey's Transition Report:** Last week Mayor Gainey's administration issued its much-anticipated [Transition Report 2022](#) (View [Press conference](#)). The report outlines a set of recommendations emerging from a team of community leaders and experts around economic development, health, education, infrastructure, and climate change. The committee included people who have been partners and supporters of our work to advance human rights in Pittsburgh and there are many excellent recommendations in the [Transition Report](#), but like many such documents, it is [limited](#). We have a chance to remind our City's leaders of our human rights obligations and of the expectations residents have for the direction our city takes.

**Join volunteers** and help us review of the Transition Report and develop a response to the Gainey Administration and others that reinforces priorities, benchmarks, and timelines that center people, community, and our natural habitat in city policies. **Tuesday Jun 7, 2022 03:30 PM EDT** [Register here](#)  
After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. \*\*For more information contact us at: [pghrights@riseup.net](mailto:pghrights@riseup.net)

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### Human Rights City News

**Councilpersons Gross, Kail-Smith introduce legislation to back housing cooperatives** --See this [letter of support from folks in our Human Rights City network](#). When our elected officials take action to support initiatives that reinforce human rights aims, we need to make sure they hear from us. Three folks who are active in our human rights city networks used this opening to offer support and to share some of the excellent resources provided by Leilani Farha during her visit to Pittsburgh. We also reminded all members of council of their responsibilities to protect human rights, referencing the messages Farha conveyed during her visit.

### **Upcoming activities/events:**

- *Oakland neighbors have asked us to help them ensure that community's vision for the neighborhood is enacted in the City's plans with developer, Walnut Capital. Also, there are concerns that resident voices are being neglected in the process through which the development plans for this cite have unfolded since the inauspicious start under the Peduto administration. Help Oakland residents defend their neighborhood and promote inclusive, equitable zoning in Oakland. [Public hearing on Wednesday May 25 at 1:30PM](#). ([Click here to sign up to speak on this legislation](#)) \*Background resources: [OPDC Timeline Proposed Oakland Public Realm District](#) (Now known as Urban Center Mixed Use) [OPDC Overview of Zoning Proposal](#)*
- **[Launch of The Shift Directives on the Financialization of Housing. \(Issued by Leilani Farha, former UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Right to Housing\) Thursday June 2 11:15-12:30PM EDT](#)** (*Push film screening precedes launch at 9:30AM*)  
*Large, institutional investors or 'corporate landlords' have a growing footprint in our cities. Investment firms seek to purchase multiple housing units and then rent them out to make a profit. They view houses not as homes, but as money-making machines—lucrative investments*

*instead of a human right. Corporate landlords are concentrated in the world's big cities – from Paris to Berlin, Madrid, New York, Buenos Aires, Cape Town, and Seoul. Approximately 1.8 billion people are homeless or live in grossly inadequate housing, often without access to basic services like water, sanitation, and electricity. Meanwhile, by the end of 2020, the value of residential real estate had surged to an estimated US\$258.5 trillion — up \$90 trillion from 2016. Housing has become by far the largest asset class on earth, worth three times more than global GDP and more than 20 times all the gold ever mined. What can be done to help defend the right to housing around the world? **Join online with a live audience gathering at the European Parliament in Brussels on Thursday June 2nd for the launch of The Shift Directives on the financialization of housing. The Shift Directives are the first-ever comprehensive framework providing governments and investors with guidance to effectively address the financialization of housing in accordance with human rights law.***

*Prior to the launch, we will be **screening [the documentary PUSH](#)**. The award-winning documentary from director Fredrik Gertten sheds light on the global phenomenon of the commodification of housing and follows the real-life stories of those living through the housing crisis all over the world.*

**[Register here for in-person or online attendance](#)**

Background: [Who \(really\) owns your city? How corporate landlords are using homes to make money](#) Greens European Parliament

- **Indigenous Peoples Day Pittsburgh WEBINAR June 21 –Details coming soon!**

**Volunteers are needed** to support the 25<sup>th</sup> annual [Racial Justice Summit](#) on January 21, 2023. This annual event has gathered hundreds of residents working to better understand the causes of racial inequities and to build networks and campaigns to transform our city. To find out more, contact: [pitracialjustice@gmail.com](mailto:pitracialjustice@gmail.com)