



**SONOMA COUNTY
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Public Hearing Room
1440 Guerneville Road
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Regular Meeting Minutes
January 13, 2009
3:30 p.m.

I. Call To Order And Roll Call:

The meeting was called to order at 3:31 p.m., and the roll was called.

CD Committee members present: Michael DeVore, Nichola Fuller, Lawrence Jaffe, Peter O'Brien, Sara Malone, Emmie Morgan, Pat Stevens, and Paula Young

CDC Staff present: Cathy Allyn, Community Development Associate; Heather Bond, Community Development Specialist; Bob Branson, Community Development Associate; Kathleen H. Kane, Executive Director; Mark Krug, Community Development Manager; Carol Turner, Leased Housing Manager; and Frances Perdew, Recording Secretary

Guests:

Jenny Abramson, Continuum of Care Coordinator
Molly Ackley, Sonoma County Community Action Partnership
Brian O'Callaghan, Catholic Charities

II. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

III. Approval of Minutes

Michael DeVore moved approval of the December 9, 2008 minutes, seconded by Emmie Morgan, none opposed, Sara Malone abstained, and the motion carried.

IV. General Administration Items

There were no general administration items for discussion or action.

V. Homeless Assistance and Planning

1. Two-Year Report on 10-Year Homeless Action Plan. Mark Krug, Community Development Manager, reminded the Committee of its action recommending approval of the draft 10-Year Homeless Action Plan February 13, 2007. Jenny Abramson, Continuum of Care Coordinator, is the author of that document and the Second Annual Report is included with the agenda. Ms. Abramson presented the Two-Year Report on the 10-Year Homeless Action Plan, reviewed the four (4) general goals established by the 10-Year Plan, described the objectives for achieving each one, and then asked the Committee for questions.

Sara Malone thought the report was impressive, and asked Ms. Abramson about future services in an atmosphere of decreasing funds. Ms. Abramson felt the loss of Project HOPE was detrimental to housing needs with the loss of 63 bed-units. She explained, however, that another 47 bed-units were created in a different manner. She added that it is important to keep services in mind while working together to solve the inevitable problems associated with decreased funding.

One program that was initiated from the 10-Year Plan is called Sonoma County Vets Connect. This program is a collaboration of every agency in the County that provides services for veterans, and it has provided services for over 200 veterans.

Ms. Abramson said she would be very involved in the 2009 homeless count to be conducted next week, adding that the data collected is critical in helping to validate increased homeless funding.

2. Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS). Mark Krug reviewed the memorandum from Cristin Tuidor, Senior Community Development Specialist, and explained what the system is and described its use. Any agency designated by HUD as a Tier 1 agency must be amongst the first to participate in HMIS. Homeless shelters that don't receive government funding are included in Tier 1 also, such as Redwood Gospel Mission and the Salvation Army. Mr. Krug said he would report the results of the Homeless Count in April. Lawrence Jaffe requested a copy of the Homeless Count questionnaire. Mr. Krug distributed a copy of the questionnaire to the Committee. He also reported that all of the Bay Area counties, including Monterey and Santa Cruz counties, are joining together and combining all the HMIS data to be analyzed, and that information will be provided to the Committee in the spring or summer.
3. Brian O'Callaghan from Catholic Charities to Report on Status of Homeless Shelters. Mr. O'Callaghan explained the difficulties of lost funding for Catholic Charities. Catholic Charities is committed to continuing services to the homeless but it is not sure how long it will be able to continue. The organization may be faced with additional cuts in funding in the future. He added there is still concern in the neighborhood surrounding Sam Jones Hall. The residents understand the need to consolidate, but are not happy with the results. Mr. Jaffe asked if Catholic Charities

has a target date for reorganizing Sam Jones Hall, and Mr. O'Callaghan responded by July 1, 2009. He said there are plans for two or three more neighborhood meetings.

4. March Public Hearing Planning. Cathy Allyn, Community Development Associate, reported that last April it was suggested that this year the Public Service portion of the hearing be in the morning since this portion is usually more competitive and difficult. All Committee members agreed. In addition, staff suggests that after the usual orientation on the amount of funding available and any unusual items, staff would provide a brief overview on each proposal, one at a time. The chair will invite the Committee to ask questions from the staff, then the chair will ask the agency representative to come forward and answer questions from the Committee. After Committee's questions, each agency will be given two minutes for final comments. After all agencies have been represented, members of the public will be invited to comment. Emmie Morgan suggested that the agency representatives come prepared to answer the specific question of how the agency's situation has changed from the year before. There was no further discussion of this suggestion.

Ms. Allyn recommended that, at the close of each public hearing, the Committee would discuss the rationales for its decisions to give the public audience a clearer idea of CDC's goals and objectives and how to present better applications, if need be. The public hearing back-up documentation would continue to be the agency's funding history, agenda, and the CDC Controller's memo on all audits and financial statements received.

Lawrence Jaffe asked if the decisions would be made by consensus or majority vote. Pat Stevens recommended that if the Committee is deadlocked, the vote would be by majority, otherwise, the decision would be based on consensus. The Committee agreed.

Kathleen Kane arrived at the meeting at 4:51 pm.

VI. Rental Assistance

1. Sonoma County Housing Authority Application for Family Unification Program Vouchers. Carol Turner, Leased Housing Manager, reported that the Housing Authority is submitting an application at the end of January for 50 housing units under the Family Unification Program. This program also includes foster youth. This agenda item was approved by the Board of Supervisors/Commissioners on January 6, 2009, and is presented for the Committee's information.

VII. Affordable Housing Development & Preservation

1. Status Report on Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP). Mark Krug reported that approximately \$4 billion was allocated to the Neighborhood Stabilization Program across the country; however, none of these funds were directly allocated to any Sonoma County jurisdiction last fall. The State of California received

approximately \$145 million of the \$4B and is currently administering the secondary allocation of these NSP funds to jurisdictions across the State. Sonoma County is teaming up with the Cities of Santa Rosa, Petaluma and Rohnert Park as a group to apply for \$1.5 million in set-aside funds for Sonoma County, as well as an additional \$1.5 million in competitive funds that must assist households with gross income at or below 50% of the county area median income.. The funds would be used by local non-profit agencies to buy or rehabilitate foreclosed properties and then used in a manner consistent with both NSP guidelines and that agency's mission. Staff is attempting to have the program design prepared in February in anticipation of a State Notice of Funds Available (NOFA) expected to be published in January. The State requires public meetings for this program and the first meeting is scheduled for January 28, 2009. These are CDBG funds and carry most of the usual CDBG requirements and both the federal and state governments have added non-CDBG criteria, as well.

Emmie Morgan commented that when houses begin to be rehabilitated, she hoped that Youth Build would be part of this program. Ms. Kane said that Youth Build does not pay prevailing wages and staff would need to check into an exception for Youth Build and Habitat for Humanity.

2. HCD BEGIN Grant Modification to Increase Current Award. Bob Branson, Community Development Associate, explained that the BEGIN program provides down payment assistance for low-income households. A letter was received from the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) stating that the BEGIN Program had amended its guidelines and would allow an increase in the amount of up to 20% of the affordable sales price for each income-eligible assisted home. The Board of Supervisors/Commissioners approved this agenda item, which authorized the Executive Director to submit a letter to HCD requesting an increase of the current award to an amount equaling the amended cap of 20% of the sales price for each affordable housing unit, estimated to be approximately \$660,000. This agenda item was approved on January 6, 2009.

VIII. Non-Housing Community & Economic Development

There were no Non-Housing Community & Economic Development items for discussion.

IX. Executive Directors Report

Ms. Kane reported that she had just come from the Housing Element public hearing at the Board of Supervisors. Some new concepts were added to the Housing Element such as, 1) converting to restricted sales prices, 2) trying to look at perpetual affordable housing models, 3) provisions to prevent the County's scarce available land from being developed into transient uses like vacation homes, and 4) restricting the development of residentially zoned land so that it can't be used for non-residential high end uses, such as bed and breakfast amenities. The Housing Element was adopted and will be submitted to the State HCD department.

The County budget is being seriously impacted by the economy and the County departments and agencies are being asked to prepare scenarios to reduce their budgets by five percent this spring, an additional 5% in July, and another 5% depending upon what happens with the economy. The Board of Supervisors is looking at prioritizing programs and services, with criminal justice and law enforcement as top priorities. Ms. Kane added that the CDC is somewhat insulated from these budget reductions because approximately two percent (2%) of the CDC's budget comes from the General Fund. Ms. Kane said that the CDC would propose its budget reduction scenarios by the end of January and submit them to the County Administrator's office by February 1. The CDC plans to propose some "cost shifting" in the areas of Redevelopment and the County Fund for Housing, i.e., slightly less money for the developers, which would allow the CDC to maintain sufficient staff to implement the programs. There will be, however, layoffs of employees in other areas of the County. The State has frozen disbursements of funding, and it will be likely that the CDC will not be able to drawdown funds in the near future for such programs and the BEGIN Program. The County is being assured it is a temporary situation, and the CDC won't need this funding for about two years.

Ms. Kane reported there is no new information on the federal budget at this time.

Ms. Kane announced the recruitment process of the Redevelopment Manager closes January 9th, and staff will report the results to the Committee at its February meeting.

X. Comments & Information Materials

There were no comments or information material for discussion.

XI. Adjourn

There being no further business for discussion, Nicola Fuller moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Michael DeVore, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Perdew
Recording Secretary