



HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Monday, April 14, 2014
Council Conference Room
Palo Alto Civic Center
250 Hamilton Avenue
7:00 PM
SPECIAL MEETING

ROLL CALL:

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

Council Liaison: Mayor Shepherd

Staff: Minka van der Zwaag, Mary Constantino, Amy Johnson

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

NONE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

None

AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, and DELETIONS:

None

BUSINESS

1. UPDATE FROM INNVISION/SHELTER NETWORK REGARDING PROGRAM CHANGES:

Mila Zehlka from InnVision Shelter Network gave an update on recent changes in their program. The Opportunity Services “Drop in” Center has been observing their programs over the last eight months to see how they can increase engagement with the homeless population with case management. They have been looking at all of their programs such as the Breaking Bread Hot Meal Program, the Food Closet at Hotel de Zink. Currently they are seeing approximately 115 people per day at the Opportunity Center and many of them do have active case management but a large percentage of participants just hang out without any engagement or case management. In January and February they started to put together a plan to increase engagement and in March they begin informing the clients. InnVision Shelter Network’s goal is to enhance the outcomes and increase self-sufficiency and set up a program track. The three tracks include 1) A guest track for people who have a diagnosis who are too ill to participant in program services in a measureable way, 2) a

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43 program track for individuals who agree to work with a program manager, and 3) People who are in
44 the Social Track, where they have declined case management; however, InnVision Shelter Network
45 is very motivated to get them into tracking. If you decline case management some perks will not be
46 available; for instance, they are not given the opportunity to receive food and clothing choices before
47 other participants who are engaged in case management. If you live upstairs in the Opportunity
48 Center you don't have to be involved in case management. If you come to the Opportunity Center
49 you are asked to be tracked. There are four case managers at the Opportunity Center; including one
50 case manager for families which makes 20 participants per case manager.

51
52 Stanford Medical School with Stanford Health for America Partnership has provided two students
53 for six months working with their team and clients to make sure they are receiving preventative
54 medical care, nutrition and exercise. This program is in conjunction with the medical health program
55 with Ph.D. students who are receiving their degrees with UCSF in Clinical Psychology. Ms. Zelhka
56 shared some recent success stories whereby participants received SSI and supportive housing
57 benefits, six clients gained employment, 11 received eye glasses and other items. An anonymous
58 donor provided funding for a Food Innovation Manager for two-years. He will be overseeing how
59 the agency sources and delivers food across all of the sites.

60
61 There is a proposal to expand the Maple Street Shelter to double the capacity from 70 to 140 beds.

62 63 Commissioners' Questions:

- 64 • What types of perks are taken away if they refuse to participate in case management?: These
65 individuals cannot enter the Opportunity Center until 9:30am after all participating
66 individuals who can enter at 8am.
- 67
68 • Please elaborate more on the homeless residences: There are three individual apartment
69 buildings that provide up to 50 master leases. The Opportunity Center has access to 35
70 rooms, which allows them to provide Supportive Housing with a case manager who checks
71 on the residents to make sure they are taking care of themselves.
- 72
73 • What types of employment were obtained? Is there security? Ikea employs many graduates.
74 Employment usually starts at 28 hours a week. Target and Safeway are partners with the
75 Opportunity Center.
- 76
77 • Elaborate on tracking residents who live at the Opportunity Center: Residents of the
78 Opportunity Center agree to certain rules for residents; if they agree, they are provided with
79 case management support; children's programs provide after school and pre-school
80 enrichment programs. If someone comes to the Drop-in Center they can receive the same
81 support if they agree to work toward independence. For the

82 83 **2. HOUSING LEARNING SERIES – (PART 12) – SPEAKERS TO DISCUSS SENIOR** 84 **HOUSING:**

85
86 Ms. van der Zwaag introduced Tom Pamilla, Executive Director from the Stevenson House Senior
87 Housing. Mr. Pamilla passed out their brochure and discussed his background briefly as a Social
88 Worker. Stevenson House provides affordable housing for 140 people who would not have any
89 other housing option. It is more than an apartment complex; it is a home that people are proud of
90 and a community of residents who look out for one another. If there are issues, they come to him.

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91 There are many needs of residents such as loss of job, friends, and family; they also face issues with
92 health, memory, mobility, hearing etc. Their world becomes smaller which causes depression and
93 isolation. Mr. Pamilla discussed challenges such as finding ways to celebrate in a way that is non-
94 patronizing and shows dignity.

95
96 Stevenson House amenities include: weekday meal program five evenings a week. The Unitarian
97 Church and the Kiwanis Club provide a lunch on a quarterly basis. All apartments have a kitchen
98 but it is important that they also have a meal program. A gentle exercise program is scheduled by
99 the YMCA. A nurse comes in once per week to discuss medications and when it is important to see a
100 doctor. Last year they briefly had a social worker which really helped, they currently have a great
101 need for a social worker. Many of our residents speak Chinese and not English. Last week a
102 resident died by suicide.

103 Commissioners Questions:

- 104 • They asked questions about subsidized rents and how the City could help to provide more
105 housing.
- 106
107 • Commissioner Chen expressed her concern for senior immigrants who don't understand western
108 culture and how important communication is for everyone. Mr. Pamilla explained that
109 Stevenson House purchased a translation machine but that they do not have any cultural training.
- 110
111 • Commissioner Morin asked what percentage are immigrants? Many parents are of adult children
112 who work in organizations in the community that bring their parents into the community. That is
113 how many of them come to the United States. The Russian immigrants have decreased but the
114 Asian immigrants have increased. What is the average longevity and do they live there for the
115 remainder of their lives? If they can take care of themselves then they are considered
116 independent. You need to be 62 but the oldest is 101.
- 117
118 • Commissioner Ezran asked if Stevenson House is independent or involved in other properties?
119 Stevenson House is a private organization with 501C3 IRS designation for the last 45 years.
120 Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provided the property. Studio Apartment is 300 square
121 feet, 1 bedroom is 500 square feet. If the apartment is subsidized, a studio is \$590 and a one
122 bedroom is \$691. If you are on the Stevenson House waiting list and move into the apartment
123 that is subsidized; the subsidy stays with the room but if you have been on the Santa Clara
124 County Housing Choices waiting list through the Housing Authority, the subsidy stays with the
125 person.
126
127

128 Mr. Pamilla discussed the eligibility criteria: The applicant must be 62 years old or above or with
129 someone who is; in addition, they must be within a certain income level. HUD determines the
130 maximum income guidelines for subsidy which is \$40,000, and unsubsidized is \$58,000.

- 131
132 • Commissioner Stone asked how long the waiting list is. The Santa Clara County Housing
133 Authority Choices Voucher list is 50,000 people long. People come to Stevenson House when
134 they have their voucher. Twelve subsidized apartments on average are turned over per year. If
135 the apartment is available they call the list in order.
- 136
137 • Social Worker: The Palo Alto Community Fund gave contributions to budget a 15-hours per
138 week, \$20.00 an hour position. After being hired for a few months, she went to work full time at

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139 Avenidas. He is looking for adequate funding to hire another social worker. An advantage of a
140 social worker at Stevenson House is that they bring joy as well as problem solving skills. The
141 residents are grateful to have someone who cares.
142

143 Vice Chair Bacchetti recognized Mr. Pamilla for doing an excellent job especially with all the
144 challenges he faces to manage the facility.
145

146 Mayor Shepherd asked for more information about the one meal a week. Mr. Pamilla replied that
147 when Stevenson House started the residents did not have an option to participate in the meal
148 program; they paid a fee for the program. About 5 years ago the Housing Authority said the people
149 with the voucher or subsidy with Santa Clara County Housing Authority didn't need to participate in
150 the meals. About 25 to 30 residents decided to drop out of the meal program and Stevenson House
151 had to pay for the running of the Kitchen and they lost approximately \$30,000 in funding from the
152 meal program. They have five dinner meals a week and the Kiwanis and Unitarian Church serve a
153 meal quarterly. Mayor Shepherd thanked Tom for his work. Chair O'Nan asked if he had tried to
154 collaborate with the Jewish Community Center to collaborate on a meal program; he has spoken to
155 them but they have not setup anything yet.
156
157

158 3. DEBRIEF OF REGIONAL HRC BREAKFAST

159 Chair O'Nan reported that she and Commissioners Ezran and Morin attended the HRC breakfast on
160 April 8th in Mountain View. They each shared their impressions of the breakfast meeting:

- 161 • City of Mountain View has recruited Commissioners who are younger and from different
162 cultural and ethnic backgrounds.
- 163 • Local "at risk" hotel and restaurant workers may not be treated fairly.
- 164 • Upcoming film to be shown in Sunnyvale. They are hoping to keep in contact with Miryam
165 Castaneda and Kim Castro so they are knowledgeable about the date of the presentation.
- 166 • Commissioner Morin stated that Miryam Castaneda is interested in tying the Northern California
167 Commissioners together.
- 168 • Commissioner Morin stated that Mountain View has roundtable events which resemble "Our
169 Palo Alto" to create community. There was an event at the Women's Club called Democracy is
170 Conversation where people share particular topics and ideas.
- 171 • Commissioner Chen stated that Harry Adams, from Santa Clara County, who works with
172 housing the homeless in San Jose, shared his experiences since there are a lot more homeless in
173 San Jose and they have different problems; such as, many have pets and cannot stay in shelters.
174 San Jose is more experienced in that area and Commissioner Chen believes Palo Alto can learn
175 from them.
- 176 • Discussed if Palo Alto can host next year, Minka thought that Santa Clara County is hosting next
177 year.
178

180 4. HRC AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE

181 Chair O'Nan spoke about the Subcommittee working on the on HSRAP needs assessment and
182 the need to review the responses to identify additional information and following up with
183 committee members to identify HSRAP funding needs. O'Nan has been following up with
184 InnVision Shelter Network who has had some shortfalls in funding. Commissioner Stone spoke
185 regarding scheduled phone interviews with non-profits and had them elaborate on their programs
186 and received facts to report. Commissioner Ezran will meet with one agency and will follow up

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187 with two more this week to find simple projects that benefit the Palo Alto so when they go to the
188 Finance Committee, the committee will understand why they are asking for money
189

190 Commissioner Chen reported on the Housing Element. She wrote a short concise summary of the
191 committee with background research. They have not finalized their data. Commissioner
192 Bacchetti stress that their task is how the HRC can effectively advocate for the improvement of
193 the low-income housing situation. Housing is needed but there is not much money. There is
194 social turmoil. Facts are compelling 20% of the residents have incomes below \$50,000 and 10 %
195 have incomes below \$25,000. Low income range goes up to \$70,000 to \$80,000 range
196 depending on family size. People would be surprised to find out how many residents in Palo
197 Alto are in those low income ranges. During the day so many come here to work but cannot
198 afford to live in Palo Alto. We must be more sensitive that most people cannot afford to live in
199 Palo Alto and how important it is to have economic diversity in housing.
200

201 Commissioner Chen reported on her efforts to help the immigrant community. She wants to meet
202 with Claudia Keith, Chief Communications Officer to share her ideas of how to help with the
203 project.
204
205

206 5. REPORTS FROM OFFICIALS: 207

208 A. Commissioner Reports:

209 Vice Chair Bacchetti reported the good news that Police Chief Dennis Burns was awarded a Tall
210 Tree Award. It was a nice ceremony and there were approximately 400 people in attendance.
211 Homeless Services Task Force wants to make homeless information more public. Human
212 Relations Commission is working on the Housing Element task force.
213

214 Commissioner Stone reported on the last Palo Alto Mediation Meeting on March 20. The group
215 spoke about a presentation that was given in the Palo Alto High School social science classes.
216 Palo Alto Mediation put on a mock mediation with the students. Palo Alto Mediation needs
217 more mediators and asked if the city can help with the cost for training at \$500.00 per person.
218

219 Chair O’Nan spoke about her ride along with the Palo Alto Police Department, she spoke about
220 what she saw and how impressed she was; she recommended that all the commissioners try to do
221 it.
222

223 B. Council Liaison Report:

224 Mayor Shepherd reported:

- 225 • “Our Palo Alto” kicks off on Wednesday, April 23 at 6:00 p.m. in the Downtown Library. There
226 will be demographers speaking about who we are, what we are and what we might be in the
227 future.
- 228 • Public hearings scheduled for the Buena Vista Park with the hearing officer. Minka will update
229 the correct date and time.
- 230 • Housing is doing more outreach on April 24 in the Lucie Stern Community Center Fireside
231 Room.
- 232 • Finance Committee is discussing HSRAP tomorrow night.
- 233 • California Avenue Focus Plan on the Housing Element; State regulation and mandate.
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- Human Relations Commission interviews on Wednesday.
- Neighbors Abroad is celebrating their 50th anniversary with Oaxaca, Mexico. A delegation is going to Oaxaca to share in the celebration.
- Community Conversations—democracy is messy and productive. It is imperative to operate as a community; it is our job as citizens.

C. Staff Liaison Report:

Ms. van der Zwaag reported on the following:

- On Friday, April 25 the Human Rights Conference is being held in San Francisco. Commissioners Chen, Savage, Morin, and staff Minka van der Zwaag and Mary Constantino are attending. Updates: Committee looked at Request for Proposals for intensive case management regarding homeless individuals in collaboration with the County but cannot state what agency was selected at this time but the information will be out soon.
- May Fete Parade will be on Saturday, May 3, 2014. The theme is Let Me Be Your Neighbor which encompasses the Developmental Assets.
- Chair and Vice Chair attended the Policy and Services Committee regarding the HRC's recommendation for Avenidas and PACCC. The Committee did not support it the HRC's recommendation. It goes to full Council on May 12th.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Ezran thanked everyone for working with him on the Commission. He had a great time. He stated that working with Minka is rewarding and to be of service to the City of Palo Alto. The Human Services Commission is a special role to be in contact with dedicated individuals who serve in the agencies who do extraordinary work.

CALL FOR AGENDA ITEMS

- Housing Learning Series – Judge Manley OR his staff person.
- Debriefing about the Cahro Conference
- Next Meeting is scheduled on May 8
- Report on subcommittees

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm