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4 **Special Meeting**
5 **HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION**
6 **Thursday, February 28, 2013**
7 Council Conference Room
8 Palo Alto Civic Center
9 250 Hamilton Avenue
10 7:00 PM
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12 **ROLL CALL: Commissioners Present:** Bacchetti, Chen, Ezran, O’Nan, Savage, Verma, **Council**
13 **Liaison: Liz Kniss Staff:** Minka van der Zwaag, Debbie Park
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15 **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None**
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17 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

18 Chair Ezran made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2012 and January 10, 2013 as
19 amended, seconded by Commissioner Verma, AYES: Unanimous, Absent: Commissioner Morin,
20

21 **AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, and DELETIONS: None**
22

23 **BUSINESS**

24 **1. Recommendation for the next funding cycle of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**
25 **Funding for Year 2014:**
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27 Steven Turner, Manager of Planning, introduced Consuelo Hernandez, CDBG Coordinator, to go
28 through the staff recommendations and various points for 2014 CDBG cycle.
29

30 Ms. Hernandez discussed the following:

- 31 • CDBG is a principally a federal program that provides grants to improve physical, economic and
- 32 social conditions primarily for persons of low and moderate income.
- 33 • As of 2/28/13, the City has not received final funding allocation from HUD for FY 2014.
- 34 • Activities funded through CDBG must meet one of the 3 national objectives:
- 35 1) They must either benefit low or very low income persons
- 36 2) Aid in prevention or elimination of slums or blight
- 37 3) Meet other community needs particularly urgent for the low income community
- 38 • All the activities being recommended for funding meet the first objective.
- 39 • Estimated funding for FY 2014 is \$566,757. For details refer to the Memorandum dated
- 40 February 28, 2013, from Consuelo Hernandez – Community Development Block Grant Fiscal
- 41 Year 2014 Funding Allocations included as Attachment A in the February Human Relations
- 42 Commission Packet.
- 43 • CDBG Program has two spending caps: one for Planning and Administration and one for Public
- 44 Services.
- 45 • Currently CDBG is on a two year funding cycle.
- 46 • 8 applications were received including one from City staff proposing a pilot program.
- 47 • The subcommittee was not able to reach consensus for funding recommendations of two
- 48 organizations; Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County & Silicon Valley Independent Living
- 49 Center. The primary concern pertained to the small grant amount of \$5,000 and the effectiveness

of the grants and the organizations. Ms. Hernandez said concerns were also raised about a secular affiliation of Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County and cases of discrimination and so the final funding recommendation for these two agencies has been deferred to HRC.

- Ms. Hernandez presented the following two options for consideration:
 1. Not funding either Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County or Silicon Valley Independent Living Center and distributing the \$10,000 proportionally amongst Palo Alto Housing Corporation and InnVision Shelter Network.
 2. To fund both agencies at the minimum grant amount of \$5,000.

Commissioner Bacchetti recused himself because of a conflict of interest.

Public Comments:

Ms. Nayana Shah, Director of Finance from Silicon Valley Independent Living Center (SVILC) discussed their services: SVILC provides wrap around and holistic services for persons with disabilities; said they are the only independent living center in the Santa Clara County; they provide housing services for people with disabilities; finding affordable housing and support services.

Ms. Debra Stevens, Development Director from Silicon Valley Independent Living provided highlights of their program: Ms. Stevens mentioned that minimally it takes about 20 hours to serve one person; last year, 341 people with disabilities were assisted with housing. Abilities United collaborates with them by providing space for workshops and appointments.

Mr. Chris Canter, Vice President of Finance, InnVision Shelter Network, said that the Opportunity Center is the only multi service center in the community for homeless and low income residents. They served about 110 residents last year and 500 unduplicated clients come through annually. Mr. Canter thanked the City for the past support.

Ms. Susan Cortopassi, Grant Writer from YWCA Silicon Valley, thanked the City for a long standing partnership and support.

Ms. Olivia Garcia, Field Ombudsman for Catholic Charities long term care Ombudsman Program said she appreciated the City's long term support and spoke about services they provide to assist residents living in long term care facilities in Palo Alto. The program was developed in response to widely reported concerns for those who are most frail and neglected.

Ms. Marylou Cristina, Representative from Catholic Charities said they rely heavily on cities and counties to support the work of the ombudsman program. City's support helps them leverage with other funding.

Ms. Ann Marquart, Executive Director of Project Sentinel said they provide multiple services to the residents of Palo Alto: fair housing, tenant landlord program, mortgage program, housing investigation, conciliate complaints, community education, education and disability calls.

Chair Ezran spoke about his concerns and issues about the funding recommendations for two organizations; Catholic Charities of Santa Clara and Silicon Valley Independent Living Center. The concern was regarding small grant amounts and the staff time required to monitor the contract. He also talked about the sectarian affiliation of Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County, issues of Church and State separation, potentially discriminatory recruitment practices with their volunteers, findings of discrimination against same sex or unmarried heterosexual couples by Catholic Charities in Illinois, and discrimination against their women employees nationwide.

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Ms. Olivia Garcia, Catholic Charities said that the public funding would go to clients regardless of religious affiliation.

Commissioner O’Nan commented that Catholic Charities program does good work for little money.

Commissioner Chen said if the program is benefiting local residents then the HRC should support them.

FUNDING RECOMMENDATION CATEGORIES:

1. Public Services

Commissioner Verma made a motion to fund Silicon Valley Independent Living Center. Seconded by Commissioner Savage. Motion Passed 4:1, Commissioner Morin absent, Commissioner Bacchetti recused.

Commissioner Chen made a motion to fund Catholic Charities, seconded by Commissioner O’Nan. Ayes: 3, Nays: 2, Commissioner Morin absent, Commissioner Bacchetti recused. Need 4 affirmative votes of the commissioners to be considered a favorable vote. This motion did not pass.

Commissioner Ezran made a motion to fund all agencies except Catholic Charities the exact amount as indicated in option 2 and remaining \$5,000 to be allocated proportionally to remaining agencies.

Commissioner O’Nan proposed an alternate motion to Commissioner Ezran’s proposal. She proposed allocating Silicon Valley Independent Living Center \$5,770 and to raise YWCA to \$10,000 and to allocate the remaining proportionally to Palo Alto Housing Corporation and InnVision Shelter Network. Seconded by Commissioner Verma. Motion Passed: Unanimous, Commissioner Morin absent, Commissioner Bacchetti recused.

Commissioner Bacchetti returned.

2. Planning and Administration

Commissioner Verma made a motion to pass Planning and Administration recommendation as is. Seconded by Commissioner Chen. Motion passed 6:0, Commissioner Morin absent.

3. Economic Development

Ms. Hernandez spoke about the City of Palo Alto’s Microenterprise funding request. Palo Alto is the first city in the bay area proposing to use CDBG funds for microenterprise assistance program. This program would help alleviate poverty and provide a new funding source for employment opportunities for at risk individuals. Staff is in design phase of the program and allowing six months to work with the Economic Development Division of the City, Chamber of Commerce and county to see if the program is viable in the city and county. Requested amount is \$35,000 to administer the program.

Commissioner Verma asked who this program is designed for since there are other charities in town. How is the City’s program different?

Ms. Hernandez replied that they are designing the program to be a grant instead of a loan. Because the population they are serving is homeless and low income who often times can’t qualify for a conventional loan, this program would provide seed money for small business opportunities Ms. Hernandez also said they are also hoping to work with a bank that is interested in this type of program.

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Commissioner O’Nan asked if this is modeled from other services.
Ms. Hernandez said that she is hoping to develop a program catered to Palo Alto. Another area they are exploring is how to incorporate youth into the program and help them develop skills.

Mr. Turner added that this is a pilot program and they are allowing six months to develop the program and if the project is too big to take on, they would re-divert the money to another CDBG project.

Chair Ezran spoke in favor of this project and commented that we are all about innovation and encouraged HRC support. Commissioner O’Nan also supported this approach.

Commissioner Bacchetti asked who is running the program and who is a typical applicant?
Ms. Hernandez said she will be running the program and that they are looking to form a board. They are hoping to develop and create leadership skills in individuals re-entering the work force.

Commissioner Verma said that she liked the idea but had concerns about anyone being able to start a business on 90K.

Chris Richardson from the Downtown Streets Team expanded on this by giving an example of how two individuals started a small business with \$500 seed money.

**Commissioner O’Nan made a motion to approve the budget. Seconded by Commissioner Verma
Motion Passed: 6:0, Commissioner Morin absent.**

**Commissioner O’Nan made a motion to recommend that the Finance Committee and City Council
approve the recommendations, Seconded by Commissioner Chen.
Motion Passed: 5:0, Commissioner Morin absent, Commissioner Bacchetti returned.**

**2. Recommendation to City Council regarding the impact of possible park closure on Buena Vista
Mobile Home Park residents:**

Commissioner Bacchetti presented a document and summarized the content. There are 3 things in the document that are important to look at carefully: First, a section on commentary about why policy guidelines are important. He said that there was a discussion about what level the HRC could participate. Second point is to make recommendations that are general. Finally, it is up to the City Council to work with staff to forward from guiding principles to implementation. The goal of the HRC is to get City Council’s attention and influence their approach by proposing guiding principals that address some of the key HRC issues that are involved in the Buena Vista Mobile Home Park situation.. Commissioner Bacchetti said that this is an action item so the task is to assess what to recommend.

Public Comment:

Mr. Herb Borock, Palo Alto resident, said he believed that this is a wrong approach. He believed that the commission should take the approach of recommending to council and suggested ways the Council can provide affordable housing; to approve projects that are wholly affordable housing and find money for those; to approve lots of market rate housing and have small percentage of that be affordable housing; to preserve existing affordable housing such as this location.

Commissioner O’Nan suggested including a background in the recommendation, for example, having the children who are displaced be allowed to continue their education in Palo Alto through high school.

198 Commissioner Chen asked whether the recommendations will be presented in person or in a report.
199 Ms. van der Zwaag responded that all background information could go in the staff report to the City
200 Council and a member of HRC would attend the City Council meeting to answer any questions.
201

202 Chair Ezran said he supports the document as is.
203

204 There was a brief discussion about the recommendation's two-part format; with the first
205 recommendation addressing the current Buena Vista situation directly and the second recommendation
206 addressing future displacement of low income individuals.
207

208 Ms. van der Zwaag commented on the timeline and said the next step in the process is in January or
209 February when the relocation specialist is meeting with all the residents to develop a report that will be
210 given to staff in March for a review. In May, the hearing officer makes a decision, and in June, the
211 Council can hear any appeals. In July, a notice of closure could be issued to the residents and they
212 would have six months to be reallocated.
213

214 **Commissioner Bacchetti made a motion to approve the document, seconded by Commissioner**
215 **O’Nan. Ayes: Unanimous, Motion Passed: 6:0, Commissioner Morin absent.**
216

217 Chair Ezran directed the staff to prepare a staff report for the City Council.
218

219 **3. REPORTS FROM OFFICIALS:**

220 **A. Commissioner Reports:**

221 Commissioner Bacchetti gave an update on Project Safety Net (PSN) with regards to Compass Point, a
222 consultant firm.
223

224 **Council Buddy Reports:** None
225

226 **B. Council Liaison Report:**

227 Council Member Kniss made a comment about her method as an observer and the goal not to influence
228 but to observe and help with the process issues as needed.
229

230 **C. Staff Liaison Report:**

- 231 • Ms. van der Zwaag noted there are two open positions on the HRC. Commissioner Verma
232 decided not to reapply, Commissioner O’Nan is reapplying.
- 233 • Reminder of the Finance Committee meeting on March 8, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. on Human Services
234 Needs Assessment.
- 235 • HRC Regional Breakfast; 5/15/13, 8-9 A.M.
236 Both Commissioner Savage and Commissioner Verma agreed to be on the sub committee but
237 Commissioner Verma’s term will end.
238

239 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

240 Commissioner Verma thanked everyone for the last three years. She said it has been a great experience
241 and learned how the City works. Chair Ezran thanked Commissioner Verma for her service and said she
242 made many valuable contributions to the HRC.
243

243 **CALL FOR AGENDA ITEMS**

- 244 • There will be a presentation from Rhyena Halpern speaking about programs in Arts and Sciences
245 that do outreach to disabled low income members of the community and give an overview of
246 what the division does.

- 247
- Election of chair and vice chair.
 - 248 • Recommendation for next HSRAP cycle
 - 249 ○ After 2nd reading - will work on staff report
 - 250 ○ Commissioners to get a copy staff report and HSRAP Summaries for review

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252 **ADJOURNMENT**

253 The meeting adjourned at 9:14 p.m.