



Housing Commission Minutes [SUBJECT TO APPROVAL]

February 17, 2022 – 7:00 p.m.

This meeting was conducted in accordance with Governor Newsom's Executive Orders N-20-20 and N-35-20 and COVID-19 pandemic protocols

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Galvin called a teleconference meeting of the Housing Commission to order at 7:01 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was recited.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Commissioners Karline Fischer, Neil Kripalani, Vivek Mohan, Tony Soby, and Chairperson Jay Galvin

Commissioners Absent: None.

Staff Present: Steve Hernandez, Housing Manager; and Edith Caponigro, Recording Secretary

Mr. Hernandez informed commissioners that Kate Duggan had resigned from the commission.

AGENDA AMENDMENTS

None.

MINUTES

1. Approve Regular Meeting Minutes of December 16, 2021

Motion made by Commissioner Soby, seconded by Commissioner Fischer, to approve the December 16, 2021 meeting minutes. **The motion approved unanimously.**

Commissioner Kripalani asked about additional information to be provided by Sean Barcelon as reported on in the minutes. Chair Galvin suggested this be brought up under Matters Initiated by Members of the Commission.

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

2. Introductions / Awards / Recognitions

None.

3. Public Comment from the audience regarding items not listed on the agenda

None.

MATTERS BEFORE THE COMMISSION

4. Review of Semi-Annual Progress Reports for FY 2021/22 Housing and Human Services Grant (HHSB) Subrecipients

Mr. Hernandez advised that the seven agencies that were approved funding by the commission for FY 2021/22 were attending the meeting and being allowed two-minutes to provide their semi-annual reports and comment on their accomplishments to date.

Chairperson Galvin noted that two members of the current commission were not members of the commission at the time funding was approved for these agencies in 2021.

Abode Services – Tasha Jefferson and Lakea Williams - advised that the goal of their funding was to provide housing for six, and they have currently provided housing for five in Pleasanton are working on housing for an additional two people and should have sufficient funding remaining to be able to house one more person bringing the total to eight.

Commissioner Kripalani asked about a lack of coordination, collaboration and duplication of services indicated by Abode in question 23. Ms. Williams indicated she was unfamiliar with what Commissioner Kripalani was referencing. Mr. Hernandez informed Commissioner Kripalani that agencies were responding to items required for semi-annual reporting and not questions from the current funding applications. He noted that the next item on the agenda will allow commissioners to ask questions from the application.

Commissioner Soby confirmed with Ms. Jefferson the number of people housed and the anticipated number that Abode is hoping to achieve by the end of the funding cycle. He also asked about the achievements made in locating housing in Pleasanton. Ms. Jefferson commented on changes Abode has made in how it searches for housing and is being more active in the housing search process. She commented on the work of their new housing manager and work being done for increasing income. Ms. Jefferson noted that they already have a housing prospect for one more client and are waiting to determine approval for the client.

Commissioner Soby asked about budget expenditure for the full year, and Ms. Jefferson advised that Abode would meet its goals even with the addition of extra clients.

Commissioner Fischer questioned if Ms. Jefferson was able to provide any details or calculations on the average cost of placing someone in housing. Ms. Jefferson commented on the inflated cost of housing in Pleasanton which includes higher deposits, but Abode has been able to negotiate with property managers and landlords to get reductions in rents.

Tri-Valley REACH – Kay King – provided some background information about the organization and their successes in providing housing for adults with developmental disabilities. She commented on the significant growth the organization has had in the last five years that enabled them to buy two additional properties and renovate and remodel other properties allowing them to now house up to 36 individuals. Ms. King noted that much of what REACH has been able to do is because of support received from the City of Pleasanton.

Ms. King provided information about a seismic retrofit project they have been conducting and other external upgrades advising they are now working on some ADA compliance issues, yard work, etc.

Commissioner Soby asked about the acquisition of new properties. Ms. King provided information about City of Livermore owned properties that were offered to them to purchase and a loan arrangement that was worked out that does not need to be paid back and a Pleasanton home remodel that allowed for an additional tenant.

Centro Legal De La Raza – Sam Beckett – provided background information on the formation of Centro Legal as a nonprofit legal services provider providing help to low-income tenants by leveraging funds from the Tri-Valley cities and other county-wide projects. Services include legal consultations with tenants to educate and empower them. Ms. Beckett advised that Centro also partners with other organizations to conduct workshops and provided information about the Alameda County eviction moratorium that has been in place and something Centro Legal has been helping to advocate.

Commissioners were advised by Ms. Beckett that during the first two months of the grant Centro Legal has been able to serve nine people but have been seeing an increase in the number of people in Pleasanton reaching out for assistance. She advised that many are low-income and extremely low-income who have been financially impacted or have been experiencing landlord harassment.

Ms. Beckett provided information about a new position Centro Legal has created within their Tenants Rights Team that provides a bridge between their legal team and assistance to impacted tenants who have applied for rental assistance or are behind on their rent because of COVID-19. She noted that this has enabled the organization to do more outreach to Pleasanton tenants, and the requests received from 533 Pleasanton tenants requesting over \$13.4 million shows there is a great need.

Chairperson Galvin commented on the staggering number of 533 Pleasanton tenants and questioned Mr. Hernandez had not received any prior information about this.

Ms. Beckett discussed the distribution of flyers to buildings with high number of rental assistance tenants providing information about their rights and workshops they could attend to learn more about their legal rights and how to oversee legal matters. She noted that Centro Legal was also working on a referral form that will allow city staff to forward referrals to them and is also in the midst of hiring an Intake Coordinator that will allow them to better track Pleasanton residents.

Commissioner Fischer was advised by Ms. Beckett that information provided was based on the nine individuals that have been served in the first six months of the funding received, unfortunately, she could not provide information on the number of people in Alameda County that they have assisted. She did advise that 43% came to Centro Legal because they had received some termination of tenancy information, much of which was illegal eviction notices from landlords who are frustrated by the moratorium.

Ms. Beckett confirmed for Commissioner Fischer that many people had questions about unit repairs and moratorium matters relating to their legal rights. Commissioner Fischer asked about the process Centro will be taking to work with the 533 Pleasanton tenants that had submitted applications. Ms. Beckett provided details about the emergency rental assistance funding provided by the federal government noting this is work that will be overseen by a team separate from the services provided by their legal team. She noted the funds they had received was being used for legal assistance and representing people in court.

Commissioner Soby thought that when funding was being considered the commission had asked if Centro Legal would be representing both sides, tenant/landlord. Ms. Beckett advised that Centro only represents low-income tenants but are often able to negotiate with landlords to achieve a mutually agreeable resolution.

Chairperson Galvin had concerns with the 533 number Ms. Beckett had indicated with only nine tenants being assisted. Commissioner Fischer noted that the funding provided was only for the nine tenants

assisted, and the 533 number was not something that Ms. Beckett should have been providing information about. Chairperson Galvin agreed but felt if the organization was responding to the larger number of calls from Pleasanton residents wondered why they were not requesting more funding.

Ms. Beckett clarified that Centro Legal had not answered phone calls from 533 individuals but that was the number of applications seeking emergency assistance received through the county. Chairperson Galvin was still concerned at the substantial number of people in Pleasanton that had requested assistance and that the Housing Commission had not been made aware of this. Mr. Hernandez indicated he had had a conversation with Ms. Beckett, and they will be looking into information that should be included as part of the narrative on reporting.

Ms. Beckett clarified for Commissioner Soby that Centro Legal did not receive 533 phone calls, but it was the number of requests received by the county for many issues that Centro will try to target to inform these people of their rights. She commented on the amount of time that Centro personnel can spend with individuals discussing their housing situations and explaining their legal rights.

Mr. Hernandez apologized for the confusion and commented on the emergency rental assistance provided by Alameda County and the federal government available for renters affected by COVID-19. He noted that another Centro Legal team has been administering this program and processing the 533 applications received from Pleasanton residents which is what Ms. Beckett had been trying to explain by alluding to the number in the city.

Habitat for Humanity – Jen Gray – provided background information on Habitat for Humanity and the Housing Rehabilitation Program that provides loans and grant repair funding for low-income Pleasanton homeowners who reside in their homes. She noted that with staff's assistance an extensive marketing blitz was conducted with flyers being inserted with utility bills to all homeowners, social media advertising, etc. and an additional marketing plan to take place in June of this year. Ms. Gray advised that one grant has already been approved with construction completed, three more grants have been requested, and four grants are anticipated to be completed for the year. Additional funding during the next funding cycle will allow for more to be approved.

Commissioner Soby commented on the improvements in this program over the past year, and Ms. Gray discussed the steady influx of interest and people looking for help with home repairs, etc.

CityServe – Margaretann Fortner – provided information on unsheltered households that CityServe has assisted in becoming housed and the journey they take with these individuals by assisting them and changing their trajectory. Ms. Fortner discussed the holistic approach they have been taking to care for people in crisis and connecting them to resources and organizations and having volunteers assist them working through obstacles. She provided details of some of the collaborations with homeless liaison officers with the City of Pleasanton.

Ms. Fortner noted that CityServe individuals have been working along with the Open Heart Kitchen Street Team delivering meals and building relationships with homeless individuals. She discussed improvements that have been made improving CityServe connection points, a resource pop-up that has been taking place in front of the Pleasanton Library, and a new CityServe office at the Pleasanton Senior Center.

Ms. Fortner also commented on individuals who were sent for long-term addiction treatment, received a donated vehicle to keep them out of the elements, and housing opportunities provided at Goodness Village.

Commissioner Soby questioned Ms. Fortner about the number of homeless people for the previous year and a survey that was conducted showing the number of homeless individuals in the cities of Livermore and Pleasanton. Ms. Fortner stated that she thought the number for two years previous was

somewhere between 75 and 80 individuals, and no survey was conducted for the past year because of the pandemic but a new number should be provided soon.

ECHO Housing – Margie Rocha – provided information about ECHO Housing and the counseling services they provide. She noted that for the first half of the year they did not see as many clients as anticipated because of the pandemic, but this did not stop tenancy terminations. Ms. Rocha commented on not being able to provide in-person assistance to individuals and the number of calls the agency received and the assistance they were able to provide regarding evictions. She noted that 90 unduplicated households have been assisted with 94-units of service provided in the first six months, but ECHO is seeing an increase of people needing help in the new calendar year. Ms. Rocha advised that though numbers are down the time spent with individuals is longer and more complex especially relating to the moratorium, AB1482, evictions, and tenant/landlord mediations.

Commissioner Fischer questioned whether ECHO Housing also collaborates with landlords, and Ms. Rocha advised they provide the same services for both landlords and tenants and advocate for the law making sure tenants and landlords both are aware of their rights and responsibilities toward each other.

Community Resources for Independent Living – Michael Galvan – provided information about the CRIL organization and their emphasis on helping people learn to help themselves and live independently. He discussed the services they provide to people with disabilities and the difficulties experienced due to the Multi Service Center in Livermore not being opened and a number of clients being walk-ins without access to phones and computers.

Mr. Galvan provided details about Chromebooks they have been able to distribute, assistance they have been providing helping people with computer skills, the virtual workshops they have been offering, and help they were able to offer in moving a homeless person into a Pleasanton home. He also commented on grant CRIL had received for the distribution of test kits that they have been able to provide in the Tri-Valley area.

Mr. Galvan informed the commission that CRIL also worked with one of the Centro Legal teams on processing applications, some of which were from Pleasanton.

5. Update Regarding the Housing and Human Services Grant (HHSG) Review Process for FY 2022/23

Mr. Hernandez provided an update on the Housing and Human Services Grant (HHSG) Review Process for FY 2022/23 noting that a total of 28 applications have been received for a total of \$1,382,891 in funds being requested with twenty-one applications to be reviewed by the Human Services Commission at their March 2, 2022 meeting and seven applications reviewed by the Housing Commission at their March 17, 2022 meeting.

Commissioner Fischer asked about applications that were not housing-related and the amount of funding available for allocation. Mr. Hernandez commented on the number of applications to be reviewed by the Housing Commission, the funding recommendations they will make, and the final decision on funding being made by City Council. He also noted that Attachment 1 in the agenda packet provided details about the HOME and Lower Income Funding funds available this year, noting that for the last two years the City of Pleasanton allocated 100% of requested funds to all agencies because of the pandemic.

Commissioner Kripalani asked again about question #23 in the application packet as it relates to Abode Services. Ms. Jefferson indicated she would be prepared to answer his concerns at the March meeting, Chairperson Galvin suggested commissioners contact Mr. Hernandez with any further questions they may have regarding the grant application.

Commissioner Mohan asked for information about the overall needs in Pleasanton and the Tri-Valley and whether any information was available on this and other ways that funds might be available. Mr. Hernandez provided details about the federal HOME Funds and the Lower Income Housing Fund and how they can be used for affordable housing needs. He noted that at the March meeting commissioners will be provided a report that contains staff funding recommendations that they will be able to consider before making and sending their recommendations to city council.

Commissioner Fischer stated that she thought Commissioner Mohan was asking about the number of people needing assistance and Commissioner Mohan agreed indicating he was interested in learning more about the demand.

Chairperson Galvin commented on reports that agencies are required to submit, and Mr. Hernandez noted that when reading the applications submitted by an agency information is provided about the number of individuals served for the previous year and will provide information about the need for the funding being requested.

Commissioner Fischer indicated she would like to receive more information about the amount of time an agency spends with an individual and thought information that was missing from the application form would help commissioners with making recommendations. Mr. Hernandez noted that the commissioners can reach out to agencies and ask for more information at the March meeting.

Commissioner Mohan asked about being able to have information meetings with the agencies, and Mr. Hernandez noted that agency contact information was provided on their applications. He cautioned Commissioner Mohan not to collaborate with other commission members with any information he obtains.

Commissioner Fischer asked about being able to visit the agencies, and Mr. Hernandez felt it would be necessary to reach out to the agencies because of in-place restrictions due the pandemic. Chairperson Galvin provided information about public meetings held by Hacienda Business Park at which many agency representatives participate.

6. Appointment of New Officers (Chairperson and Vice Chairperson) for 2022

Mr. Hernandez commented on the need for the commission to nominate and elect a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson for 2022. Commissioner Soby discussed the possibility of Chairperson Galvin being able to serve a second term.

A motion was made by Commissioner Soby, seconded by Commissioner Kripalani, to nominate and elect Commissioner Galvin as Chairperson of the Housing Commission for 2022.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Commissioners Fischer, Kripalani, Mohan, Soby and Chairperson Galvin.

NOES: None.

ABSENT: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

A motion was made by Chairperson Galvin, seconded by Commissioner Soby to nominate and elect Commissioner Fischer to serve as the Vice Chairperson of the Housing Commission for 2022.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Commissioners Fischer, Kripalani, Mohan, Soby and Chairperson Galvin.

NOES: None.

ABSENT: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

MATTERS INITIATED BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

- A. Chairperson Galvin asked if the names and addresses of members of the commission could be shared and commented on commissioners not being able to meet socially because of the pandemic. Mr. Hernandez advised that staff does not to provide this information due to the Brown Act.
- B. Commissioner Kripalani asked about the reports that Sean Barcelon had promised to provide to the commission. Mr. Hernandez stated he would reach out to Mr. Barcelon and request the reports be provided for the commission.
- C. Commissioner Fischer commented on the current small number of members of the Housing Commission and questioned Mr. Hernandez on when more commissioners would be installed. Chairperson Galvin and Mr. Hernandez provided information about the process for getting new commissioners noting that applications need to be submitted by March 19th.
- D. Mr. Hernandez provided information about a special Housing Element meeting scheduled for February 24, 2022 and the March 17, 2022 being when the commission will be discussing grants. He also advised that since no members of the public are allowed in council chambers for City Council meetings of the commission will continue being provided virtually.

COMMISSION REPORTS

None.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m. by unanimous consent.