

HOUSING, NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES & REDEVELOPMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

August 5, 2020

Members Present: *Council Member, Chair Crystal Murillo*
Council Member, Vice-Chair Francoise Bergan
Council Member, Alison Coombs

Others Present: George Adams, Andrea Amonick, Sharon Duwaik, Tim Joyce, Dan Krzyzanowski, Karen Hancock, Omar Lyle, Mindy Parnes, Jessica Prosser, Nancy Sheffield, Roberto Venegas, Sandra Youngman, and Cecilia Zapata

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Council Member Murillo welcomed everyone to the meeting.

MINUTES

CM Coombs requested a change in the June 3rd meeting minutes to add her question regarding how the city may be able to incorporate commercial properties into the trash hauling models; stating this applied to most multi-family living situations. She stated Michael Lawson's response was that the city could not mandate this, but only offer it as an option. It was agreed that she would email the Committee and cc: Cecilia with the addition for approval by the Committee via email.

The Committee unanimously approved the July 1, 2020 meeting minutes.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements were made.

NEW ITEMS**HOMELESSNESS SERVICES RFP PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS****Summary of Issue and Discussion**

City staff gave a recap of the Homelessness Services RFP Program. The RFP process is intended to simplify and streamline the application process and improve transparency and equitable distribution of funding. The process also intends to identify the best grant source and funding guidelines for each agency. The funding can serve low to moderate income persons: individuals and households, households at risk of losing their homes and those who are currently homeless. The committee's review process used to determine the recommendations, funding resources, requested and proposed funding, and timeline were reviewed.

A technical glitch occurred causing the public line to drop from the meeting. The meeting was paused and after 6 minutes and 29 seconds, the line was restored, and the meeting reconvened.

Questions/Comments – CM Bergan asked for clarification regarding the ESG funds. Jessica Prosser, Manager of Community Development, explained \$250K in ESG funds are normally received and allocated easily. Staff is waiting on the requirements from HUD for the additional ESG-CV funds and will create separate agreements for those funds. CM Bergan asked if budgets could be received from the applicants. Jessica stated budgets were one of the required attachments to the application; along with the non-profit status, board information and other supporting documentation. She will submit the electronic application packets to the Committee. CM Bergan asked for year to year increases for those who have requested funding in the past, and information reflecting what the increases encompassed. Jessica stated staff can provide the past funding amounts and the types of activities that were funded. CM Bergan asked if it was an anomaly in cases where the amount proposed from the amount requested, and where the amount increased from the amount given in previous years, was much different. Jessica stated most requested amounts went up overall, with some requesting double of what they were granted the year before. She said funding did not allow those requests to be granted. CM Bergan asked if the organizations' budgets would reflect other

funding sources and proceeded to state she wanted to make sure they were applying for other grants and still making fundraising efforts, and not relying on the city to fund. Jessica stated a leveraging and match questionnaire was part of the application process that reflected funding resources. CM Bergan asked if the funds being requested was used to serve residents of the City of Aurora, due to some organizations overlapping jurisdictions. Jessica stated that this could be part of the agreement. She stated the city wants agencies to serve Aurora residents and explained they will need to provide quarterly reports in addition to information through HMIS for tracking residents' addresses.

CM Coombs stated she wanted more information regarding the year to year changes as well as the difference between the requested and recommended amounts. She pointed out that the Salvation Army's recommendation is a significant amount and asked if the services provided were significant. Jessica explained a large portion of the recommended amount was ESG-CV dollars for rapid rehousing. This is a huge need the city is currently seeing versus what was seen in the past. In addition, these funds were not available in the past. The committee is recommending \$75k of regular ESG money for the Salvation Army, and because their services showed as COVID related, the additional CV dollars which were not available in the past are being recommended. She stated that if the city didn't have the increase of CV dollars because of COVID, we would not be able to provide them the full amount.

CM Coombs asked which organizations would be funded with HAP money and how it would be communicated to them that they will receive more than what was requested, however, not through this process. Jessica stated this was captured in a different part of the budget that didn't need to go through this process, but staff could follow up with the agencies regarding this and make it clear the next time this is brought forward.

CM Murillo asked why a representative from the city of Denver was on the review committee. Jessica stated they wanted to ensure there was no conflict of interest and explained that representative allocates similar funding, works with similar funding resources in Denver, and has a lot of experience going through this process. She stated the representative is also a member of the MDHI Board and has experience working with homelessness at a regional level.

CM Coombs asked if we are seeing service providers changing their scope or the type of services they are providing when they are submitting their request. Jessica stated in general they saw more housing navigation services that work towards closing the loop from case management to getting housed, additional staffing, rapid re-housing, and a more robust street outreach to connect people with a navigator or case manager. Staffing resources and changing processes all seemed to be a theme. CM Coombs asked if agencies have demonstrated and explained how they are prepared to engage in the expansion of their scope and change in services they are offering. Jessica stated yes, in the questions they asked regarding experience, the overall model of how they approach housing first, and in the inclusion questions. There is also opportunity to add performance measures in the agreements to include outcomes and track how many were served and housed. This will help determine where there are gaps. CM Bergen asked if the performance measures will be required quarterly. Jessica stated yes, the agencies will be asked to provide quarterly reports to be shared with council.

CM Murillo mentioned she is part of the Transforming Safety Review Board which partners with the Latino Community Coalition to build capacity in their processes. She said the city seems to have the ability to report but knows there are some barriers for some of the smaller groups who have good points in community and do really good work, but don't have the capacity or knowledge and skill to do some of these things. She wondered if we could build capacity for those groups to set them up for success. Jessica stated that for groups who aren't set up to perform federal reporting, suggestions were made for more flexible funding to get them started. In addition, agencies may pair up with a group that has more experience to leverage their abilities and funding to get there.

Outcome – The Committee unanimously agreed to move the Homelessness Services RFP Program Recommendations to study session.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING GAP FINANCING APPLICATION PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS**Summary of Issue and Discussion**

Staff gave a recap of the Affordable Housing Gap Financing Application Program. The purpose of the program is to simplify the process for developers or service providers who are interested in building or rehabilitating a structure used for housing as well as other capital needs. Projects that address housing needs from permanent supportive housing for homeless individuals to for sale products were considered. The committee's review process used to determine the recommendations, housing strategy alignment, funding sources, and application evaluation criteria were reviewed. Jessica stated they have committed to completing the process twice a year ahead of the CHFA cycle, however, the private activity bonds (PAB) would be once a year because they are an annual allotment and the bond cap must be assigned yearly by September 15. The review committee results, and each affordable housing project was reviewed.

Questions/Comments – Jessica explained the three options for handling PAB. The city may 1) keep the allotment of cap and issue the bonds, 2) provide it to a housing authority or other governmental entity to issue the bonds, or 3) give it back to the state and it goes into a state-wide pool. Traditionally, the city has given it back to the state or assigned it to a housing authority to allocate to different projects. If given to the state, it's not guaranteed it will go toward a project in Aurora. CM Bergan asked if the PAB must be used within the current year and if it must be assigned to a project in progress or about to start. Jessica explained PAB must be allocated to a housing project in progress or about to start by September 15 of the current year and is to be spent within a few years.

CM Bergan asked if the city was giving two different amounts to Providence at the Heights and asked what the funds would be used towards. Jessica explained the funds would be used to finish landscaping, parking lot replacement and some interior items that were still outstanding to get their development plan finished. CM Bergan stated she thought the parking lot was finished and understood they would not request funding from the city. CM Coombs stated the city needs to look at the funding they have received from a broad variety of sources, how little they are asking from the city, and how much they are providing in return. She stated they are doing important work and have asked for very little. CM Bergan stated she agrees they are doing important work but wanted to know why the city would allocate money to a parking lot that has already been completed. CM Murillo stated they tried to do this before the RFP, were on schedule, and would not need city funds; however, unforeseen weather happened. Jessica stated that if the parking lot was completed, the city would not provide the funds.

CM Murillo mentioned there are projects where there is a significant deviation from the amount requested and asked if there was a cap for the amount being requested. Jessica stated that for most multi-family projects, the city's portion is small and will make or break a project only in some instances. She stated the city got close to most requested amounts. In some instances, there would be less units built or less rehab being completed on a building, and not necessarily stopping the project. CM Murillo mentioned that not any applicant in this round, but there was a larger push to develop land on idle church or faith-based spaces. She mentioned New Nation as one interested party. She was curious if the city knew of groups who were interested and contacted the city in the past but didn't apply for this program. Jessica stated she wasn't aware of these groups, but a key part of the housing strategy is to keep a land inventory; city land and faith-based. She stated there is opportunity out there and that there have been developers who stated they were not ready to apply or wanted to rehab buildings but didn't apply. The city reaches far and wide, to include CHFA and local partners. CM Murillo stated she has heard efficiency has been an issue and was glad this program shifted to an RFP. She asked Jessica to keep New Nation on the radar. They have expressed they would like to renovate their parking lot and do a mixed youth center and housing units. CM Murillo also stated she was glad to see Jesus on Colfax Ministries with the FRIENDS building successfully be recommended. The building can use a lot of TLC and they have been ongoing with helping folks.

Outcome – The Committee unanimously agreed to move this item forward to study session. CM Bergan stated she wanted an answer regarding the parking lot at Providence at the Heights. Omar Lyle, Community Development staff member, stated he reviewed the application and found they requested WIFI locks and resurfacing the parking lot. CM Murillo requested more information on the opportunity costs for the study session. CM Coombs asked if there was any cost to the city as a partner when working on projects and we are not willing to support something

that is specifically a part of a plan. The expectation on this project was to refinish the parking lot. Jessica stated that finishing the parking lot was part of completing the development plan.

POLICY COMMITTEE REVIEW OF COMMITTEE NAME AND GOAL/PURPOSE

Summary of Issue and Discussion

Neighborhood Services finalized a reorganization and department name change on June 1, 2020. The department is now named Housing and Community Services. The Committee reviewed the Council Rules definition of the Housing, Neighborhood Services and Redevelopment Policy Committee and the objectives.

Questions/Comments – CM Bergan asked to clarify if there was no longer a Neighborhood Services department. Nancy Sheffield, Interim Director of Housing and Community Services, explained the department name was changed. CM Bergan asked if the department still encompassed Animal Services and Code Enforcement. Nancy stated yes and explained the changes, to include Community Relations moving to the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

CM Coombs stated she wanted to address this at the Rules Committee meeting to allow more time to brainstorm based on the information given. CM Murillo agreed. She stated she was more interested in looking into the policy committee goals to assure they are in line with the types of presentations and the direction of the committee. She stated she was curious if the city's equity plan would impact the committee's charge. She felt the city ultimately created public/private partnerships, but it wasn't a goal.

CM Bergan stated it was a large committee in terms of the subjects that come up. She said she understood the redevelopment, but there was planning and economic development that crossover. She suggested adding some of the incentive of economic development or urban renewal. She stated she was looking at the balance of the committee. CM Murillo stated she would like to see the distribution of power in committees be more equitable. She stated committees are an opportunity to explore and have discussion and not be a barrier to getting information council needs. CM Coombs said it was important that, after so many years, each committee is reviewed to ensure its charge still aligns in a reasonable way and that there aren't committees where few or no council members are committed to the issues taken up and the charge. Alignment and relevance both need to be looked at.

Outcome – The Committee unanimously agreed this item should be in line with the Rules Committee processes and the equity plan. CM Murillo suggested speaking with Mayor Pro Tem Johnston on when she intends to bring this up. She stated the Committee and staff should circle back with City Manager Twombly on the status of the equity plan and how the committee can weigh in on the process.

MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

No miscellaneous matters for consideration.

Next meeting: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.
Meeting adjourned at 4:29 p.m.

APPROVED:

Committee Chair, Crystal Murillo