



CITY OF
**PALO
ALTO**

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Thursday, October 1, 2020

7:00 PM

SPECIAL MEETING

*****BY VIRTUAL TELECONFERENCE ONLY*****

Commissioners Present: de Turreil, Regehr, Smith, Stinger, Savage,

Staff: Minka van der Zwaag, Mary Constantino

I. ROLL CALL

Chair Smith: I'd like to welcome everybody to the monthly meeting of the Human Relations Commission. This is a special meeting. We are one week earlier than we usually are. My name is Kaloma Smith. I am the Chair of this Commission. I'd like to thank everybody and all of our Commissioners for being with us tonight. We have a packed agenda, so I'd like to first start with roll call.

II. AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, DELETIONS

Chair Smith: Do we have any agenda changes, requests or deletions? Hearing none, we'll move on.

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Chair Smith: We have one person in the attendee's box. Would they like to make an oral communication at this time?

Ms. van der Zwaag: Chair, could you please ask them if they are for an agenda item, because oral communications right now is for items that are not on the agenda?

Chair Smith: Thank you. They haven't raised their hand, so I'm assuming they are not for the oral communication.

IV. BUSINESS

Chair Smith: Tonight, we have two actions items and two discussion items.

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1. Consideration of approval of Palo Alto Mediation Program Selection Panel's recommendation on appointments or reappointment of mediators.

Chair Smith: As they come forward this year, we are a little bit earlier in the process than we've been in the past, and I'm grateful for that. We have the Vice Chair that has been working hand-in-hand with the folks from PAMP, and I would like to hand the meeting over to her.

Vice Chair Stinger: Thank you, Chair. I'd like to begin with introductions, first to our guest, Elizabeth Guzman, who is Director of Dispute Resolutions at Project Sentinel, Aruna Bellary and Marleta Young, who are co-chairs of the Palo Alto Mediators Panel. I'd also like to introduce or describe to you the presentation. I'm going to, with Minka, provide a brief history of the two organizations – Project Sentinel and Palo Alto Mediator Panel – and then talk about the recruitment and selection process that we went through to reach a slate of individuals to train and to be nominated to the Palo Alto Mediator Panel. [Recording cuts out] you, the HRC, to meet its responsibility, both to PAMP and to the citizens seeking mediation. This responsibility is two-fold. The bylaws of Palo Alto Mediators call for an HRC liaison to sit on the five-member Selection Panel. That would be one person from Project Sentinel, the two co-chairs, another mediator, and then the HRC liaison. In addition, the Project Sentinel contract with the City calls for efforts to recruit a diverse array of new mediators. That diversity is of particular interest to the HRC. The contract allows that diversity could include anyone one or more of the following qualities: age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, language ability, disability and housing status. That is, renters, landlords or homeowners. Project Sentinel had broadly defined diversity in their contract. What you will be asked at the conclusion of this is to confirm – that is, approve – the recommendation from the Selection Panel. As the liaison, I can attest to the rigor and thoroughness of the deliberations. I sat in the meetings to establish our selection criteria, to author the interview guide, to screen 15 applications, to interview eight and recommend five. I was in the sandbox, and I got into the grit. You, on the other hand, are asked to take a bird's eye view, a more strategic look at the process and the recommendations. That will be the flow of this evening. Minka?

Ms. van der Zwaag: Thank you, Vice Chair. I just wanted to give a quick history of mediation services and the City's relationship with Project Sentinel and the Palo Alto Mediation Program. In the early 1970s, the HRC was actually the body that was responsive to community mediation requests. They would see and hear these requests during the regular HRC meeting times, but as these requests grew in the 1970s, the HRC appointed a Rental Housing Task Force to respond to these mediation requests that had to do with rental housing. However, in the 1980s, these requests for mediation expanded beyond landlord/tenant to what you see today, including neighbor to neighbor, merchant to customer, and the name changed to reflect that, so it became the Mediation Task Force instead of the Rental Mediation Task Force. Even later on, the Task Force name was dropped, and it just became the Palo Alto Mediation Program, which is the same name that it uses today. In the early years, after the HRC was no longer hearing these cases and the Palo Alto Mediation Panel really became up and running, the administration of the program was handled by a local version of the 2-1-1 program. For those of you that have been around Palo Alto a long time, it was called the PAIRS program – Palo Alto Information and Referral Services. Other organizations took over PAIRS, and it finally just went out of business. At that point, the City of Palo Alto looked for another administrator of the mediation panel and for

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mediation services in the community and then contracted with Project Sentinel and has been doing so for many years. To see what we asked Project Sentinel to do in those early years – and they still continue to do so today - is when someone calls for mediation services, they answer the phone, and they see what it's about. Because they are connected, the staff member staffing the mediation hotline is an employee of Project Sentinel. They have a lot of information about fair housing rules, tenant/landlord counseling, and so forth. Once they get the calls in, if they feel like it's something that should go to mediation, they prepare the case to hand off to the mediators. So, that was the early years. To look at what's happening today, I'll just tell you what everybody's role is right now. I would say I've been working with this program for several years, and it took a little bit to really know everybody's role in this collaboration. The Palo Alto Mediation Program, of which the mediators that you will be looking at the recommendation to approve today, they are a community service program of trained volunteer mediators who operate under a set of bylaws, and they're self-governing, so they are a self-governing body. Project Sentinel administers the Palo Alto Mediation Program, in collaboration with the mediators themselves and their leadership, and provides the administrative services that I mentioned earlier. The City of Palo Alto and the Office of Human Services, of which I am a staff to, we set up and oversee the contract with Project Sentinel and work with the HRC on the selection of the mediators via your representative and approval of the slate of mediators by the entire HRC, which is what we're doing tonight.

Chair Smith: Minka, we made a change in the process this year about the HRC sees the candidates, so can you just reference that before we go further?

Ms. van der Zwaag: I think you will see that later in the presentation, Chair.

Chair Smith: Thank you.

Elizabeth Guzman: I'll go over the PAMP Mission Statement and then our recruitment processes. As Minka talked about, we provide free dispute resolution services to residents in Palo Alto. We are staffed with impartial mediators that facilitate a confidential process that supports parties to reaching their own resolution. To get these mediators, we do a recruitment every year. This year, we were a bit interrupted because of COVID. Usually our recruitment starts in January, and we're interviewing by March, but this year we were interrupted by COVID, so we kind of put everything on hold, and once things kind of settled and we had transitioned all our services to online and remote services, we resumed back in August. So, we have two periods of recruitment this year. We really made an increased effort from years past to cast a wider net and get a farther reach in our recruitment. Typically, we do print advertisements and a daily post in *The Weekly*, and we did that this year. In our first round, we did it in several different languages. We also really focused this year on our online advertising. We were promoting the recruitment through our social media where we have Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, and then when we were reaching out and networking with other organizations, we asked them to share our posts about recruitment. We also made a concerted effort to outreach to diverse sectors of the community. We have established partners and people, organizations that we work with in the city, that we usually outreach to, but we tried to cast a bit wider net and go even a little bit outside Palo Alto, just to increase those networks. It wasn't included in the report, but some of those include Life Moves, Opportunity Center. We tried to get into churches to see if we could

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get those memberships. We reached out to the NAACP of San Jose, Stevenson House, organizations like that, and really tried to, like I said, just cast a wider net. Here's what we got. We got ten applications in the spring and five in the fall. So, anybody that we received an application from in the spring, we contacted them and brought them into the fall recruitment process.

Ms. Aruna Bellary: I'm one of the Co-Chairs. The 2020 selection process was enriched by having an HRC voice on the PAMP Selection Committee. This year, it was important to come up with and document the selection criteria. We used the criteria throughout the process to develop interview questions, review applications and to make our final recommendations. Once they are approved, the candidates will enroll in the required training, which includes focus on how to remain neutral and not let bias impact or influence a mediation. Elizabeth has already spoken to the recruitment process. I now want to talk about how we went about selecting a slate of candidates from the applicant pool that we feel will make good mediators, with their diverse backgrounds and experiences. We want to call out that the City covering the cost for the mediation makes it accessible to all. We'd like to reemphasize the valuable input that we received from the inclusion of our HRC liaison. You have received a copy of the selection criteria in your packet. We will talk through them in detail next. You have observed already that two of the seven were tied to diversity. Also, two of our interview questions were explicitly related to diversity. They are, first, what role does unconscious bias have in mediation? And the second, describe the importance of having diversity within the mediation program. This slide highlights our overall thinking, our process, and how we plan to assess the candidates. We think this process has resulted in our selecting and recommending a strong and diverse slate of candidates. I'll hand it off to Marleta.

Ms. Marleta Young: Now we want to walk you through the selection criteria in detail. We've split them into four sections. This first section is our five basic requirements. These are really just a screening tool and are required for the applicant to even be considered. The first requirement you see listed comes straight from our bylaws, and the rest on this slide are there to ensure a candidate's ability to contribute to our program over their two-year term. I'm going to quickly move on to the next slide, where we start getting into the meat of our criteria. We grouped together the three criteria on this slide, because they target our primary goal, which is to find candidates that have the potential to be good, skilled and neutral mediators. For relevant life experiences, it's important to note that most candidates do not have actual mediation experience, so we look for candidates that have experience with dispute resolution of some kind. For the next criteria – open-mindedness, flexibility, empathy, ability to remain neutral and unbiased. This criterion is really hard to assess objectively, but it's very important in terms of what makes a good mediator, so we included it as a selection criteria this year so that we could keep it front of mind throughout our entire process. Aruna already mentioned that we also specifically added a couple of interview questions to try and target this criterion. The reason is that just because a candidate has some kind of dispute resolution experience, it doesn't mean that they are the open-minded candidate we're looking for, someone with empathy for both sides and someone who understands the importance of remaining unbiased. Then, obviously, communication skills are very important for mediators, since we're looking for folks who can facilitate difficult conversations and understand the importance of active listening. On this slide, we wanted to

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show you a sampling of some of the different experiences with dispute resolution that the candidates this year bring with them. We have a former Stanford Dean of Students that has experience with conflict management while interacting with a large student body. We have a president of their HOA Board, who has facilitated collective decision-making amongst the members of the HOA. We have a lawyer with actual mediation skills and experience, but in a commercial capacity. We have an engineer who has managed large international teams and dealt with the interpersonal conflicts that naturally arise within teams. And, we have a former business leader with expertise negotiating deals, including experience with acquisitions. We believe that all of these different backgrounds are very relevant to these candidates having the potential to become really skilled neutral mediators. Aruna is going to cover the next section of our criteria now.

Ms. Bellary: We were looking for candidates who are motivated to give back to their community, who wanted to help others resolve conflict and were not just wanting to put PAMP on their resumes or LinkedIn for career enhancement. Prior volunteer experience is not required, per se, but it is helpful in showing a candidate's motivation. Here is a selection of some of the organizations where our candidates have volunteered in the past. In this list, you'll see a wide range from very local and community-based groups to large non-profits, with a very global reach. Here we show how our candidates' backgrounds have motivated them to become volunteer mediators now. I'll let you read through the list while I highlight the first two. We have a first-generation immigrant with experience both as a renter and a homeowner, who knows both sides and wants to use this understanding to help settle conflicts between landlords and tenants. Another candidate is a former executive director of multiple non-profits, who wants to continue volunteering on a more personal level. Marleta?

Ms. Young: This is the last section of our selection criteria, and these are the two that Aruna mentioned earlier that explicitly relate to diversity, although I hope we've shown that we tried to cover diversity of experience throughout. That's because, as important to us as mediator potential and motivation are, it's equally important to us that the candidates we bring have a diverse set of experiences and perspectives that they can bring to our panel. We strongly believe that we strengthen our panel by having a diverse membership where all are able to learn from each other, and we want a panel with bench strength that pulls from people with all sorts of different backgrounds, who bring with them new and varied perspectives. We feel that this is both enriching our membership as a whole, and it also improves our ability to serve the entire Palo Alto community. One specific element that we asked about on our application was language fluency. That's because language fluency is both a skill, and it also gives a hint at the diverse backgrounds of our mediators and our candidates, so on this slide we wanted to show the various languages, other than English, spoken by both our current mediator panel, as well as those that the new slate of candidates bring with them. Lastly, I just wanted to note that our final recommendations were based on an overall assessment of all the selection criteria and not limited to just a single one. I'll hand it over to Valerie.

Vice Chair Stinger: That brings us to our recommendation of five candidates for the training and then the acceptance into the panel of mediators. We have Christie Ma, who speaks Mandarin and Shanghainese dialects. She brings diversity as a young professional, peer counseling and HOA experience. Deborah Neff, a retired CEO, brings work, board and community experience with

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mediation. Norman Robinson brings us experience with multiple non-profits in the community. He has a degree in Counseling Psychology. Vishal Saxena is a first-generation immigrant and captures very clearly what that means to negotiate in Palo Alto. Finally, Norman Walker, who brings a very crisp community style and some fascinating pro bono work. It is the recommendation of the Selection Panel that you approve this group of five people, so that they can begin training in mid-October. The Selection Panel further recommends that the HRC confirm the following current mediators for a subsequent two-year term. In addition to the five new candidates, ten of the existing Panel of 12 mediators are recommended for a renewal. Nine mediators are continuing as voting mediators, or active participants in the Panel, and one is requesting emeritus status. The recommendation for their continuation is based on their strong experience as mediators, their contributions to the Panel, their capacity to mentor the five new mediators, and the projected workload. Thank you for your attention, and I turn this back to the Chair.

Chair Smith: Thank you so much, Vice Chair, for such a phenomenal report. Thank you, Project Sentinel and Palo Alto Mediation. I just want to lift up one thing I don't think was made very clear. The process before this year was, we received the names after they had gone through their training. We felt like it's unfair to have somebody go through the training and then have the vote on their viability, so we're grateful to PAMP. We're grateful to our Vice Chair. We're grateful to Project Sentinel for working with us to bring this decision earlier in the process, where we can really speak and work with others. I'm grateful for their willingness to work with us on this project, and I really want to highlight that willingness at this moment. Right now, I'm going to open it up for a round robin, because I know we have various Commissioners here. I want to give each Commissioner on the first round two minutes to ask questions of the...Do I have to do Public Comment?

Ms. van der Zwaag: You do that after the round of questions, and then you go to Public Comment, and then discussion, Chair.

Chair Smith: Okay, thank you. We're going to start with – and we'll be using this order for the rest of the evening – Commissioner Savage. Do you have any questions that you would like to ask any of the presenters?

Commissioner Savage: I don't have questions but have some comments. Just that I'm really impressed with the amount of thought and care and time and energy that went into this. Those recommended seem highly qualified. It's a diverse slate of candidates. Just, great job. The Selection Committee seemed to keep in mind all of the selection criteria, and we've got a very good, diverse candidate selection. So, thank you for doing that.

Chair Smith: Thank you so much. Can we please have Commissioner Regehr?

Commissioner Regehr: Hi. I just want to say thank you so much. One of my first meetings that I was watching – I watched all of the meetings before I decided to attend – was the mediation meeting. Historically, I wanted to thank Kaloma Smith and Commissioner Lee for all the work that they did, even though it was a tough meeting, pushing for diversity and really working with this committee prior to this outcome. I also wanted to thank Commissioner Stinger for following

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it up and the Sentinel and both Palo Alto Mediation Program, because it seems like what basically Kaloma Smith and Commissioner Lee said about you, and you really work hard to make diversity, so I want to thank you all for all the historical and all the hard work, because it really does take a village to bring in a diversity. Sometimes it does take pushing something to get it done, so thank you.

Chair Smith: Commissioner, please say your last name for me one more time. I do not want to butcher it.

Commissioner Sunita de Turreil: de Turreil.

Chair Smith: Our newest Commissioner, Commissioner de Turreil. Did I get it right? I'll be working on this all year. I promise you I'll get it right.

Commissioner de Turreil: I just had a comment as well. I was impressed with the caliber of the different candidates and was happy to see the ways that you were trying to look at diversity and make sure that there was a good amount of diversity represented. Actually, I do have a question. I was curious. I was noticing that there are the new candidates and then ones who are given further terms. I was wondering how...I suppose you applied the same sort of criteria to those who getting their terms furthered, and I'm wondering how the two folks who spoke to us – thank you for your presentation, Marleta and Aruna – I'm wondering, how do you get chosen to continue to serve, or is that an automatic thing because you're doing this extra work as well?

Ms. Bellary: Was the question specifically for the Co-Chairs, or all of those who are seeking to be continued on the Panel?

Commissioner de Turreil: I meant it specifically for the Co-Chairs, because I assume that you are involved in the recommending of continued service for the other folks. I just noticed your names, and I was curious how that works, how you choose the folks who are going to continue, considering that both of you are continuing? I don't know if that makes sense.

Ms. Young: I can take this one, because I was part of the spring piece to recommend. The overall application process that we usually go through that Elizabeth mentioned, from January to March, and we make recommendations in April, at that time all of the mediators whose two-year term is ending are up to either decide if they want to renew or not. If they do, we don't have them re-fill out an application with any detail, but we ask them to basically re-commit to what they've already committed to for another two years. Then, the Co-Chairs do – which, Aruna was not at the time, because we've switched over in the middle of the summer; our terms ended – but the decision is made by the Selection Committee at that time. So, we did at that time have Gabe, who was part of the HRC on our Selection Committee as our liaison, and so the Selection Committee at that time voted on the candidates that had re-applied, using some of the statistics that we pulled from their involvement – so how many times they volunteered, how active they were. Those are more of the types of criteria that we use to recommend folks that were re-applying. It's a different set of criteria and more about their active involvement and intention to stay actively involved.

Commissioner de Turreil: Great. Thank you for that thorough answer and for your service.

Ms. Young: Thank you.

Chair Smith: Vice Chair?

Vice Chair Stinger: I have no questions.

Chair Smith: I have a few questions, because I always have questions. It looked like you received a greater amount of candidates than you usually receive this year. Is that a correct or incorrect statement?

Ms. Guzman: We received ten in the spring and seven in the fall. Let me just pull that number, because I think I put it in the report.

Chair Smith: Because I remember, in years past, there was attention with everybody. You didn't have enough volunteers, so it was really good to start to see that you were able to whittle down from a larger number to a smaller number. I wanted to know, do you attribute that to the advertising and the diversity push, or what would you attribute the more bodies coming forward to? If it's actually more bodies.

Ms. Guzman: Yes, so it looks like in 2018 we received ten applications, and in 2017 we received three. I think the outreach definitely helped, and I think we're also getting just more activity within the PAMP Program. We are seeing this across the board at Project Sentinel. We have more in-depth counseling that people are needing and that is filled so well by mediators who are to provide that, so I think that has something to do with it, too, that I think there's a sort of renewed energy within the Panel.

Chair Smith: Given the current challenges around housing and housing scarcity and housing vulnerability, I'm really glad to hear that. Right now, I would like for somebody to present a motion on this.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Chair, could you first please check if any of the attendees wish to speak to this agenda item?

Chair Smith: Using the raised hand function, would any of our attendees like to make public comment? Public comment would be two minutes.

Ms. van der Zwaag: I don't see any hands, Chair.

MOTION

Chair Smith: Thank you. At this time, I would like to advance a motion to accept the slate of candidates that has been presented by this fine organization and the Vice Chair.

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Commissioner Savage: I move to accept.

Commissioner Regehr: I second.

Chair Smith: Thank you so much. We have a vote.

MOTION PASSES, 5-0

Chair Smith: We have a unanimous vote. Project Sentinel, Palo Alto Mediator Project, thank you for your community service. Thank you for your push for diversity. Our Commission truly appreciates the work that you are doing, and we're grateful for what you have done for our community. Thank you.

2. Consider ways that the Human Relations Commission can support the efforts of the Safe Parking Program host sites in the community

Chair Smith: We are moving to our next item on our agenda. I want to talk to the Commission about supporting the Safe Parking program host sites in the community. Right before COVID, Commissioner Regehr, myself and Commissioner Lee met with a group of churches, vendors for safe parking programs and the City, because at that point, the City was looking at doing a Phase I program that would allow for church parking lots to have four vehicle dwelling units. There was a whole bunch of stuff that you had to do. You had to get a vendor. You had to put in a bathroom. You had to have security. There was a whole thing, so we were very involved early on, getting all of the parties together and being part of that discussion, because housing was a significant push for us last year. Since then, we had COVID, which sort of slowed the process. The County made some really strong offers around 24-hour parking and the City was working with them on that. The City Council has opened a lot on Bay Road so that we are moving forward with that. In their approval that they did for the lot, they have also allowed for churches to start applying to use lots for four vehicle dwellers. As it stands right now, a group of churches on Middlefield...Full disclosure, my church that I pastor is not using the lot, but we're supporting another church that's right next door to us. Peninsula Bible Church will be putting in their application and they want to do a community informational meeting on the date of October 22nd. I am asking tonight for the HRC to be a co-sponsor of that event with the City, the vendor that is providing the services and the churches in the community that are talking to the community about the needs, desires, concerns, hopes, to see if we can move this program forward, because a significant part of the approval process is the fact that you have to have public comment with your neighbors. We want to approach this program in a way, that is, to ask tonight. Are there any questions on this at this time? Yes, Commissioner Regehr.

Commissioner Regehr: When you say churches, do you mean just places of worship?

Chair Smith: Okay, sorry. The group that is currently coalescing or working on this specific part of the project, or will be the first work on it, will be the Highway Church, the Peninsula Bible Church, the University AME Zion Church, and I believe there is one more other organization in it. The City ordinance is "places of worship," but the group that's working on the initial push is a group of churches. Does that make it clear?

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Commissioner Regehr: Yes, I was just wanting to make sure, because I know that there were other people of faith that were involved in this that were coming to our meetings. I guess, when you say co-sponsor, what does that mean, in regard to co-sponsor?

Chair Smith: I have a sample agenda of what the meeting would be. Basically, the goal of the meeting is that this will be the first house of worship that will try to get the ordinance through. They will have a community meeting so that people can hear about the program, hear about the impact on their community. It's part of the ordinance, so that actual flow of the meeting would be something like, there would be introduction, there will be somebody from the HRC – myself, the Vice Chair, because we both actually live in the neighborhood that this is happening – speaking about it. We would have City staff. We would have the vendor speak that is doing the actual program and managing the program for the church. Then, we would open it up for people in the community to ask questions about the program. So as a co-sponsor the HRC would be there to a) listen, and b) also provide our perspective of why it's important for our community to deal with housing, particularly at this time, or deal with homelessness at this time. Any other questions?

Commissioner Regehr: What is the outreach going to be? I guess I'm concerned about us just staffing it and then people in the neighborhood feeling like it's being... Sometimes the outreach isn't very good from the City, so I'm wondering what is the outreach going to be?

Chair Smith: As institutions that are in this community, we are talking about specific Facebook targeting for zip code and miles around the actual site. We're also talking about door hangers. We will do the outreach. It's not going to be the City that does the outreach. If you'll remember, the City just writes the ordinance. They'll be there to explain the technicalities, but we have to build the relationships in the room to get it to go from there. The outreach won't be a City thing. It will be the organizations that are trying to help with the housing issue.

Commissioner de Turreil: When you're saying we are going to be doing the outreach, you mean the places of worship and you don't mean the HRC?

Chair Smith: Yes. I will ask Minka to probably send out to neighborhood organizations or houses of worship in that area that are not us, and other community organizations in the area to also bring their resources, so that people in the community can hear about it. Because, the one thing we want to be absolutely clear on – and this is why I think this is a great opportunity for the HRC – is a) we want to have as much public participation in the process. We also want to be on the ground floor to hear what the community response is. Up until this point we've heard some stuff at City Hall. We've heard organizations. We've heard vendors that run the program, but we now need to talk to the people in communities in Palo Alto and hear what their response is to this, so I think this would be a great opportunity.

Commissioner Regehr: Are you going to have the vendors there so that they can help answer the questions of how it works in other cities? Because, I thought that each place of worship were going to pick their own vendor, which makes a competition kind of thing.

[crosstalk]

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Chair Smith: Yes.

Commissioner Regehr: Are you going to have a couple of the vendors there, so people can?

Chair Smith: They do have a vendor, and I will find out after I ask the next question, I'll find out exactly who it is, because it's in my notes, but they will have the specific vendor presenting that night. It won't be a number of vendors. It will be one.

Commissioner Regehr: Okay.

Chair Smith: They've narrowed it down to that.

Commissioner de Turreil: I apologize if this is something that was covered in previous meetings.

Chair Smith: No, no. Ask as many questions as you'd like.

Commissioner de Turreil: Just to understand, what is the role of the vendor? What is a vendor? I don't mean specific names.

Chair Smith: Okay, basically what happens is the way the ordinance is written for the City is that the house of worship pulls the permit, but houses of worship don't have people that are specific in case management. They don't have people that have the specific skills and the infrastructure to handle four cars and all the other challenges that come with working with people that are dealing with vehicle dwelling situations. One of the elements of the City of Palo Alto ordinance is that you have to get them in the County computer, so that they can receive services, all of that stuff. So, the vendor does that part, so it's almost like a partnership. The house of worship gives the property and maybe some funding, and then the vendor does the project management and the case management and the property management around that to make sure that the space works. For example, City of Mountain View, they don't manage their parking lot program. They have a vendor that comes in and does the case management and does the interface with the vehicle dwellers and does the services and the does the interface with the County to make sure people are getting the right services. That's the role of the vendor. I'm pretty sure I'm calling it the wrong thing. Minka, what is the correct term?

Ms. van der Zwaag: I'm not sure of the word vendor. For me, it's just the service provider.

Chair Smith: That's the correct term. That's the correct terminology.

Ms. van der Zwaag: The service provides case management

[crosstalk]

Ms. van der Zwaag: As you say, does the assessment to get them into the County system to try to connect them to permanent housing or permanent supportive housing.

Commissioner Regehr: The provider also – for example, we have the new one that’s coming in, they just got the keys on a couple of days ago for the lot on Geng Road – they also screen the people that are coming. It’s not like people can just come willy nilly, come any night and leave, come. They screen them and they do a process. They have applications, and they are the ones that –

Chair Smith: And I think that’s the critical part to...The date is October 22nd. I’m pulling up the actual agenda now. Amber will be doing the presentation for the vendors.

Ms. van der Zwaag: I believe she’s from Move Mountain View.

[crosstalk]

Ms. van der Zwaag: ...the same provider as the lot on Geng Road that the County and the City are collaborating on.

Chair Smith: I think the questions you are asking now, Commissioner Sunita, is really the questions that I think the community needs to ask and needs to get these answers and needs to hear, so this is why we’re doing this event.

Commissioner Regehr: Do you need a motion?

Chair Smith: We need public comment. If there is anyone in the public that would like to make a comment, we’d like you to use the raise hand feature at this time.

Ms. van der Zwaag: There are no raised hands, Chair.

Chair Smith: Thank you so much. At this time, I would entertain a motion.

MOTION

Vice Chair Stinger: I would move that we support the efforts of the City parking program and endorse the effort.

Commissioner Savage: I second it.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Can I ask a clarification question? I think we need clarification if it’s the Safe Parking program or the specific event that the Chair is referring to.

Chair Smith: That would need to be the motion. Thank you, staff. Can we get an amendment to the motion that would basically state that we are supporting the..

Commissioner Regehr: We’re co-sponsoring.

Chair Smith: Co-sponsoring the South Palo Alto Safe Parking community meeting on October 22 at 6:00 p.m. on Zoom.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Can I interject once again? The HRC can endorse event. Co-sponsoring implies a gift of City funding. It's a specific term that we use, so you could use the word support. You could use the word endorse, but the word co-sponsor cannot be used.

Commissioner Regehr: How about co-host?

Ms. van der Zwaag: You can certainly co-host, if that's your will and if that's the request of the faith community coming to you.

Chair Smith: I would go with co-host, because I'm probably going to ask the Vice Chair to do some speaking, since she's a community member in that place.

Vice Chair Stinger: Could I ask a question about the term co-host?

Chair Smith: Does that give us access to the HRC mailing list?

Ms. van der Zwaag: I hear what you're saying. I'd have to look up that specific language, so that would take me a minute, so hold on.

Chair Smith: Can we suspend the item and bring it back after the next item?

FRIENDLY AMENDMENT

Vice Chair Stinger: How about if I ask for a friendly amendment to say endorse and co-host?

Chair Smith: You make the motion. I can give you a friendly amendment if you would like.

Ms. van der Zwaag: I do have the language in front of me. I was actually fairly quick. Actually, it talks about an event sponsored and co-sponsored by the City, so it's not that clear for the HRC, but if it's an event that you are co-hosting, I would feel more than comfortable sending that out to the list serve, which has about 280 individuals on it.

Chair Smith: Thank you.

Commissioner Regehr: We made a motion at the last minute at the last meeting to do something for the renter's town hall, and all of a sudden I saw the Human Relations Commission name on there, and that's not what we voted on. Whatever we voted on that, or whatever someone assumed that we could be on that list, on that flyer, I think, is something that we could do because we didn't vote on that, and all of a sudden we're on there as –

Ms. van der Zwaag: I believe that was the vote at the last meeting, to endorse that event.

Commissioner Regehr: But endorsing is different than co-sponsoring.

Ms. van der Zwaag: I think what happens is some things are lost in translation, so I think with good faith effort, the name was given on to the organization and then they had a whole list of agencies and maybe didn't make that specific.

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Commissioner Regehr: No, it was just two of us – them and us.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Okay, well I think that might have gotten lost in translation, but the effect of the vote last time was to endorse the event.

Commissioner Regehr: Right. Not to co-host. So I guess that's my only thing. I mean, I was glad to be that, but that's not what we voted on, to co-host. So, Valerie, you basically want us to be on this, so Valerie, you want to put it whatever way you...?

Chair Smith: I want to go to every step except giving them money, so however that language needs to be, or for the City to do any financial support. I want us to support up to that level. Do we use the language "endorse" at that point?

Ms. van der Zwaag: You could use "endorse." You could use "co-host." Both of those would be acceptable.

Chair Smith: Okay, and I just want to make sure, so that nobody's caught by surprise in the future that will mean that we'll most likely have members of the Commission speaking at that event, and our name on the flyers at marketing. Is everybody all right with that? Okay, cool. I have provided a friendly amendment to the Vice Chair's motion to endorse and co-host. We'll just put both words in the motion. I will take a vote at this point.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Could we leave the whole motion out completely, because Mary takes notes, and...

Ms. Mary Constantino: I didn't get it all. All I got is South Palo Alto and something about Zoom. I'm sorry. That's all I got.

Chair Smith: Okay, the Human Relations Commission would like to co-host/endorse the October 22nd South Palo Alto Safe Parking community meeting, Next Steps. It will be on Zoom at 6:00 p.m. The other partners will be Move Mountain View, City Office of Development and a coalition of houses of worship that are looking to offer parking. Does that cover it?

Ms. van der Zwaag: I don't think it needs to be that specific. I think, "The HRC would like to co-host and endorse the Safe Parking exploration program on October 22nd." I think that is sufficient, if the Commissioners feel that is sufficient.

Chair Smith: Commissioners, I am going to take a vote now on the simplified language.

Commissioner Regehr: We need to second it, don't we?

Chair Smith: No, I was doing a clarification of language.

Commissioner Regehr: Okay.

Chair Smith: Because we were addressing what Vice Chair had done when she asked for the friendly amendment. At this point, I will take a vote.

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MOTION PASSES, 5-0.

Chair Smith: Thank you so much.

Commissioner Regehr: I'm sorry to bother you. When I read that as the "consider ways that the Human Relations Commission can support the efforts of the Safe Parking Program," the host sites, I thought it was also going to be discussing how we can support the City's Safe Parking Lot. Are we ever going to have that discussion that's opening up soon?

Chair Smith: I would love to have a discussion on how we could support that. I think we would need to have a conversation with Rachael from the Office of Development and see how we could best support it, and then bring it back for our next meeting. Does that make sense?

Commissioner Regehr: It does, but it doesn't, because the agenda item said "host sites," so I agree, but it's more than just Rachael. It's more of... We can discuss it when we're talking about the next agenda. It's just that we never had any discussion as a group about the next agenda. I'm just concerned about the agenda, so we can just discuss that later.

Chair Smith: Okay. Thank you so much for that.

3. Overview of the Human Services Resource Allocation Program (HSRAP) and Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)

Chair Smith: One of the critical functions, one of the things that the City has given a hand in, is recommendations on a significant amount of disbursement of funds. The reality is, they come from many different pools and many different pockets. Some of it has come from HUD. Some of it comes from County funding. Some of it comes from City funding, so each different criterion, each has different expectations. Each has different processes to fulfill, and what I did ask for staff to do was to go over the program, go over it in depth, go over the funding, where it comes from, the processes, where we are in the processes and where we are moving forward to. Because I wanted everybody to have a shared understanding of the process, shared understanding of our responsibilities, shared understanding of where we move forward from. So, staff?

Ms. van der Zwaag: I thank the Chair for asking for this item. I will first be presenting about the HSRAP program, and then my colleague in Planning and Development, Erum Maqbool, will discuss the CDBG program. I would like to go over the Human Services Resource Allocation Process known as HSRAP. We rarely use the full name. Most people don't even know what it stands for, but it is the HSRAP process. I just want to give you a quick overview of HSRAP. Basically, HSRAP is just a procedure in which we identify, prioritize and support grant applications to the City to meet human services in the Palo Alto community. You will see in a later slide that the Priority of Needs – that's the allowable funding programs that will be considered – are quite broad, so prior HSRAP committees and staff have really to make very clear what they think the priority is for the HSRAP program. You'll see it here. It says, "The primary goal of HSRAP is to meet the needs and improve the quality of life of low income and vulnerable populations, while considering and addressing the financial, social, cultural, psychological and physical barriers that prevent Palo Alto residents from accessing the human

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services they need.” I think a lot of time it’s thought that HSRAP is just for programs serving low income folks, and you will see, for instance, for some of the mental health programs. We support agencies that work in the schools or elsewhere, and some of those youth might be more upper income, but supporting these agencies allows them to have direct access at schools on the campus, and doesn’t always involve having to have a private appointment. We felt like we really needed to look at the services and the need for the services, and not just that it was just for low income folks. At this point, we’re giving a little over a half million dollars. This is general fund money. This is City of Palo Alto money. This is not federal money. There are currently 15 grantees in the program, and they are on a two-year cycle. They get money for one year, and if everything goes well, if the City has the same amount of funding the second year, we will also provide the same amount of funding for a second year. I will say that I’m very proud of the City of Palo Alto, even though it was going through a quite significance budget shortfall due to COVID-19, it still gave a cost of living increase of I think about 2.5 percent to the HSRAP grantees, so I think that really speaks to the value that the City places on the needs of our HSRAP grantees and the individuals that they serve. So, how do we come up with what we’re going to fund? We do it by means of what we call a Human Services Needs Assessment. We do this before each of the HSRAP processes. Sometimes it’s very involved. In 2012, a committee of HRC members and an intern and Human Services staff did quite an elaborate analysis of human services needs in the community that was worthy of a very high-paid consultant for the results of work that they got. It was one of the proudest moments of the HRC to be able to present this to the Council. That was very labor intensive. We currently mostly do a survey to not just the HSRAP grantees. We keep the list of human services providers. I think it goes to over 40 agencies every two years. We have a baseline of questions that we ask them. What are the greatest needs that you’re seeing? What are the barriers for your clients to meet those needs, and so forth? We ask the same questions every two years to see if there’s any differences in our community. This year we are planning, when we do the Human Services Needs Assessment, we’re planning to add some questions about COVID-19 to see the effect of the pandemic on our agencies, their livelihoods and how they serve their clients and their clients’ needs. We also do updated local demographic information to look at a whole series of looking at who is in our community, age, gender, ethnicity, and to see what the changes are in Palo Alto over the years, and see if that affects the priority of needs that the HRC decides upon. The HRC gets all this information, and they make a recommendation for the priority of needs. What you see in front of you is the priority of needs that was used in the last HSRAP cycle. You will see, it’s extremely extensive. You will not find this extensive list of priority of needs – or, acceptable funding areas is probably a better way of saying it – in most funding programs. When we looked in the past at what other cities do, sometimes they only focus on two or three areas. They say youth and seniors, and that’s it. So, prior HRCs have made the decision that they are really looking at a diverse array of needs in the community to make a broader impact. These are the Priority of Needs from the last HSRAP cycle. I will let you know that in the next couple weeks, I will be sending out the next Human Service Needs Assessment, and in the next month we will be reviewing the demographic information and collecting it. On the next HRC agenda, you will see the results of the current Human Services Needs Assessment, and you will work with staff to approve a Priority of Needs for the next HSRAP cycle. This isn’t something that’s coming in several months from now. This is coming really soon. How does it work? How does an agency apply for HSRAP? Well, it’s managed through the City’s Purchasing Department, which may

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seem odd, but they have a very robust and rule-guided approach to getting proposals in. That has been very helpful, to have a very professional approach to accepting these applications. We send out a proposal. We send it out to what we call a bidder's list, which is just a fancy name for a list of providers that provide services that are listed on the Priority of Needs to Palo Alto residents. It doesn't have to be an agency that's in Palo Alto, but they have to serve Palo Alto residents. That's the only thing that we will approve. They might have a program that is cross-jurisdictional, but in their application, they will speak directly to the amount of Palo Altans that are served by the program. We ask them to go to what we call a pre-bid meeting, because we want the folks that fill out the application to really know what we are looking for, to know what the application criteria is, and to answer their questions about the paperwork. It is a significant amount of paperwork. For those that have sat on the Emerging Needs Fund application, that's basically a two-page application in ten questions. This is intensive. We usually get at least a 30- to 35-page application from each of the applicants, so we really want them to make sure they know what they're applying for, what the qualifications are and answer any questions. All the applications are submitted via an online e-procurement site that our Purchasing Department runs, so there is no turning in of applications in person. So, what are we looking for? What do we ask people to submit to us when they turn in an application? We ask for a proposal summary. That takes everything in the entire application and gives a two-page summary of the proposal. A proposal narrative that asks a series of questions about what they plan to do, how they plan to do it, who will they be serving, what would be the impact of the service provided, why this service is necessary in Palo Alto. We ask, "Are you asking for money just to pay for supplies to do such a program, or are you asking for funding to pay for staffing?" I would say that the majority of the HSRAP grants that we get are from organizations asking for us to pay for a staff member to provide the services. Sometimes there are auxiliary services that they ask for as well, but the majority of funding requests we get are for staff. So, we ask for a specific budget. We ask them, "What does it cost you to run the entire program?" "What does it cost you to run your entire program for only Palo Alto residents, and what are you actually asking for funding for?" I'll be a little more specific. They might have a program, like a food program, that they help folks in Palo Alto, East Palo Alto and Mountain View. That would be their program budget. Then we would ask, "How much of that program do you spend just on Palo Alto residents? We want to know what that is, so in this grant, how many people are you asking to fund?" They might serve 5,000 people overall, 1,000 people in Palo Alto, but they're asking for funding for 100 Palo Altans. We want to see the different gradations of their budget to help understand it. We also ask for references of other organizations that they get funding from. So, what happens? This is where the HRC really comes into play, and that's in the review process. Once we get all of the applications in, I do a quick look at them and then I am in contact with Erum, my colleague in CDBG. CDBG also funds human services organizations, so Erum and I always want to have a quick conversation to say, "Hey, did you also get an application from this agency? What are they asking in CDBG? What are they asking for in HSRAP? Is it the same? Is it different? Because we want some very deep clarity of what they are requesting from each funding source. Erum will give you more information, but CDBG is a federal funding source.

Chair Smith: So, are you trying to stop double dipping?

Ms. van der Zwaag: We are trying to stop double dipping. Erum, did you want to...

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Ms. Erum Maqbool: Yes, because like Minka was just mentioning, the CDBG is a federal grant and the regulations speak that, as far as CDBG is concerned, we have to make sure that double dipping is not occurring, so that's why me and Minka are in touch constantly, to avoid that.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Thank you. So, then the HRC comes into play. The HRC has a subcommittee, and that subcommittee is the group that does the deep, deep dive on the applications, and I think we have always been blessed with a really great group of commissioners to serve on this subcommittee. It seems to naturally turn out that one person really looks at the budget, one person really looks at the program metrics, and these different skills really come to be complementary in the review process. So, they do the deep dive with staff. They make recommendations based on meeting the Priority of Needs, based on past performance, so that staff will come in, and staff might say, "Yes, they were a grantee last time. A concern we had is they didn't meet any of their performance standards, and now they're asking to meet a higher level, or they were not able to continually turn in their paperwork on time, and so forth." That is just information that the subcommittee uses as part of the process to review. They also make the decision, just like you heard about in the mediation process. Decisions are made based on very specific proposal review criteria. That goes away from, "Oh, I know that agency. I know they do a good job." Well, the HRC subcommittee bases its decisions on the proposal criteria. They come up with a recommendation, and that goes to the full HRC. The full HRC gets all of the applications as well, but the real expectation is that the full HRC reads the proposal summaries, the two-page summary of the entire application, and they leave the real review to that subcommittee. They are really responsible for doing that rigorous review. At that meeting, the applicants, they come in, they are able to address the HRC during Oral Communications, and then the HRC deliberates, or sometimes has follow-up questions for the applicants. The key point that I want to point out is during the subcommittee time and the full HRC time, we can only ask questions based on information they provided on the application. You can't ask them a question that's just interesting to you if you don't ask that same question to all of the other applicants. That's a key part of the review. After the HRC makes a recommendation it goes to the Council Finance Committee. That, in years past, mostly has meant that the recommendations of the HRC is just included as a page of the draft budget that comes from my department, which is the Community Services Department. There usually is not a separate discussion of each applicant at the Finance Committee level. For those that have been on the Commission a long time, for instance, Commission Savage, she might remember that we used to have a separate meeting with the Finance Committee, and we did go over kind of a high-level review, much like the subcommittee does with the full HRC. That doesn't happen any longer. So then, the Finance Committee approves basically my department's budget, of which HSRAP is a part, and it just becomes part of the full draft budget that goes to the City. So then, let's say the City approves the budget and all of these agreements, we turn them into actual contracts with the different grantees. We go back to them and we ask them to redo what we call the Scope of Services. Scope of Services is really just a fancy word for their goals and objectives and what they will accomplish. The reason why we ask them to redo it, is often an applicant will ask for \$100,000 in funding, for example, and their levels of service reflect that level of grant, but they were only awarded \$30,000, so they need to look back and resubmit what they will accomplish in those same service areas. They can't all of a sudden, if they were asking to house homeless folks, they can't come back and say, "You gave us \$30,000. Now we're going to use it for food." It has

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to be in the same areas that was on their application, and they make changes and adjustments to the scope. They provide it to staff. We have our Purchasing and our Attorney's office write up a contract. Everybody reviews it. It gets signed, and now they're a HSRAP grantee. After they're a HSRAP grantee it's not like we don't talk to them for the next two years. They are responsible for sending in semi-annual reports, a very specific report of how they're meeting their service requirements in the Scope of Service. They turn in quarterly payments. I should have said that first. They submit requests for payments quarterly. They submit semi-annual performance reports that staff reviews, and then two more things happen. Every two years, usually the HRC makes a visit to the grantees. Usually that's in the first year of the HSRAP cycle, because we don't want it to be too close to the when the decision on HSRAP will be made. That is mostly a social call. You ask, "What are your services?" "Can you give us a tour of your facilities?" "How do they work?" "What do you find as challenges?" It's a chance for the Commissioners to better learn about the different grantees. Then, staff does also a biannual site visit. Ours is different. Ours is more reviewing the contract with them – how they're meeting their performance standards. Do we have any concerns with project and contract management? We have that discussion with the grantees at that time. That is really the end of my presentation, and I'd be happy to answer any questions at this point.

Chair Smith: Minka, thank you so much for that phenomenal presentation. I know that I have a lot of questions, but what I'd like to do again is a round robin. We'll start with Commissioner Savage. We'll give each Commissioner five minutes on this. Commissioner Savage, do you have any questions?

Commissioner Savage: First, it was a very thorough presentation, Minka. Thank you for that. I just want to know the timing about when do we get involved, etc.?

Ms. van der Zwaag: I neglected to say, this whole process is a "we." This process, the staff part, is a "we" between Mary and me, and then it becomes a deeper "we" when we collaborate with Erum in CDBG. The applications usually go out in December/January. We usually give applicants about six to seven weeks to turn in the application, so that's usually in late January. At that point, in early to mid-February, we call the subcommittee of the HRC together. They make their deliberations, with usually coming to the March HRC meeting with their recommendations to try to make an April or a May budget hearing.

Commissioner Savage: Okay. I'm good. Thank you.

Chair Smith: Commissioner Regehr, you have five minutes.

Commissioner Regehr: I just wanted to explain to Sunita...Minka, can you explain the Brown Act a little bit, because I remember watching that meeting the first time, before I was on there and how I was a little confused as a community member why the Commissioners really didn't know as a group?

Ms. van der Zwaag: Why they didn't know as a group what?

Commissioner Regehr: What the process, what the other subcommittee did, because we can't really talk about it amongst ourselves until the meeting, so can you explain that process? Because, I remember watching a meeting and having Commissioner Gabe, I think, that kept on telling people, "I'm sorry. We're not acting like we're ignorant, but we just don't know because we haven't been able to talk amongst ourselves before it was presented."

Ms. van der Zwaag: The Brown Act, when the Commission was of seven and the subcommittee had three members, that meant that before the subcommittee's recommendations came through the full Commission, they could not talk to anybody else, so when the recommendations come to the full Commission, that is the full Commission's first look at the applications. That speaks to the Brown Act, but it also speaks to the key role that the subcommittee plays in doing a thorough vetting of the applications and having a very thorough written report and oral report to the full Commission on the process that took place before it got to them. But the HRC will have, with plenty of time before they make a full HRC recommendation to the Finance Committee, they will have access to the applications. Now, what they can't do is then they can't start talking to each other about what they think about them before they come together as a full body in an open and noted meeting.

Commissioner Regehr: Right.

Chair Smith: Do you have any other questions, Commission Regehr?

Commissioner Regehr: No. I just remembered the first time when I wasn't on the Commission listening to this, so I thought it was important for the community and also to know that when we come together, we haven't discussed it as a group. That was a clarification more than a question. Thank you, Minka.

Chair Smith: I think integrity of the Commission is so important, so thank you for that question. Commissioner Sunita, do you have any questions?

Commissioner de Turreil: Is there any outreach done, or do organizations that are interested just find out that there's a fund and are able to submit applications? How does that work for public knowledge of these programs?

Ms. van der Zwaag: Sure. We create what we called the Bidders List. That is a list of 40 agencies serving Palo Altans that we know about. What I try to do every year – obviously, the current grantees are on the list – I do down the Priority of Needs and Mary and I talk together, and we look at our Bidders List, and we say, "Is there any other agency?" We go through our database. We maintain a database of organizations that serve Palo Altans, called our Family Resources Site. We look through that database to see if there's any other organizations that we would like to add to the list. Any organization that is in a Priority of Needs is free to let us know as well. What we haven't done, and we can consider doing this time, we haven't specifically, for instance, put an ad in the *Palo Alto Weekly*. We do very specifically look at every single Palo Alto organization that we can think of and we know of. I have a listing of all the non-profits in Palo Alto and try to add those to the list that aren't currently there. The HRC is more than welcome to help me advertise that and get additional names on the list.

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Commissioner de Turreil: I was thinking specifically, like you mentioned, these organizations that may, as part of their mission, serve Palo Alto but be based in Mountain View or East Palo Alto. So those wouldn't necessarily be on the Bidders List, unless you –

[crosstalk].

Ms. van der Zwaag: That is correct.

Chair Smith: Any other questions? Vice Chair?

Vice Chair Stinger: Yes, I do. Thank you, Minka. That was helpful, even thinking that I had gone through the process and knew it, I still had it all together and learning from that. I did have two questions. One was, how reflective of the current situation do you think this Strategic Needs Assessment is? The one that was done –

Ms. van der Zwaag: In 2012.

Vice Chair Stinger: Yes.

Ms. van der Zwaag: How reflective it still is? Unfortunately, I do tend to read that and a lot of the issues that came up in 2012 are still issues facing the organizations today, so it's not only issues facing their clients, but also issues facing the organization itself. I am really interested this year in our current Needs Assessment when we ask the additional questions for COVID-19 and how that has affected them organizationally. I speak to non-profits on a regular basis, and I actually just facilitated a meeting with all the HSRAP grantees to hear, along with the City Manager, how COVID-19 has affected them. I think this survey, which they know is coming, will help the HRC understand a little bit better of the financial situation that a lot of them are in and the ways in which they have pivoted to serve their clients. Does that answer your whole question, or did I miss an aspect of it?

Vice Chair Stinger: No, you did not miss an aspect of it. I continue to wish that we could redo that.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Yes. I am hopeful that before the next HSRAP process – that would be two years from this fall – I am hoping that at some point in the next fiscal year – so that starts next July 1st – that I will be able to get some funding to have a more thorough professional assessment. That's really dependent on funding internally that I am able to request and hopefully be allocated.

Vice Chair Stinger: If I can comment, it really makes a lot of sense. I've been wanting to proceed with a full review thinking it's just time. It's five to eight years, but going out in two years or a year-and-a-half or whatever that would be, makes sense, because we'd have the impact of COVID, but we'd also have the settling into a new norm, so that's a very good time to do that. The other question is, when will we decide when our subcommittees...

Ms. van der Zwaag: That would be up to the Chair.

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Vice Chair Stinger: Okay.

Chair Smith: January. I have a couple of questions. I like the Vice Chair's point about the update, so I think we can write a letter or something to City staff or the Council to encourage that this needs to be done because of the changing environment. I have a question for you about, particularly, the effectiveness, and how do we judge the effectiveness of organizations? Because, given the current changes and challenges that are happening, we are seeing a lot of nonprofits and for-profit organizations falter financially, and we are a significant funding source. I would really like for us to know about organizations that are faltering or that have issues or challenges. How are we protecting our investment to make sure that people are getting the right services in the long run? I don't know if I made that clear. It's a hard question to ask, but I think it's an important question to ask at this point.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Right. I want to go from that on two aspects. This is a grant funding program. They are responding to the Priority of Needs that we have established. It is not specifically that the City is asking for a specific service to be provided, so we do have some contracts with some nonprofits. Let's just take Project Sentinel. We have said in our contract with them, "If you want to have this contract, we are asking you to do these very specific things." With HSRAP and with, at least our grant program, the Priority of Needs is quite broad. It is a question if the HRC wants to be a little more specific in certain needs to be met and certain populations to be served. I will say that that would probably be a very challenging conversation for the HRC to have, because the current Priority of Needs is so broad, and the current list of HSRAP grantees, many of them have been grantees for many years. There is no obligation. Every time a grant cycle comes up, a grantee must request the funding again and be approved. But past HRCs have found it very hard to whittle the Priority of Needs down and, unless there's a huge issue, not provide funding to a grantee. Now, what I hear you saying might be greater input to the Review and Selection Committee in that it is the desire of this current HRC panel to look a little more deeply into an organization's finances. They do provide a program budget. We could ask for an organizational budget. I think what is very challenging is having HRC members review a program budget, sometimes a multimillion-dollar nonprofit, without adequate financial background. Making assumptions about what they see without knowing if that's actually the case. That would be a concern of mine. As far as real review, that is the information that Mary and I bring to the review meetings of any questions and concerns of the management of the grant. This will be an interesting year, because –

Chair Smith: That's what I'm thinking.

Ms. van der Zwaag: No, one of the things that came up at the meeting that the City Manager was present at, for the HSRAP grantees, just this Tuesday was they asked for some lenience if they had not met their level of program needs, if they were going to serve 100 clients and they only served 50. It makes it a little hard going into this cycle when we're just getting off of COVID. I think what staff can be very clear of in the pre-proposal meeting is that we want them to take a hard and cold look at what they're asking money for and that it is areas of solid programming, that the levels of clients that they will be serving, that they've been very reflective that what they're asking for funding for is meeting the core needs of their clients, and maybe just not keeping a favorite program afloat, but looking organizationally to say, "What are the needs of

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our core clients at this time?” Sometimes what grantees like about City of Palo Alto money, because we are so broad in what we allow them to bring to us. Many funding sources say, “We will only fund A, B and C,” and they’re very specific, so it allows them to be a little more flexible, saying, “Okay, they’re very specific. I’m going to ask for funding from the Lilly Foundation for that, because they are very specific,” and we’re a little more – I don’t want to use the word lenient – but a little broader. That has been very valued by grant applicants to HSRAP, in that we see some of the needs and see their approach to meeting the needs a little broader as well, so it’s a lot of interwoven understanding of nonprofits in general, but the local landscape and our grantees.

Chair Smith: My final question, and then I’ll go to Commissioner Regehr. I’m significantly concerned that the pandemic has created a lot of different financial stresses and societal stresses. This cycle is going to be absolutely critical in helping meet a lot of needs, so I know you’re asking questions in the survey. How are we asking questions to really understand and flex, because what would be a tragedy is if we fund \$300,000 to historic programs, and miss the opportunity to fund \$150,000 to something that’s meeting a really pressing need today that’s generated by the COVID pandemic and the financial fallout and the layout.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Right. There’s nothing that stops the HRC Selection Committee and the full HRC to say, “We have \$500,000. We will divide \$300,000 of our historic grantees, or grantees that are meeting specific needs, whether they have been a HSRAP grantee before or not, and then we will take \$200,000 to meet new needs. That’s going to make for very hard decision-making, as far as the subcommittee and the full HRC, but that is within the prerogative of the HRC to look at it that way.

Chair Smith: Okay. Commissioner Regehr.

Commissioner Regehr: I just wanted to say...I lowered my hand because you asked the question.

Chair Smith: Thank you. We’re on the same wavelength. Commission Sunita, do you have a question?

Commissioner de Turreil: Yes. I was just looking at the list that you had in your slide. The title was Priority of Needs, and next to the last HSRAP cycle, so those are the needs, I suppose, that were basically addressed in the last cycle? That isn’t a complete list of all the needs that have been addressed in the past or could be added to future HSRAP cycles?

Ms. van der Zwaag: Correct, but I think past Commissions have found that it’s so diverse already that sometimes there’s this given and take off, “Okay, if we include something, do we take something away? Do we add to it? You’re not going to get any more money next year to the best of my understanding.” So, it’s a real give and take as far as what you add. It would be my hope that if something was suggested to be added, it would be based on results of the Priority of Needs assessment, because what has happened very often with the panel is, “Well, I really think that this issue is really important.” I don’t want to dismiss for any second an area of need that a Commissioner feels is very important. Staff has those opinions as well. But we need to be able to say, “We base this priority of need based on past history of needs and [distortion].”

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Commissioner de Turreil: Okay. I was just noticing that there was LGBTQ issues, and we're calling out particular communities or groups, and I was wondering if, for example, given all of the historic systemic racism that there's been, if we might have their black and brown communities as well called out?

Ms. van der Zwaag: That is certainly the prerogative of the HRC to have this discussion next meeting, certainly.

Chair Smith: Commissioner Sunita, do you have another question? And then I'll go to Commissioner Regehr. Patti, you're still muted. We'll go to Valerie and then we'll come back to Patty. Valerie?

Vice Chair Stinger: My question is, is there a way we can foster some creativity perhaps in partnerships? I'm wondering if daycare is a need, and we have The Y providing daycare and PACCC. I'm just curious if the Commission could do some more to say, how can we really funnel the money that's available within the City, our HSRAP money, our CDBG money, donor money. I don't know, maybe one organization takes on one age group? I don't know what it would be, because I can't be creative on the spot, but it just strikes me that there might be different partnerships in this area.

Ms. van der Zwaag: I hear maybe two things, and maybe I'm misunderstanding you, Vice Chair. Are you asking that staff or the HRC look at some local funding sources to make sure that we're not all just funding the same agencies, or are you looking ahead of time, are you looking for grantees to work collaboratively to further deepen their impact on certain issues in the community?

Vice Chair Stinger: Well, that was my question, but I like the first option, also, that you laid out. I think that's important. Maybe I'm thinking of the workshops that Human Services has done in the past. There were different HSRAP grantees brought in to look at grant writing and telling your story. I just wondered if there would be room for exploring partnerships to make sure that we don't leave out a segment that needs attention.

Ms. van der Zwaag: With this question I also hear two aspects of it. One is to encourage our grantees to maybe work with other partners in the community that aren't giving grants to see if they together further their impact in a certain area. I will say that what I have seen during COVID with the nonprofits that I have worked with is an incredible amount of mutual aid with each other. I'll just use an example of La Comida, which is the congregational meal site. They, during his pandemic, have provide all of the meals for the Women's Shelter, for the Heart and Home Collaborative while they were at the Unitarian Church. They provide meals to a low-income housing complex. So, in some of these meetings we've had together, one member said, "Oh, my seniors at my shelter don't have enough to eat. I'm asking the community to provide meals," and La Comida says, "Well, we can do that for you," so there has been, during COVID, a real coming together of nonprofits to help. We're just calling it mutual aid. That is some form of mutual aid or greater working together can be emphasized in when we have, we call it the pre-bid meetings, or the pre-application meeting. They do get points. When they're being reviewed, there's like a grid of points. They do get points for working collaboratively with others.

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Chair Smith: I'm going to ask Commissioner Regehr to ask the last question of Minka, and then I want to have Erum come forward and present. She's been so patiently waiting, and I don't want to keep her here all night.

Commissioner Regehr: Right, so Minka and Erum, too, it could go to either one of you. I have two questions. One is, when I was on the County Human Relations Commission in another state, we did a needs assessment to the community, not to the agencies. So, the needs assessment, you're doing it to the agencies and asking them what their –

Ms. van der Zwaag: Correct.

Commissioner Regehr: So, is it possible that we could do a turnaround and not do that, but ask the community? Because, when you say seniors, it's having to know if these are a wealthy senior, because for some agencies they don't break down. That's what I'm saying – instead of doing a needs assessment from agencies can we do a needs assessment to the community?

Ms. van der Zwaag: I would say that if we had had this discussion several months ago that could have been a possibility. At this point, with the timeframe that we have, I would like to continue working with the agencies. I do ask them to share the surveys with those that they work with and then next time when we do the bigger needs assessment – well, we did the big one last time and we were able to reach out more to the community – but I do also ask if agencies shared the survey with those that they work with but I will have to be honest, at this time in the turnaround to get the Priority of Needs to the HRC by the next meeting, given the other projects that I was working on, I would say for this needs assessment, it will have to go through the service providers and have them work with the people they work with. To be honest, the Priority of Needs is so broad that it covers the majority of needs. I don't have the capacity to offer a broader –

Commissioner Regehr: I guess my next question is, can we ask to see their...I have a problem with using money from the City, funding an agency that might have more money than our own City, and we're laying off people and we're helping another agency that has a lot of money. Can we ask for their financial tax return? So that we can see exactly how much they're spending on and what they're doing?

Ms. van der Zwaag: The grantees, when they are actually grantees, we do get a copy of their audited financials every year, so we do look at that. I would have to check with our Purchasing Department, because they manage the process, if that is something we can specifically ask for, but I would caution what I stated earlier, that just having HRC Commissioners who may or may not have a background in reviewing pretty complex financial statements, I would hate to make assumptions without having a full vetting of that, so that would be my real concern.

Commissioner Regehr: I know who you're directing it to, Minka, so we will leave it at that. But I think it's important to know what their financial stuff and give us credit that we know what we're looking at when we do it across the board.

Ms. van der Zwaag: I was not directing it at any specific person. I'm sorry if there was any feeling of that, but I'm just saying...

Commissioner Regehr: Okay, thank you.

Chair Smith: Everybody, thank you so much. Erum, I would like for you to start, please.

Ms. Maqbool: Good evening, Chair Smith and Commissioners. My name is Erum Maqbool, and I manage the Community Development Block Grant program for the City. I'm here tonight to provide a brief overview of the CDBG program and the annual funding allocation process. The City of Palo Alto receives annual grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development as an entitlement city under the Community Development Block Grant, also known as the CDBG program. It is a federal program, a federal grant, that is provided to each city to improve the physical, economic and social condition in their communities, primarily for persons of low and moderate income. The activity that can be funded through CDBG must meet one of the three national objectives. Goal number one is to benefit low and very low-income persons. Goal number two is to aid in prevention or elimination of slums or blight. Three is to meet other community needs that are particularly urgent for the low-income community. The Department of Housing and Urban Development requires preparation of a five-year plan, referred to as a Consolidated Plan. This is required to address the housing and community development needs and to set goals for attaining identified objectives. The Consolidated Plan is scattered out through action plans that we create annually. The Annual Action Plan outlines activities implementing the objectives and goals identified in the Comp Plan. We just recently adopted the Consolidated Plan, which is effective from July 1, 2020, until June 30, 2025. The City Council adopted that on June 15th. Along with the Consolidated Plan, the City also adopted the Annual Action Plan for fiscal year 2021. It's not a given how much funding we receive, but approximately the entitlement grant that we receive every year is around \$500,000. We are preparing the budget for the CDBG allocations. We have to also include the program income that we receive every year from the previous loans that we have provided to affordable housing developments. That's called program income. We approximately receive \$150,000 of program income every year. Also, if there are any other prior year CDBG resources, we also have to include those while preparing the budget. For example, if we have received \$500,000 adding all of the program income in the prior year resources, we typically are able to fund eight to nine programs, but this year was a bit unique. We received additional CARES funding through HUD. We received the first round in April of 2020, and then the second round was just announced on September 11th, so we received, actually, an additional \$750,000. That's like one more grant in the same year. So, due to the additional CARES funding, we are able to fund approximately 13 to 15 programs this year. The CDBG, like HSRAP, we operate on a two-year funding cycle. However, for capital improvement projects, which mainly are housing rehab or public facilities like Community Health Center or anything, we receive applications annually. We follow the formal application process for funding allocations. We publish the Notice of Funding Availability every two years, but like I mentioned before, for capital improvement projects, we publish the NOFA every year. We publish in newspapers, as in *The Daily Post* to announce the availability of funding, send letters to interested agencies, which are approximately 60 to 70, and then we also email an announcement in the Regional Housing Planner Group and the CDBG Coordinator's Group. We meet every two weeks, and we also look whenever we publish the

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NOFA and whenever any other jurisdiction publishes their NOFA, we announce that in the meetings, too. So, in case of there is any other agency in another city where they want to serve Palo Alto residents, they should also know that we have grant available. For capital improvement projects, we try to schedule in person meetings, too, because the funding for capital improvement projects is very specific. It should go only towards housing rehab, affordable housing or public facilities. The property needs to be in Palo Alto, and there are a not a lot of properties, not a lot of agencies interested in them, the specific capital improvement grant. Because we follow the Davis-Bacon rule, the project is prevailing wage, which the contractors usually hesitate to pick. We usually have problems in allocating this funding. The key elements, the general content of an application package, consists of the project summary, target population, to ensure that the project caters to the low and moderate people, because this is the hard regulations that the grant should cater towards, the low and moderate people. We also ask for target population, the capacity of an agency to carry out the project and their experience with the federal grants, and their understanding of the federal regulations, because CDBG is a very complex program. The agencies, before they are planning, to know that it's not coming out of a general fund. It doesn't have a lot of flexibility. Also, we ask for budget and ask what is the capital improvement projects are concerned. We also ask for a timeline for a project, because you know, every year in April we have to do an audit to see if we are spending enough money. If we are not spending enough money, then the first year, they provide us a warning that you have this money and you're not spending, and if it's occurring for two consecutive years, the City can be on probation. So, we have to be very careful when we are providing funding that the agency has the capacity to carry out the project. The funding allocation process is very, exactly similar to what HSRAP process is. We publish the Notice of Funding Availability every year in November, and we then conduct two pre-proposal conferences in December, usually first week of December, and second week of December is when we conduct the pre-proposal conferences. Again, for the agencies if they have any questions related to the regulations, if they are having any problem in filling out the application, if they are having problem in identifying the national objective that they qualify for, so things like those. We conduct pre-proposal conferences and then the deadline to submit the applications usually is early January. Then we start the staff review of the applications immediately. We coordinate with the Human Services staff. We call Mary. We coordinate that. We see the Scope of Services, again, to avoid the double dipping, if you're not funding the same programs, the same goals and all of that. Then we schedule the meeting with the HRC Selection Committee, which usually happens end of February. After the HRC Selection Committee, we send all of the application content to the Commissioners who volunteer to serve on the Selection Committee. The application, like Minka mentioned, it's a fairly long application, like 20 to 30 pages of application and the attachments that we ask, the financial order, their bylaws, their employee handbook and all of that, we ask the agencies to submit. After the Selection Committee recommendations, in March, we go to the full HRC to present the funding allocation that's coming through the Selection Committee. After the full HRC, we incorporate the funding recommendations into our Annual Action Plan and then secure the Annual Action Plan for a Public Comment period for 30 days. In between, in April, we go to the City Council Finance Committee to present our Annual Action Plan, which is still in the middle of Public Comment period, but we want to do a more public hearing because we want to ensure maximum citizen participation. After the Public Comment period is concluded, we go to the City Council and finally, we submit our Annual Action Plan to HUD. The deadline always is May 15th. Sometimes

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if they announce the allocations late – like in 2018, they announced the allocations for each city in April, so it was difficult for us to do all the process in a month, so they provided us an extension for two months, all over the County, not just for the City of Palo Alto. The program administration, it's exactly the same as HSRAP. We draft new agreements on the first year of the funding cycle, and of course every year, because the capital improvement project is annual, we draft new agreements. As for the capital improvement project, because it is affordable housing rehab mostly, we have also, by drafting agreement, we also have to follow the City Housing Fund guidelines, because we want to make sure that the funding that we are providing to the projects, we want to ensure maximum affordability. If an agency is applying for a grant less than \$150,000, as per the Housing Fund guidelines, affordability terms should be at least 33 years. If it's more than \$150,000, then it's 50 or 55 years. I'm sorry, I don't exactly remember, but it's between 50 to 55 years. We make these terms part of the agreement for capital improvement projects, just for housing, not for public facilities. For the rest of the agreements – the public services, Project Sentinel, economic development – we redo the Scope of Services based on the contract amount. If they are getting more money, we also increase their goals. For example, they receive \$300,000 one year and they are just assisting 30 people, and they are receiving \$350,000 the next year, we would like them to increase their goals, too, because they are getting more money. Then, the contracts are drafted and reviewed by the City Attorney and reviewed by the grantees, and then we just execute the contract. As far as the monitoring and the reimbursements are concerned, we make quarterly payments. After making the quarterly payments, we have to submit a report to HUD on their site, which is called IDIS, because what we are doing is we are doing the reimbursement out of the general funds, and after we submit the report to HUD is when we get the money from HUD. If we have spent this much in this quarter, so, "Can you please reimburse us back?" So, the quarterly reimbursement report to HUD and the from the sub recipients we ask for a semi-annual report to see how they are doing, if they are having any problems, if the City can help them with anything, with outreach, like if they are not getting a lot of case management cases, things like those. And then, the year-end report, to track the goals. Again, like HSRAP, we do site visits, monitoring visits, for sub grantees every two years. For the financial portion of the agencies, we have specifically hired a consultant to look at their audit reports and all of that, to see if everything looks fine. They are able to carry out the project. How much they are spending on work and all of that, so specifically for the financial side, we have a CDBG consultant to do the monitoring. So, at the end of the fiscal year they re-submit the year-end performance report to HUD, like how the City of Palo Alto did in the previous fiscal year. Somehow that's how our allocation is also decided, so they also, HUD wants to see how we are spending money, if we are spending money on the correct goals and the correct national objectives. This was the brief overview. I am available for any questions that you may have. Thank you.

Chair Smith: Okay, wow. First of all, thank you so much and thank you for clarifying the different objectives of the program versus HSRAP. I think this was a great session. We're going to do round robins now. Given the lateness of the hour, I want to give each person three minutes for the first round of questions, and then if you need to expand out, we will do that. I would like to start with Commissioner Savage.

Commissioner Savage: You covered it, Erum. Thank you. Very thorough. I thought I knew it all. I didn't, but now maybe I do, so thanks a lot.

Chair Smith: Commissioner Regehr.

Commissioner Regehr: I just want to say thank you very much for the presentation, and also your hard work, because I was on that committee. I had a couple of questions for you. Seeing that it's COVID still and we're not sure what it's going to be like in January and February, is it possible to have the community participate? Like, can we film our subcommittee meetings, that one meeting when we're going over that, for transparency? Because, even as of today, there's been accusations about how that meeting went down last time, and then there was not a process where the whole decision was brought up to the HRC, because under the auspices of the COVID, and yet we did have a meeting before the Finance Committee and before the City Council, so you guys bypassed us, and I'd like to know why, and I don't want that to continue for next year. So, is it possible, one, to film it, and two, to ensure no matter what's going on with the Finance Committee that we don't get bypassed this year?

Ms. Maqbool: Commissioner Patti, our regulations are, we have to take the CDBG item – this is requirement from HUD – two times, in one fiscal year or two-program years. Because we have a deadline to follow, we had to submit our annual action plan by May 15th that we were actually provided an extension to. We couldn't have waited for the HRC to resume their services, because then our action plan would have been postponed, and we would have been penalized for that. Because we are following the HUD deadlines.

Commissioner Regehr: Were we asked to have an emergency meeting? Did you guys ask us?

Ms. Maqbool: No.

Chair Smith: Commissioner Regehr –

[crosstalk]

Commissioner Regehr: I'm just saying on the timeline, so that is one question.

Chair Smith: Commissioner Regehr, if I remember the timeline correctly, all Commission meetings were suspended by the City in the months of, I believe, March, April and May.

Ms. van der Zwaag: We met in May.

Chair Smith: But their date was already past at that point.

Commissioner Regehr: That's not. I'm sorry.

Chair Smith: Commissioner Regehr, please –

[crosstalk]

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Commissioner Regehr: I don't want to argue. I'm just asking if we can ensure next year –

Chair Smith: Please don't –

Commissioner Regehr: Let me finish, Kaloma.

Chair Smith: You have cut me off twice.

Commissioner Regehr: I was talking. It's my time, Kaloma.

Chair Smith: Commissioner Regehr, I answered a question, and then you spoke –

Commissioner Regehr: No. My question wasn't directed to you. It was directed to Erum. I know what the timeline was. I'm asking for this year, that we can have an emergency meeting. We can have...because there was a time period that we could have done that. So, for next year, I would like to state, since that is the process you just outlined, can we ensure that that will happen this year?

Ms. Maqbool: Commissioner Patti, definitely on a typical year. Every year we follow that timeline, but if there are unusual circumstances, how are we going to follow the same timeline when the Commission meetings are suspended? We don't want to delay our report submissions to HUD that are required by a certain time. Otherwise, we will not be getting this grant.

Commissioner Regehr: I totally understand that, but we could meet. We could have done it, is what I'm saying. We didn't have to say...And also, my other question was about filming that meeting, and also about transparency, about staff sending memos about what happened in that meeting to City Council meeting without having the Human Resources Commission, in the civil discussion, discuss it.

Ms. Maqbool: We actually provided the staff at the meeting all the recommended [distortion] from the action committee or required of the Finance Committee reports. Everything that you mentioned, specifically, about a certain agency.

Commissioner Regehr: I'm talking about transparency, so I'm asking that we film those meetings, so when people want to see what happened, they can see it.

Ms. Maqbool: Commissioner Patty, I can talk to about this with upper management. I cannot make a decision at this point

[crosstalk]

Commissioner Regehr: I guess that's my question –

[crosstalk]

Commissioner Regehr: Can we look into to see if that's a possibility, so that the City and the Human Resources Commission can be transparent, and people can see, that aren't there, what's going on, because we'll probably be doing it, again on Zoom.

Ms. Maqbool: Yes.

Commissioner Regehr: Thank you.

Chair Smith: Thank you so much, Commissioner Regehr.

Commissioner de Turreil: Thank you for that informative presentation. I have no questions.

Chair Smith: Vice Chair Stinger.

Vice Chair Stinger: I just want to thank Erum, consistently guide us through some difficult discussions at the subcommittee level. You come well prepared, and you did that again tonight. Thank you.

Chair Smith: Erum, first of all, thank you for the hard work, and we know that this year has been extremely challenging, given that you said it in your presentation, that you received an extra grant, extra \$750,000 this year. Will the extra grant, and with what's going through Congress at this time – I know you don't have a crystal ball – but do you project that having an impact on our process or increasing the amount of funding we will possibly see as a municipality?

Ms. Maqbool: I actually read the CARES Act, as far as the CDBG funding is concerned. The next grant most probably will be based on – because this is a formula grant. For the CARES grant that we received, we received it twice, and it was based on the number of positive cases that each county is having. Because Santa Clara, there are a lot of cases, so we were actually provided \$750,000, which is more than what we receive annually. Again, I'm not sure, but I do think that we are going to get more than what we usually get this coming year.

Chair Smith: How does that impact our process? And how do you see that impacting where we fund, what we fund? I know there are restricted funds and different things like that, so I would love to know, how does that work?

Ms. Maqbool: Sure. You know, for the CDBG grant, there are specific categories in which we can allocate funding, so one is Public Services. Number two is Administration, which usually the jurisdiction who is administrating the program, they can keep 20 percent of the total grant, but in the case of Palo Alto, we have also included Project Sentinel in the Administration category, because HUD allows us, so we keep less. We give a part of our administration money to Project Sentinel. The current category is Economic Development, and (inaudible) we have been Public Facilities. So, these are the restrictions. There are spending caps on Public Services. We cannot give more than 15 percent. For administration, we cannot keep more than 20 percent. For the rest of those three categories, there are no caps. What happened in fiscal year 2021 was HUD removed the public service spending cap, and we provided as much as we wanted. We provided Mayview Community Health \$70,000 just for COVID testing and PPE equipment, while in the

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past, with that 15 percent spending cap, we couldn't have done that. We might have provided them \$5,000, \$10,000, because usually we can just give \$80,000 to \$90,000 to five or six applicants. This happened last year. At this point, we don't know if they are going to keep removing the spending caps for public services, but if they do, then definitely we'll have more flexibility to allocate our funding to different public service agencies.

Chair Smith: And then, that would be part of our deliberation –

Ms. Maqbool: Yes.

Chair Smith: Or is that a separate –

Ms. Maqbool: No. Everything is going to be part of the Selection Committee, and the HRC.

Chair Smith: Because of the uniqueness of the time we live in, there is going to be more funding. This might be once in a lifetime kind of year coming up, as far as funding. Am I overstating that?

Ms. Maqbool: More funding, actually we have received more funding, so I'm not sure if we are going to get more money as part of the entitlement grant is concerned, but the thing with CARES grant is, we just received \$450,000. We were notified on September 11. Staff recommendation was to include that \$450,000 in the upcoming grant and take it through the regular allocation process. We spoke to HUD – because of course, we are getting funding from HUD – but HUD didn't agree with this plan. They want us to spend all that money soon. Yes. They said because the pandemic is happening right now, we don't want you to go through the lending or process. This is what we they ask us to do. So, we have to expedite our process as far as the \$450,000 is concerned.

Chair Smith: Okay. This is all very good. I would like to open up to if anybody has any other questions. Yes, Vice Chair.

Vice Chair Stinger: I'm wondering if we could take some initiative with some of the Safe Parking programs.

Ms. Maqbool: Commissioner Valerie, actually when we received the first allocation, we actually reached out to HUD, because that's what Rachael and Jonathon, my Director and Assistant Director, they also want to fund that, but because the regulations, CDBG funding cannot go towards mobile things. This is part of the regulations.

Chair Smith: They have to be permanent structures.

Ms. Maqbool: Exactly. So, one thing is, you can provide case management to the residents of the Safe Parking, but you cannot provide full equipment.

Vice Chair Stinger: Can we provide showers or....

Ms. Maqbool: Yes. We can provide funding for that.

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Chair Smith: Okay. We'll be talking tomorrow. I have somebody that wants to fill out a grant for you. Okay, great question. First of all, I want to say thank you to Minka and Erum for spending time tonight. We'll talk about emerging needs next month, Minka. I know I had tagged it on message, but I think we are going into overtime. Human Relations Commissioners and fellow Commissioners, we are sitting at a pivotal time. We are in charge of close to a million dollars of funding at this moment, and it might be more depending on what happens in D.C., as far as aid packages and different things that happen. I was reading in the paper today; it was like a \$2.2 trillion package was attempted to pass through Congress. It becomes incumbent on us to focus on the least and the lost and those with the most needs. Our job, as Human Relations Commission, right now is to really meet the needs of people, so I wanted to ask staff tonight to really explain the processes. I wanted them to talk about the restrictions, the limitations, the places that we can and cannot. Valerie validated this. If nothing else happens out of tonight, the thinking that Valerie just applied around the Safe Parking and bathroom structures and the staffing stuff, those are the kind of thinking we need in Palo Alto now. I read in the *New York Times*, I think two days ago, they said our current economic challenges are disproportionately hitting low income individuals, and these funds are designed to be there. So, I'm asking that this year we be extra intentional with working with staff and finding those places that we can get funding to. This is something that we can do, something very tangible, something very life changing. I'll be honest. I am really concerned with expediting the process as fairly and quickly as possible, because the longer we tie stuff up in committees there is somebody that doesn't have housing. There's somebody that might not have a meal. There's somebody that might be struggling to pay rent, and we want to make sure that as we work these processes through, we focus on the person that doesn't have resources, the person that can't do a Zoom, the person that can't sit in their house, the person that can't have this conversation. So staff, thank you so, so much for all that you do. Erum, sorry to keep you out for two-and-a-half hours.

Ms. Maqbool: No, thank you for having me.

Chair Smith: I just want to clarify one thing. Where are we in the cycle with CDBG? Are we in year one or two?

Ms. Maqbool: November 2020, we'll be starting the NOFA process, and that will be for the first year of the two-year funding cycle.

Chair Smith: So, we'll have a lot of heaving lifting to do this spring.

Ms. Maqbool: Yes.

Chair Smith: Is that what I'm hearing, Minka?

Ms. van der Zwaag: Right. We'll have heavy lifting to do this spring, but also to realize that we can't really expedite this much more, because this is all – at least for HSRAP – it's for next fiscal year money, so these grants would not start until July 1, 2021. We do have the Emerging Needs Fund, which is a quarterly grant application process. We recently opened that up, and we got requests for \$30,000 more than the fund has for the entire year, so that subcommittee will have a challenge in their trying to review the application, but that is really the only funding we have at

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this point, unless Council, for some reason, allocates more money that can go to nonprofits to respond to needs. We have to remember that last spring that the Emerging Needs Funds did allocate \$80,000 to local nonprofits responding specifically to COVID-19.

Chair Smith: Thank you so much, Minka. Commissioner Regehr.

Commissioner Regehr: Minka, I just had a question. If someone applies for the emergency fund that's up now, does that mean that if they get it they can't apply to the other... Okay.

Ms. van der Zwaag: It means that they can't apply for another Emerging Needs Fund for two years, but they could certainly apply to HSRAP or CDBG.

Commissioner Regehr: Okay, thank you.

Chair Smith: Is there a way...? Who would we have to write a letter to, to address that restriction on emerging needs?

Ms. van der Zwaag: Every two years?

Chair Smith: Yes.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Well, the policy for that fund did come before the HRC at some point a little over a year ago, because it used to be three years, and then it went down to two years. Since the funding is so limited and the real concern was that –

Chair Smith: I remember this now.

Ms. van der Zwaag: The diversity of agencies. If it was every year, that would make it a lot more challenging.

Chair Smith: I think we're in a slightly different time right now.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Yes.

Chair Smith: Maybe we make it an agenda item if we have further discussion. Right now, we are on the minutes.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Actually, Chair, there are actually two more items. If you could ask if any of the attendees wanted to speak to Item 3., HSRAP or CDBG, and then the fourth item is an update on the report on Brown and Black lives, before we go to –

Chair Smith: Okay. Any of the attendees, would you like to, at this time, make any public comment on CDBG or HSRAP? Please use the raise hand function.

Ms. van der Zwaag: I do not see any hands, Chair.

Chair Smith: Thank you so much. Vice Chair, we talked about this on the phone, and I don't believe I tried to rush over it, because we've done so much work on it. Can you please give us a quick overview of where we are in the processing and what to anticipate for November?

Vice Chair Stinger: Okay. We have collected history from Stanford Palo Alto, and we've collected videos, stories from the current lived experience. The Chair and I are a subcommittee, and we'll bring that back in November. We looked at specific events, or historical events, current expressions, and made some observations. Now we need to look at a way to present clearly to Council and decide what our recommendations are, or what are some of the follow-through that would be useful and valuable to this city? We'll bring that back in November.

Chair Smith: Thank you so much. For those of you that did not know, we actually extended the entry timeline to 9/18, so the compilation of material, there's no way to turn the report around of the significance in 12 days. But we are working on it. Do we have any questions from any of the Commissioners?

Vice Chair Stinger: Should we explain for the new Commissioner?

Chair Smith: I spoke to her about it already.

Vice Chair Stinger: Okay, thank you.

Chair Smith: Do we have any public questions on the report?

Ms. van der Zwaag: I do not see any raised hands, Chair.

Chair Smith: All right. Thank you much.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 1. August 13, 2020 Draft Regular HRC Meeting Minutes**
- 2. September 2, 2020 Draft Special HRC Meeting Minutes**

MOTION

Chair Smith: You received two sets of minutes in your packets. I'm going to do them as a joint motion. I want to make a motion that we accept the minutes for August 13, 2020 and September 2, 2020.

Vice Chair Stinger: Can I make a comment?

Chair Smith: You can.

Vice Chair Stinger: In the September 2 minutes, there's a reference to 900 Geng Road, and I think it should be 2000 Geng Road. If we could just correct that, then I would like to make the motion that the August and September minutes be accepted.

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Chair Smith: I can modify the motion to say we accept the minutes for August 13, 2020 and September 2, 2020, with the corrections as pointed out by the Vice Chair on the address on Geng Road.

Ms. Constantino: Excuse me, Chair. Also, Council Member de Turreil, she also sent me a change.

Chair Smith: What is that change, please, Mary?

Ms. Constantino: I don't have in front of me, but on page two of the one that's six pages, I think that was the September 2nd, it said, for Kat Snyder, it said Ms. Smith instead of Snyder. Just a name error.

Chair Smith: So, we will make the motion to accept August 13, 2020 and September 2, 2020, meeting minutes with the name correction and address correction as noted by staff and the Vice Chair. Can I get a second on the motion?

Commissioner Regehr: Second.

Chair Smith: Thank you. We will go to vote now. Commissioner Savage, your vote?

Commissioner Savage: Aye.

Chair Smith: Commissioner Regehr?

Commissioner Regehr: Aye.

Chair Smith: Commissioner Sunita?

Commissioner de Turreil: I need to abstain, because I wasn't part of the meetings. Sorry.

Chair Smith: Thank you. Yes, that is a valid vote to make. Vice Chair?

Vice Chair Stinger: Aye.

Chair Smith: I will vote aye also.

MOTION PASSES, 4-0-1

VI. REPORTS FROM OFFICIALS

1. Commissioner Reports

Chair Smith: Do we have any Commissioner reports? I know a lot of us have been sheltering in place, and a lot of us have been on the phones and helping with different things. If there are any Commissioner reports right now, I would like to hear any of them.

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Commissioner de Turreil: I have a tiny question. What would a Commissioner report look like?

Chair Smith: This is a great question. A Commissioner report would be the events, activities or work that we've done that isn't covered in an item. So, for example, tonight I would say something like, "I worked with International Muslim Group to train San Jose staff on diversity, and I worked with Mountain View PD to do training on police reform." Or, some kind of community stuff that deals with our work in the HRC. When we were able to go places, Commissioners would go to a lot of community-based events. For example, if a group did something, or did something special, or X,Y,Z, they would ask, they would report that out. For example, me and Commissioner Stinger, we've worked on a lot of public forums together, and it took a couple of months to come together so it's not really an item that needs an action or a discussion. It's just an update to the rest of the Commission. I think that's it. Does that answer the question?

Commissioner de Turreil: Yes, so with the intention of just letting folks on the Commission know what might be going on in the community and what we've learned.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Right. You can also bring up if you went to a community meeting and you wanted to bring up an issue related to that, what can't happen is then the Commission starts to discuss the issue and have a conversation, because then it might venture into a violation of the Brown Act, that you're discussing something that wasn't on the agenda. So, it's more informing, and then folks can ask clarifying questions.

Commissioner de Turreil: Thank you.

Chair Smith: Commission Regehr, you had your hand up. You're good? Thank you. Vice Chair?

Vice Chair Stinger: There are also liaison relationships with different organizations, so if I hadn't done the presentation I might have said, "I was liaison to the PAMP Committee, and this is what happened." Or, "I was liaison to Healthy Cities, and this is what happened," so that the full HRC is aware of an activity.

Chair Smith: Thank you. Thank you, Commissioners. I stated this privately at our pre-hearing, but this Commission has worked extremely hard over the last four to five months. You have done some really transformative community work, and I believe with the HSRAP grant and the CDBG that we discussed and some other stuff that we'll continue to work on, I believe that we can continue to have significant impact in our community. Tonight, I really liked what Commissioner Regehr and Vice Chair Stinger talked about, writing very specific letters and languages to City Council and those that are in charge, to get funding so that we can properly survey and know the needs of our community, particularly post COVID, in a very specific way. That's not a volunteer role. We've got to pay somebody for that, so we need to be pushing the City for that, because if we want to offer services, we want to make sure they're in the right place.

2. Council Liaison Report

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Chair Smith: Council Liaisons, they're running for office, so they will come back if they get in office.

3. Staff Liaison Report

Chair Smith: Staff?

Ms. van der Zwaag: Chair, I just have one announcement, and that's something pretty special, because I know the Magical Bridge, which is the inclusive playground at Mitchell Park, they have let us know that they are offering to fund and maintain a 3-D map for the Magical Bridge Playground to help visually impaired visitors better navigate the playground. So, look for that in the future, visually impaired folks can feel and know where things are in the playground. They wanted to let you know that, and I wanted to pass it on.

Chair Smith: Thank you.

VI. TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR NEXT REGULAR MEETING:

Chair Smith: I will say, we have two very clear items coming out of this meeting, leading into the next meeting. Well, three, specific. We have HSRAP. How long do you think that...? And that's a priorities discussion. Staff?

Ms. van der Zwaag: That could take 30 to 40 minutes. We will provide you with the results of the Needs Assessment, so then staff reviews it and asks questions of the Needs Assessment and the demographic information. And then, you have the discussion where you make recommendations to staff on the Priority of Needs, so that could be 30 to 40 minutes.

Chair Smith: I'll go on the long side and call it 45 minutes.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Okay.

Chair Smith: Because it's too important a discussion to rush and not have space to talk about. Will that be an Action Item?

Ms. van der Zwaag: That would be an Action Item. That is correct.

Chair Smith: Thank you. The second item, which will probably be 20 minutes – well, it will be probably half an hour – will be myself and the Vice Chair bringing forward the report City Council and getting everybody's approval to sign off on that and what language and what we'll present to Council around that report. That is the second item. The third item, Commissioner Regehr, you had questions around the site and the parking. Would you like to agendaize that item for the next meeting?

Commissioner Regehr: I'm wondering if we could have a discussion and have someone to discuss the Safe Parking Lot, like maybe have Amber and we could ask questions. I'd like to put that whole discussion of what are we doing for the unhoused, because that has been one of our issues, so I would like that to be an invite, or maybe invite –

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Chair Smith: Rachael?

Commissioner Regehr: Rachael, but also maybe Joe Sabia's [phonetic] office? They are the main people.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Are you asking for what is happening in the unhoused regarding the Safe Parking, or a larger discussion of what's happening...

Commissioner Regehr: I know what's been going on. I've been very active, and I would like to know...Because I think that question today is what are the needs? What is the Human Relations Commission, which is on the agenda tonight? I thought that was for the entire issue of the parking lots. So, I would like to extend it to the parking lot in...

Ms. van der Zwaag: Right. I just want to make clear that you're not asking to consider for a future agenda or the next agenda, and entire discussion of what the City is doing for the unhoused, because that's a much larger presentation.

Commissioner Regehr: Not what the City is doing, but what we can do.

Chair Smith: What we can do. So, I would think –

[crosstalk]

Commissioner Regehr: I guess that's...Because I would...and discussing liaisons, because we have new Commissioners, and I think it's important to have the vote on maybe having a liaison for the Safe Parking Lot program.

Chair Smith: There's two things –

Commissioner Regehr: I don't know how you would word it –

Chair Smith: I think you and I and staff can talk offline, because there's a lot of different moving parts. There's County, City. There is service providers. I can't call them vendors. Vendors doesn't sound good, so its providers.

Commissioner Regehr: Providers.

Chair Smith: You also have other nonprofit entities, such as houses of worship and community people engaged, so I think maybe we can talk tomorrow and figure out which element is a spear tip, or who is leading the charge at this moment, and how can we come alongside them and at least make it a focused discussion around who can we help best at this moment with the portfolio of tools that we have, or that we could possibly have?

Commissioner Regehr: Right. And maybe just not even that. Maybe just discuss liaisons, because we need to assign new liaisons. That alone could maybe –

Chair Smith: I am reserving liaisons to January. We're going to do some stuff around retreat and priorities and all of that in January, so what I want to do is make sure whoever is voted in as the next Chair has the ability to set their liaison, set their priorities. We're at the end of my term, so I don't want...I am not Donald Trump. I don't want to saddle somebody else with my stuff.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Can I ask a clarifying question? When the Chair and Commissioner Regehr speak tomorrow. Just so we're clear that whatever kind of discussion or conversation you want to have at the next meeting or what kind of meeting, that it's with the information you need to make that decision. If you need to know more about homelessness in general to make a decision on something else that maybe think that that information is provided before you have that discussion. We do also have another agenda that has to go next time, because of timing, and that is regarding CDBG, the CPER report. I think stands for the Consolidated Action Performance. It's like a report that they need to turn in to HUD, and the HRC needs to review it before, I think, it goes to the next step along the way.

Chair Smith: What is the level of depth and timing that we need on that, Minka, historically?

Ms. van der Zwaag: My understanding that it has to come next time to make Erum's timeline. Usually in the past it's like if the CDBG reads Erum's report ahead of time, it's like a 15-minute discussion.

Chair Smith: Okay.

Commissioner Regehr: I guess, Kaloma, if we're going to meet in December, by that point we will know what the needs are, hopefully, from the people that are living at Geng Road and we'll know what the needs are from the past meeting. So maybe, if we meet in December, because November seems...I just don't want to keep on prolonging into no action.

Chair Smith: I know. So, let's review these agenda items. I always want to leave at least some slack. We have HSRAP priorities, which is very critical. That's 45 minutes. Is that what we have, staff? We have 15 minutes, if everybody does their homework for CDBG. Will you all read it before we get here? If we do that, that's 15, so that's an hour. We have half an hour for mining Commissioner Stinger's report. Is that correct?

Vice Chair Stinger: I think that's good.

Chair Smith: What else do we have to put...? I'm mentally keeping track of this, so I might have missed something. Is there anything else outside of the housing or parking that we have to address?

Ms. van der Zwaag: I think you're a making a good...to put some times, but also to give leadership the flexibility if something comes up in the next month, to be able to determine what the best timing is for the topics that are coming to you. I don't have the timing on the Safe Parking program on Geng to know when you would have the sufficient information that you would like to have.

Commissioner Regehr: Are we going to meet in December?

Chair Smith: I have been on the Commission three years, and I think two out of three Decembers we haven't met. Is that right, Minka?

Ms. van der Zwaag: That's correct, but that's completely the decision of the HRC. They have sometimes done a holiday gathering together, but this year that's your decision on whether you want to meet or not.

Chair Smith: I honestly am considering not doing a December meeting, given the fact that we have people working significantly through the summer, and given that we're going to have a heavy load and asking a lot of volunteering with CDBG and HSRAP coming up, so let us put the parking thing in November. We'll form it, but I want to be very transparent with the Commission where we are right now. I feel like we've done a lot of work and you've heard from staff tonight that next year is a big year for CDBG and HSRAP. I want us to be a fresh and focused as possible. Plus, in January we want whoever the Chair is to have the ability to do their retreat, come up with the values, come up with all of the other stuff, so it's going to be a little bit of heavy lifting as we get into the first four or five months of next year. That's my current thinking unless something comes up pressing, unless something happens in the world. This is 2020. The sun can possibly hit the earth or something, but that's my current thinking at this time. Does anybody have any significant challenges around that, because I'll ask for a vote on the December next month? I just want to give you my thinking ahead of time.

Commissioner Regehr: My thinking is that we are supposed to be serving the community. We're not supposed to be serving the needs of the staff in that regard, and I feel that we're coming into winter. People are going to be more homeless, and I think that we need to discuss this, no matter how long it is in November, or have a very good discussion in December after we find out what's going on.

Ms. van der Zwaag: I want to provide clarification that it is not staff that is requesting. Staff will honor whatever decision the HRC makes. Staff did not make a request that the December meeting was cancelled.

Commissioner Regehr: I know that. I'm just saying we shouldn't be moved by your timelines. We should be moved by what the needs are of the community. We could accommodate that, but what I'm saying is that we are to serve the community.

Chair Smith: I know, and I think we are serving the... We did say we were going to do the item in November, however it's shaped. Historically, December has been either a time for us to get together as a team that works, or because people travel in December we usually don't have meetings, so historically in my time on the Commission – and maybe Commissioner Savage and Commissioner Sting can help me here – it's been more of a Commissioner-driven decision, not a staff-driven decision. Thank you. Are there any other items I have missed? First of all, I want to say thank you very much to our new Commissioner. Welcome, welcome, welcome. Thank you for asking a lot of great questions and adding a lot of depth and texture to our discussion. I saw you taking a lot of notes, so we'll probably be tapping you for a CDBG or HSRAP position in

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the next few months. So, get ready for that. Thank you all for all that you continue do for the community. Thank you, Vice Chair Stinger for filling in while I had some family situations to deal with. I know it was in good hands. I look forward to talking with you all at our regularly scheduled tie next month. Commissioner Regehr, I'll probably reach out to you around 12:00 tomorrow, and staff, I'll get to you next week with what we want to do around the homeless discussion. Everyone have a good night. Thank you.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Thank you all.

Commissioner Regehr: Good night. Thank you, if anybody's listening, for staying with us.

Chair Smith: Thank you.

Ms. van der Zwaag: One person.

Chair Smith: One person, thank you.

Commissioner Regehr: Thank you that one person.

Vice Chair Stinger: Thank you. Good night all.

Commissioner Regehr: Good night.

VII. ADJOURNMENT