

HOUSING, NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES & REDEVELOPMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

March 4, 2021

Members Present: Council Member Nicole Johnston, Chair
Council Member Alison Coombs, Vice-Chair
Council Member Marsha Berzins

Others Present: Councilmember Crystal Murillo, Barbara Abbots, George Adams, Meg Allen, Andrea Amonick, Scott Campbell, Lana Dalton, Sharon Duwaik, Michael Franks, Elizabeth Fuselier, Jeff Hancock, Karen Hancock, Tim Joyce, Emma King, Dan Kryzanowski, Andrew Larsen (Interpreter), Omar Lyle, Brittany McGaughy, Rodney Milton, Mindy Parnes, Jessica Prosser, Minsoo Song, Rosetta Torres, Roberto Venegas, and Sandra Youngman

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Council Member Johnston welcomed everyone and announced she was leaving early due to an urgent matter. CM Coombs took over facilitation of the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

MINUTES

Minutes of the January 28, 2021 meeting were approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Karen Hancock announced the Electronics Recycling Drop-Off event is from March 1st through March 13th at 3250 Lewiston St. The cost is \$5.00 per vehicle. Event information is on the City's website.

Chance Horiuchi with On Havana Street thanked the city for assisting with the 1st Equity Vaccine Clinic at the Stampede. She is hoping more of these events can be hosted on Havana St. She announced there is a \$500 give-away online at onhavanast.com to celebrate small businesses on Havana St. Lastly, she announced the multi-mobile study on Havana Street is going forward. A survey is online through March 19th at Engage Aurora.

NEW ITEMS**Affordable Housing GAP Financing Program – Winter Round****Summary of Issue and Discussion**

Staff stated the Affordable Gap Financing Program is to support the housing strategy in production and preservation of affordable housing. The program will utilize 2.4 million in CDBG funding. The timeline was reviewed as follows:

Timeline:

- Request for applications released Monday, Feb. 1, 2021
- Application closed on Friday, Feb. 19, 2021
- Review of applications, committee recommendations and presentations to the Committee – March 24, 2021
 - Review committee consisted of internal staff and members of the Citizen's Advisory Committee on Housing and Development
- Announcement of GAP Financing Awards - Late March to Early April 2021

Questions/Comments

CM Berzins stated this program was great. Normally, paperwork slows things down, but this program has a pipeline to keep it going. She appreciated the program. CM Coombs asked if the program or Housing and Community

Services in general was looking into tiny homes or other types of transitional housing. Staff shared that the program was funded by regular CDBG funds and guidelines and did not allow for transitional housing. There may be opportunities through the housing strategy's demonstration project for transitional/tiny homes. They stated that of the 3 applications received, 2 projects were for scattered site housing and one was for large affordable housing, but no tiny homes. Staff announced the department will be hosting a symposium on March 19th to discuss safe outdoor spaces and other options for the more transitional housing options, possibly using COVID funds. CM Johnston mentioned she received an article regarding tiny homes from a constituent and was also wondering where that option fit in the plan.

Outcome

This item was informational only and no further action was taken on the item at this time.

Resolution Expressing the Aurora City Council's Support that Housing is a Human Right

Summary of Issue and Discussion

Housing is a Human Right Act is a concept designed to address the root causes of homelessness, meet the needs of community members experiencing harms from homelessness, and transition communities to provide affordable dignified housing to all. This resolution would provide back up for lobbying efforts around bills at the State and Federal level that strive to reduce barriers to housing for those most vulnerable in our community.

CM Murillo presented a Resolution that expressed the Aurora City Council's support that housing is a human right. She has been working with, and educating for several months, a group of community members in Ward I called Las Señoras. They received the housing strategy in Spanish and had many questions regarding how the process came about. This community asked how the document, before, during and after the COVID pandemic, would meet the housing need now and prioritize the more affordable portions of it. CM Murillo stated the City has a role to offer direction using the housing strategy and pointed out there are state level legislation that prevents the City from fully executing some affordable housing. Therefore, there is city and state level language in the Resolution. Jessica Prosser added that the Resolution could be made part of the housing legislation as a blanket support on housing items.

Questions/Comments

CM Coombs expressed strong support of the Resolution, stating the City must acknowledge it is part of its responsibility as a government and as public servants that people have at least the bare minimums met. CM Berzins appreciated CM Murillo working with Las Señoras; however, stated she would not be supporting the Resolution as it is not the City's job to add rights. It is not in the Constitution of the Bill of Rights. She stated she agrees the City needs to and has provided housing for all income levels over the years and does not support to pass a Resolution saying what is already being done. She stated the City needs to step up the game and be more proactive. CM Johnston stated she would be supporting the Resolution stating Council regularly using resolutions to elevate an issue, to create awareness, and to send a message to the community that the issues are important.

Assistant City Attorney Tim Joyce clarified the City could not create a constitutional right by the Resolution, but rather the Resolution was simply a call to aspiration. CM Murillo stated she would work with other Council members for support and would continue to guide and provide institutional knowledge to the community members on the legislative process.

Outcome

Councilmembers Johnston and Coombs supported the Resolution and approved to forward the item to study session.

MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

Housing Strategy Update

Staff shared that the strategy was in an implementation phase and described the working groups within the strategy. CM Coombs requested the breakdown of the working groups in writing. Rodney will provide the information.

Mental Health Co-Responder Program Update

Staff stated there has been a kickoff meeting with Faulk and Aurora Mental Health Center to envision and get more specific about the scope of the program and design what the community engagement process will look like. The program manager position will be posted the following week. CM Coombs asked if the program name was finalized. Staff stated that is one of the first items to be discussed. CM Berzins stated she would like to see the name changed as well.

Youth Violence Prevention Program Update

Staff stated interviews are scheduled on March 17th for the program manager position and that they continue to collaborate with the Denver team in a joint task force.

Updates from Community Members

No updates presented.

Metro Center

CM Berzins asked staff for an update on the Metro Center. Director George Adams stated the Metro Center applicant submitted in late February and is in the process of being reviewed. Staff is targeting a Planning Commission date of March 24th and will be reviewing the applicant's master plan at that time.

Next meeting: Thursday, April 1, 2021 at 8:30 a.m.

Meeting adjourned: 9:23 a.m.

APPROVED: Nicole Johnston

Committee Chair, Nicole Johnston