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HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
Thursday, November 13, 2014
Meeting Room
Downtown Library
270 Forest Avenue
7:00 PM
REGULAR MEETING

ROLL CALL:

Commissioners Present: Alhassani, Bacchetti, Chen, Morin, O’Nan, Stone
Absent: Savage

Staff: Minka van der Zwaag, Mary Constantino,

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Morin made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 9, 2014 meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Chen. AYES: Unanimous. Abstain: Alhassani and Bacchetti

AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, and DELETIONS:

Remove Agenda Item #4

BUSINESS

- 1. Discussion regarding priorities for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) 2015-2020 Consolidated Plan – Goals and Objectives – Consuelo Hernandez/ Matt Weintraub, Planning and Community Environment Department (PCE)**

Chair O’Nan stated that one of the responsibilities of the Human Relations Commission (HRC) is to recommend funding allocations for CDBG. Senior Planner Consuelo Hernandez stated that it is a good opportunity to introduce Matt Weintraub, the new CDBG Coordinator and also update the HRC on the adoption of the new 5-year Strategic Plan and provide what has been accomplished over the past five years. Ms. Hernandez stated that the City receives the CDBG funding from the federal government of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) directly, and in order to receive the funding, the City must prepare a 5-year Strategic Plan also known as a Consolidated Plan. The plan addresses the priorities and objectives that the City hopes to complete over a 5-year period. Ms.

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Hernandez explained that PCE uses the public's help through a needs assessment survey to identify the priorities and these include housing, economic and general community development. The Strategic Plan is a document that helps cities and counties make decisions on how to use their investment of CDBG dollars. Every year it is a struggle on which agencies to fund and this is a perfect opportunity to think of the goals and objectives that will facilitate the selection of grantees come budget time. Ms. Hernandez stated that she would also like to share the current low moderate income limits since the beneficiaries of the program are required to be of low to moderate income. The threshold for individuals is \$49,950 annually and for a family of four it is less than \$71,390 annually. The beneficiaries must meet these threshold income limits in order to receive CDBG funds.

PCE is currently in the planning process working on determining the needs. PCE uses information gathered from the needs assessment survey, contacts with nonprofits and one-on-one consultations with the public to set priorities and identify resources and all of the data informs the establishment of the goals. The draft Strategic Plan will then be introduced to the HRC in February showing the goals and objectives based on the information collected. It is important to focus on the goals, objectively and accurately, so the programs that are funded match the goals.

The effort is in conjunction with the county and the cities that don't receive money from HUD directly. The City is collaborating with the different partners in the county. There are five different categories to allocate our resources of CDBG. The most important is the Public Service dollars. There is a 15% cap on the services and the funding is similar to HSRAP.

Housing Category: The program allocates funding for homeowner rehabilitation but it is difficult for Palo Alto to qualify due to the income restrictions, but the program was active in the 1980's. The City also participates in the rehabilitation of multi-family housing. The City funded the Community Working Group's Alma Gardens project where the city replaced the windows, roof, exterior painting and interior improvements that were needed.

Chair O'Nan informed Ms. Hernandez that some of the owners who are moderate to low income purchased below market rate (BMR) units 20 or more years ago and their houses need infrastructure upgrades. Are they illegible for this program? Ms. Hernandez stated that under the existing BMR program there is money allocated for the emergency rehabilitation. Tim Wong is the Housing Coordinator who is responsible for program. Under CDBG an individual cannot be funded, a program needs to be funded. However, you can outsource to an agency that can run the plan or you can set up a program.

Public Facilities and Improvements is also difficult to qualify in Palo Alto because the services that are provided need to be directed toward programs that 70% of the individuals have low to moderate income levels. Avenidas was funded for their services on their HVAC project because seniors have a special threshold that does not require them to be low to moderate income.

Economic Development. This is technical assistance to businesses and this is how CDBG was able to fund the Pilot Microenterprise Program and through job training funds is how CDBG was able to fund Downtown Streets Team.

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Ms. Hernandez stated that the City has received over \$3,000,000 for the last five years. The allocation from federal government is decreasing even though our programs continue to generate income every year. For FY2015 the City's allocation was \$433,000, and we are still waiting to see what funding will be received for FY2016 but it is anticipated that there will be a decrease.

Chair O'Nan asked why the downward trend? Is it because the federal government is cutting back or because our community is considered affluent? Ms. Hernandez replied that actually it is both. There has been a reduction in overall CDBG appropriations and instead of HUD using the census data where your allocations changes every 10 years, it is using the American Community Survey which changes every two years. Instead of seeing a dramatic drop in funding there is now a small decline every two years. In FY2013 there was a huge reduction and the City had to re-strategize how it spent the funds by shifting the fair housing services under administration to reduce the impact on other social service providers.

Ms. Hernandez provided a breakdown on the different funding categories; \$1.2 million spent on affordable housing and \$1.8 million on economic development. The City has met the 15% funding restriction on Public Services. When cities have allocated funding over the 15%, the federal government can request to city to repay the funds back.

Current 2010-2015 Goals Consolidated Plan:

- Assist in the creation and preservation of affordable housing lower-income and special needs households
- Support activities to end homelessness
- Support activities that provide basic services, eliminate blight, and/or strengthen Neighborhoods
- Promote fair housing choice
- Expand economic opportunity for low-income households
- Promote environmental sustainability

Ms. Hernandez explained that the goals and objectives are a little misleading on the current Strategic Plan so staff wants to make sure the data is properly captured on the new Strategic Plan. In February when the HRC reviews the applications for funding, they can see what the agencies are applying for and how the goals line up with the Strategic Plan goals and objectives.

Chair O'Nan stated that some agencies would like to start trainings for people with disabilities. Would that be something that would fall under CDBG funding? Ms. Hernandez stated that the Silicon Valley Independent Living Center is currently funded by CDBG, and there was a high priority for funding with people with disabilities but it was not included as a goal or objective so the results are not included in the two-year goal. The City needs to demonstrate to HUD that the funds were used for the program.

Chair O'Nan asked how to connect an agency, such as Abilities United, to receive CDBG funds for job training? Ms. Hernandez stated that the Notice of Funding will be available later in November and is a perfect opportunity for the agencies to apply for the funds. If the HRC would like the need to be identified as a goal the Strategic Plan that opportunity will be provided to them in February.

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Staff is currently reviewing the needs assessment and analyses of our current data to see if it is a priority.

PCE will be asking for two volunteers to be included in the selection committee in January, and it is the Department's top priority to make sure the goals and objectives are clear. Chair O'Nan stated that it would be helpful to have the federally mandated constraints clear on the onset of the review. Chair O'Nan explained that she served on the last committee, and she did not understand why the Magical Bridge project did not qualify. Ms. Hernandez explained that there are two qualifying factors; national objective and eligible activity and since Palo Alto is a high-income area, the project could not be designated as a single national objective. Ms. Hernandez also explained there was not a concentration of eligible participants to qualify the project as an eligible activity.

Ms. Hernandez stated that the concentration is based on the census tracts. In Palo Alto there is not a geographic census area for CDBG. The funding needs to be by beneficiary since Palo Alto does not have a high concentration of low /moderate individuals.

Commissioner Chen asked about the four major areas of funding. Does the HRC have anything to say about the percentage of funding in each area? Ms. Hernandez replied that when the HRC begins reviewing the goals and objectives is when the HRC should discuss the specific needs they want to fund and the percentages for each priority.

Ms. van der Zwaag asked if PCE is going to take the county survey and puzzle out the information for Palo Alto. Ms. Hernandez stated that they would be using the Housing Element and the Park and Recreation Master Plan and any current plan that the City is working on. HUD will also supply the department with some data.

Commissioner Alhassani asked if there is a report that provides information on previous year's funding. Ms. Hernandez replied that the report is brought to the HRC in September, which is called the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER).

2. Continued discussion of the HRC report on Low Income Housing Study & Recommendations – Vice-Chair Bacchetti and Commissioner Chen

Vice Chair Bacchetti explained that he and Commissioner Chen worked on the report as a response to the 2014 goal for exploring ways for the HRC to advocate for additional affordable housing for low income, very low income, extremely low income residents (technical categories).

The data collected did not indicate that Palo Alto is the diverse and inclusive City it proclaims to be.

It seems like many Palo Altans know that because the National Citizen Survey puts Palo Alto at 278 out of 280 surveyed cities in the National Citizen Survey in regard to citizen rating of availability of forward-quality housing as good to excellent. First percentile is where the City ended up. There is an awareness of what the problems are. Vice Chair Bacchetti and Commission Chen developed a variety of statistics on income levels, low-income rental data, and incoming commute levels. Commuters cannot afford to live in Palo Alto with the negative attributes of commuting such as pollution traffic, etc. Vice Chair Bacchetti and Commission Chen presented some data on who these people are in regard to the type of work they do. They looked at rental prices and what is affordable. There is a brief discussion of Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and the question of Palo Alto's fair share of the population increase in Palo Alto and how

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the state chooses to allocate through regional agencies of which ABAG is the one Palo Alto participates in. ABAG assigns a certain number of requirements to identify sites of low or moderate housing and identifies sites but does not produce actual dwellings. There is also an issue as to whether Palo Alto accepts the 1,988 sites as its current allocation from ABAG. Palo Alto is at risk of becoming a community less and less able to live its values in diversity and inclusion and relying on a marketplace to resolve this issue and relying on an organization that does not know how to resolve the situation because the marketplace is indifferent to values. Marketing behavior is about buying and selling but not about creating low-income housing. The dilemma is what to do with this data because the City has the Comprehensive Plan, which has a Housing Element that is the main document for the Planning and Transportation Commission and is the main piece of business for the next year. This may be the place to make recommendations and share our concerns now that we have documented some of the issues that have quantitative horsepower that Palo Alto is doing too little. Some of the formal activities like ABAG can only produce sites but not dwellings. Vice Chair Bacchetti questioned how can organizations like Palo Alto Housing generate, activate and energize the community to produce some affordable housing. How can the HRC help on the grounds of our role as a moral character on what type of community we want to be and how do we get there. Right now there are more people who talk about what type of community we want to be but are not willing to act on it. There is a mismatch or gap. How can the HRC help to close the gap?

Commissioner Chen stated that assessment indicated the inflow and outflow of the job situation in Palo Alto and there are close to 90,000 jobs in Palo Alto but only 8.4 percent of the workers are Palo Alto residents. She stated that this is a serious issue. The market is driven not by human need. Perhaps a change of policy and let the business community who have offices in Palo Alto aware what is going on.

Chair O’Nan explained that the HRC should decide on what to do next. One idea is to partner with the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC) but how will we work with the Commission? Does the HRC want to come in with the report and advise them? In the past The Planning and PTC was very open and receptive with what the HRC brought them but were unable to act on the issue. The HRC will have to come up with a solution. It will be a deeper commitment of the HRC to propose an ongoing collaboration and some sort of specific solutions.

Mayor Shepherd explained that PTC advises Council. Their mission is the Comprehensive Plan. They are responsive to the projects that come into the City. The report seems to create a strategy to achieve the development of more affordable housing. Is the goal to manifest the new housing or design a new mechanism on how the City operates with their in-lieu funds? If this is a project the HRC wants to work on, the HRC needs to have a dialog with Council because otherwise the report may go nowhere.

Chair O’Nan stated that affordable housing is discussed in very aspirational terms and places are identified as potential sites but nothing happens. Does the HRC what to invest the time and energy into the project by actually manifesting the housing? Housing is a tough topic in Palo Alto but it would be refreshing to look at other communities to see how they have developed collaborating partners to develop affordable housing. Mayor Shepherd explained that the Planning Director does have the information regarding surrounding communities.

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Commissioner Alhassani indicated the more we can narrow the scope of what our goal is the easier to take action. If the HRC's goal is to make people aware, there may be a forum where it can have civic engagement and the public can ask questions. What the HRC wants to specifically do and how does it fit into the puzzle. Mayor Shepherd stated asking questions during the Comprehensive Plan period would be the right way.

Vice Chair Bacchetti asked what happens to the report with the Comprehensive Plan in place which is supposed to guide the City for some time. How do we get some of these facts and aspirations into the plan? The HRC does not just want to identify sites but create a place for people to live so it has the civic action character to the plan. How do we make it more of a significant part of the Comprehensive Plan that they will take input from the HRC?

Chair O'Nan stated that politically affordable housing is a charged, long-term issue. It may be years before the City realizes what goals were set. In 5-years from now the City may be in a different place. What type of role would the HRC like to develop and what type of knowledge that it learned from the Learning Series will be infused in the process. Chair O'Nan asked Commissioner Alhassani how the Comprehensive Plan updates are being done with the community engagement.

Commissioner Alhassani explained that there have been numerous "Our Palo Alto" events. Now that the Comprehensive Plan is being reviewed, the meetings are monthly. The City is obligated to do the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) but the City Planners need to figure out how they will they get the public input.

Mayor Shepherd explained that the EIR is something that needs to be done after Council has decided on the influences they want on the current Comprehensive Plan. The EIR goes through eight different categories; such as historical, Native American, and traffic. After Council prepares the draft report they will go through the process of the impact. It is getting the influences with the scenarios. Fast growth, slow growth or do nothing. They are bringing it back on December 8. Staff will put the information in the book and that is when the HRC can see if book includes the interest you want with housing. Then it goes into the EIR which is for the entire city. The EIR Report has to be certified and then the state will recognize the report. As soon as the scenarios are entered, the EIR will take 1.5 years to complete.

Ms. van der Zwaag stated that it is important to prep the visiting staff from other departments to let them know that these are the questions the HRC want answered or the key areas discussed. That would help PCE find the correct staff member. Chair O'Nan explained that the next step would be to work with staff and form the questions. Mayor Shepherd stated that Vice Chair Bacchetti and Commissioner Chen could meet with Planning Director, Hilary Gitelman or another option would have the Planning Director speak directly at the HRC meeting.

3. Review Workplan Items – Chair O'Nan

Commissioner Chen explained that she has not heard anything from the Palo Alto Chinese community regarding the draft version of the report from the Palo Alto Chinese Parents Club. Ms. van der Zwaag stated that she received a draft version of the report, and she is working with staff in the City Manager's office.

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Chair O’Nan reported that she is planning the Senior Summit and will invite all of the local service providers who work with the senior population. The goal is to talk about what the most important needs facing seniors, discuss the HRC needs assessment and talk about whether there are some collaborative solutions that agencies can come up on their own. The goal is to identify some items that the HRC can go back to the county and ask to help carry. It will be really great to have everyone in a room together to explore the issues. Service providers do have relationships but are a little ad hoc and having a comprehensive summit could be really helpful. The HRC can identify and quantify some solutions that our seniors face which will tie in with other work plan items which are to go to Joe Simitian and receive county funding.

Commissioner Alhassani explained that he and Commissioner Stone meet recently trying to guarantee permanent housing for veterans in Palo Alto. They met with Community Technology Alliance (CTA) which is a HSRAP funded agency. They are the HMIS database for over 100 organizations in the Santa Clara County and these organizations do a variety of services including helping the homeless. When a homeless individual checks in to the shelter, the information taken goes into a data base. They met Michelle Ogborn who gave them a great dashboard which included last year’s homeless veterans’ data information. She explained the 6-step process when a veteran arrives at an organization they have to consent and take a survey which is inputted into database. Then the coordinated care project assists and assesses the individual so they get pointed in the right direction. Then the individual is appointed a case manager who finds them housing.

Commissioners Alhassani and Stone, with Vice Chair Bacchetti’s assistance, are trying to get a list of available housing in the area. Mila from InnVision Shelter Network, also a HSRAP agency, provided a list of available shelters in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties so now they can see the inventory for the area. They are currently creating a list of experts who they want to contact. Next they are going to reach out with the Veterans Administration (VA.)

Chair O’Nan asked since it started as a federal initiative, if there is federal funding available? Commissioner Alhassani replied that there is through HUD if the city is designated as one of the 25 cities. Ms. van der Zwaag stated that through the VA there are specific targeted vouchers. Every couple of years the VA comes out with a plan to end homelessness. Ms. van der Zwaag suggested that Commissioner Alhassani speak to Jennifer Loving, Housing 1,000, who may have a better contact with the VA as well as a contact with someone at Home First.

4. Update on the possible collaboration with Santa Clara County Human Relations Commission to feature social justice movies – Commissioner Morin – Removed from Agenda

5. Debrief of the Mountain View Civility Roundtable event – Chair O’Nan

Chair O’Nan explained that last week Mountain View had a Civility Roundtable on affordable housing and Commissioners O’Nan, Alhassani, Savage, and Chen attended. The event was very interesting and this is something that the HRC is considering to have in Palo Alto. It was a well-attended event, and Chair O’Nan explained that there definitely elements that the HRC would like to borrow and some things to do differently. The HRC is planning on kicking off a Civility Roundtable early next year showing the film, *Living in Silicon Valley*, and a discussion of the disparity between the “have and have nots.”

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Commissioner Alhassani thought it was very well done and there were over 100 people in attendance. The speakers sat in a circle with a moderator with the audience looking at the backs of the speakers which was creative but did not work for the audience. They had discussion for 30 minutes which was moderated by Project Sentinel and then the audience broke into small groups with a set of questions to discuss and then each small group reported back. The idea was not to come to a resolution but to hear diverse prospective and listen what everyone had to say. Commissioner Alhassani stated that there was a great set of speakers including Supervisor Joe Simitian. The moderator did a great job meeting the objective to raise a little discourse on the issue. Chair O’Nan added that Palo Alto Sentinel said that they would help with the Palo Alto Civility Roundtable free of charge. She suggested that a semicircle would work better because it would feel more inclusive and the discussion time should be longer with such interesting speakers who had more to share. Chair O’Nan indicated that if Palo Alto partners with Palo Alto Medical Foundation or Project Sentinel, it would be a program that people would be interested in participating in. Mayor Shepherd suggested that Chair O’Nan connect with Claudia Keith from the Manager’s Office.

6. Chair O’Nan explained that the HRC has a holiday party event after the December meeting. Last year the HRC went to Il Fornaio. Chair O’Nan stated that she is leaning toward having the meeting earlier and then again going to Il Fornaio. Commissioner Stone stated that last year was nice. Staff will make reservations at Il Fornaio. The December HRC meeting is scheduled on December 11.

7. REPORTS FROM OFFICIALS:

A. Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Alhassani reported that he has confirmed two site visits. On December 12 Commissioners Alhassani, Morin and Savage are visiting Abilities United and on December 3 at 12 p.m. they are visiting InnVision Shelter Network visiting three sites.

Chair O’Nan reported that a site visit has been scheduled for Dreamcatchers on November 20 and Commissioners O’Nan, Morin and Alhassani will be participating. But she has been having difficulty scheduling a site visit with Peninsula Healthcare Connection. Chair O’Nan reminded the Commission that site visit must be finished by the end of the year.

Commissioner Stone explained that Commissioners Savage, Morin and Stone met with Police Chief Burns. Chief Burns provided a breakdown on what is going on with Police Department. The Police Academy is returning in the spring. The Police Department staffing is at its best in 12 years. Daytime residential and auto burglaries are up over the past year. The Department is getting new police cars. Citizen complaints on police officers are extremely low.

Commissioner Stone, Liaison of Project Safety Net, discussed the recent teen suicide. He stated that the community got involved and came together after the tragedy. The partnership with PSN and the school district continues.

B. Council Liaison Report:

1. Mayor Shepherd stated that on Monday night the Council is repealing the Vehicle Habitation Ordinance. The staff report is on the website if anyone is interested in commenting

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2. Mayor Shepherd explained that last week Council approved on the Consent Calendar the early packet release because there is anxiety in the community that the packet is not provided early enough and there is not enough transparency. The Council Packet will go out on Wednesday before the Monday. All Council members will have to have questions in by Wednesday and all of them must be answered by Thursday or Friday depending on the 9/80. There will be no submission of questions on Council day which will free staff in preparation for Council. Items will have to be postponed for several weeks if they are not ready for Council.
3. Mayor Shepherd explained that on Monday night there is a Study Session on Bus Rapid Transit. Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) has gone ahead without their Policy Advisory Committee to submit an EIR on bus rapid transit. They are in their comment period before they go into their measurements and there are several scenarios for Palo Alto. One scenario is to have dedicated lanes all of the way up the El Camino Real to Embarcadero which would take two lanes out of traffic. Dedicated lanes means there is a green spine up the middle of the road for buses and a bike path. VTA may need to acquire property on El Camino Real for their stations. The train (light rail) has wifi that will hold bicycles and the signals are preempted.
4. On December 1, 2014 there is a Study Session on Fiber to the Premises. Our residential parking permits are coming. The framework for the entire community and then the pilot for downtown neighborhoods.
5. Mayor Shepherd explained that the Mayor's bullying project has been meeting. The name has been transitioned to Choose Kindness. The City is amplifying what the schools are doing because the community itself has not been doing much.
6. Mayor Shepherd shared that she attended the Youth Council Meeting with Council Member Mark Berman. The Youth Council decided on their project name on Redefining Success.
7. Mayor Shepherd stated that on January 5 there will be a transition to new Council

C. Staff Liaison Report:

1. Ms. van der Zwaag explained that the Study Session with Council has been postponed. The Study Session will be scheduled early 2015
2. Ms. van der Zwaag thanked Commissioners Bacchetti and Chen for reviewing the HSRAP application. Ms. van der Zwaag stated that there has been an overwhelming comprehensive response on the Gunn campus after the student death. ACS, school psychologists, and Kara, are on campus for the administrative, kids and educators. There is a comprehensive Suicide prevention toolkit that the school follows.
4. Ms. van der Zwaag discussed that there was a parent meeting at Spangenburg Theatre on the Gunn High School campus and the theatre was 90 percent full with a good panel of speakers. The Track Watch security guards at the tracks are a deterrent. We have guards at all times at the California Avenue, East Meadow, Churchill, East Charleston train stations at all hours that Caltrain is in operation. Close to two hundred parents signed up to take QPR gate keeper

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training on suicide prevention. Ms. van der Zwaag suggested that all Commissioners should take the QPR training.

5. Ms. van der Zwaag explained that the Cold Weather Shelter at the Armory was closed and is being raised for low-income housing. The county has an alternative plan. There will be a press release of locations but they will not have the same capability as the night armory. There will be reserved spots at the existing county shelters, hotels vouchers for families and singles, and an increase of five spaces at the Opportunity Center's Hotel de Zink program. Ms. Van der Zwaag will let you know when she receives an update.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL FOR AGENDA ITEMS

1. Review Work Plan items
2. Follow-up on Affordable Housing Report with outreach to Hilary Gitelman
3. Updates on the Roundtable and Senior Summit

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9.21 p.m.