HOUSING, NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES & REDEVELOPMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

June 3, 2021

Members Present: Council Member, Chair Nicole Johnston

Council Member, Vice-Chair Alison Coombs

Council Member, Marsha Berzins

Others Present: Mayor Mike Coffman, Council Member Françoise Bergan, Council Member Juan

Marcano, Council Member Crystal Murillo, George Adams, Meg Allen, Andrea Amonick, Scott Campbell, Sharon Duwaik, Liz Fuselier, Angela Garcia, Jeff Hancock, Karen Hancock, Tim Joyce, Samara Kellem, Daniel Krzyzanowski, Omar Lyle, Jennifer Orozco, Mindy Parnes, Jessica Prosser, Roberto Venegas, Anthony Youngblood, Sandra

Youngman

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Council Member Johnston welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were some technical issues with guests not being able to not login as a panelist. CM Johnston wanted to make sure the proper type of invite rather it be panelists or attendee. Jessica Prosser advised that there are many attendees calling in via telephone and advised as needed staff can adjust the roles of those call-in numbers and any others that need to be moved from attendee to panelist.

MINUTES

CM Johnston asked if CM Berzins had any adjustments or would like to approve minutes. CM Berzins advised she did not receive any of the minutes for review. Jessica Prosser advised that minutes have not been fully prepared and ready for review due to some admin staffing sudden changes. Jessica Prosser advised the minutes will be prepared and ready for review at the next meeting. CM Johnston also advised CM Coombs is still listed as an attendee, staff support Brittany McGaughy advised she is currently working on getting CM Coombs role switched from attendee to panelist.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements were made.

NEW ITEMS

CM Johnston advised the new items segment would begin with the agenda item 4.b Neighborhood Registration Roadmap and Engagement Update presented by Meg Allen and Scott Campbell, both titled Neighborhood Liaisons. CM Johnson inserted this change due to technical issues with Mayor Mike Coffman logging into the meeting. Staff continued to work on the technical issues and Mayor Mike Coffman to present following this item order change.

Neighborhood Registration Roadmap and Engagement Update

Summary of Issue and Discussion

Scott Campbell and Meg Allen presented this item.

Scott Campbell opened the presentation with an overview. Scott stated that the Neighborhood Liaisons gathered input from residents, neighborhood groups, and HOAs to determine what incentives would encourage participation the its Neighborhood Registration Program. Input in this process was critical to crafting and fine-tuning the incentives we offer in our programing. Scott also mentioned staff started building an Engage Aurora site (https://engageaurora.org/neighborhoodregistration) in order to gather feedback. The site and survey were launched on April 1st. The survey closed at the end of April. The survey was used to gauge how connected residents felt to their neighbors, neighborhood and how resilient they thought that they were together. The survey also asked respondents to rank the various programmatic ideas in order of their preferences. Scott stated that on April 21st a special virtual community brainstorming session was held to give more of an expansive information about their

preferences and provide feedback on both the current set of programming as well as some new ideas. Scott also comments that staff has researched programming from other municipalities with consideration to our budget, our staffing levels and ways to make the programs run more efficiently. Staff then put together a roadmap that both honors the most requested programming including all the feedback received to ultimately get more people to participate in our registration. Due to time constraints, Scott requested that the group will be able to review the data in their agenda packet that has the full presentation included.

Meg Allen began to present the proposed programming and Budgets. Meg reviewed the following programs listed: Beautification Grant, Know Your Neighbor Grant, Neighborhood Printing Assistance Grant, Neighborhood Small Activity Grant, Education Program, Neighborhood Trash Day Program, Block Party Trailer and Block Party Permits Meg explained what each of the programs purpose along with the budget year and dollar amounts per program.

Questions/Comments -

CM Berzins commented she had several questions. The first question asked, for the input from 115 people, where did that input come from? Was that information from private meetings or from the city website?

Scott Campbell replied with that input from the 115 people came from the survey that was posted on the Engage Aurora website. In addition, a virtual brainstorming session also contributed. Scott also replied that neighborhood leaders reached out directly. Scott explained that the information was spread through social media and newsletters as well.

CM Berzins also asked if these leaders were like the presidents of HOA groups? CM Berzins stated there is an issue where those who have not registered with the City, miss out on a lot of information and opportunities that could be beneficial. CM Berzins mentions that with these groups, sometimes change president positions and have those miscommunications and don't quite understand the importance of registering with the City. CM Berzins commented she is in favor of the Clean Up Days. CM Berzins state she is also in support of the printing but would like to have some rules implemented such as political printing or other controversial things.

Meg Allen commented she absolutely agrees and clarified that this would only be available for parties and events such as the block parties or neighborhood events.

CM Coombs states she did not have any questions.

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

An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Aurora, Colorado, adding a New Section to be Numbered 94-122 to the City Code Pertaining to Prohibiting Unauthorized Camping on Public or Private Property and Adding Article IV, Sections 114-106 through 114-

CM Johnston opened with remarks stating due to time constraints, she will be setting some parameters due to the importance of the issue being presented by Mayor Coffman. CM Johnston states she will take the liberty of adjusting the agenda where we typically have community members speak at the end of the meeting. CM Johnston states we will have community members and stakeholders give limited minutes for comments on the ordinance and Mayor Coffman presents. CM Johnston explains she wants to keep things from going back and forth between everyone. CM Johnston also states Chief Vanessa Wilson and Sheriff Terry Brown will also be in attendance and will be providing feedback after the Mayor presents.

Summary of Issue and Discussion-

Mayor Coffman opens the presentation explaining this ordinance is a camping ban. This bans unauthorized camping on public or private property. Mayor Coffman is proposing authorization of abatement of unauthorized campsites on public and private properties. Mayor Coffman states that in terms of citing someone for this type of

violation, the person must be given proper notice and given the option for an alternative location prior to being cited, per the current ordinance. Mayor Coffman states that he would like to make several changes to the current ordinance in place. Mayor Coffman states one of the changes he would like to make is to make it a hard requirement in finding an alternative place for shelter and camping that's not in violation of the ordinance. Mayor Coffman states that in his observations, he discovered is the persons who were seeking shelter in a shelter, rarely would go out and seek shelter in camps. Mayor Coffman also explained that he discovered those who were in camps would not likely seek shelter in a shelter. Mayor Coffman stated he would like to acknowledge that in the proposal, he would like to make sure we have a designated camping space. Mayor Coffman refers to page 8, section 114-109 in the ordinance, there is a notice requirement, and, in that part, he is asking to change that no notice is given. Mayor Coffman wanted to also simplify 114-107 and align with case law.

Questions/Comments -

Tim Joyce comments to clarify that on Section 114-108 the prerequisite before any camp can be abated is there must be shelter space available for every individual, or every family in an authorized camp.

Mayor Coffman then explains that the language on section 114-109 is confusing and not aligned with section 114-108. Mayor Coffman states that in section 114-109, it does not speak of the notice requirements, the date of abatement, date in the notice or within the next 10 does if a sufficient shelter option in available for all the occupants on the date of abatement, or due to weather delays.

Tim Joyce acknowledges what Mayor Coffman is reading. He then clarifies that when you take both sections in combinations, the 10-day window was mostly to permit weather delays, but also, if they are on the day of the scheduled abatement, if shelter space isn't available that day, we can return the next day, explaining the purpose of that window.

Mayor Coffman then comments and apologizes to the chair that he should've had this conversation with Tim prior to the meeting for clarification but thinks it is good to see this exchange.

Tim Joyce continues to comment that the ordinance intention is to mirror what Denver uses as criteria to abate a camp and is aligned with case law.

Mayor Coffman responds and acknowledges what Tim is saying and is asking to have a further discussion as to whether this can be condensed down. Mayor Coffman stated that he believes the criteria meets pretty much every situation and isn't quite clear why this wouldn't be consistent with Case Law. Mayor Coffman thanks Tim and states that he thinks the changes to this ordinance are important.

CM Johnston thanks Mayor Coffman and advises that in the interest of time we would like to get some input from law enforcement and states there is an impact on law enforcement. CM Johnston introduces Chief Wilson.

Chief Wilson greets everyone and comments that our residents are experiencing homelessness as well as it having impacts on business and being a high priority for most people. Chief Wilson states she is concerned with the community being aware of the role law enforcement will have with implanting this ordinance. Chief Wilson states her intentions are to build relationships back between the community and law enforcement. Chief Wilson is greatly concerned with the enforcement piece of the ordinance. Chief Wilson is concerned and would like to see more of the ordinance and see how clear of who is going to be doing what and what the roles are. Chief Wilson is aware that we do not want to displace the problem if have places individuals can go. Chief Wilson states she is grateful for the work Lana Dalton, Homelessness Program Manager and outreach team are doing to find and help navigate those individuals to find safe shelter spaces and agrees that it would be appropriate to have our outreach continue with the process. Chief Wilson expressed that she wants to make sure law enforcement is used at the most minimal.

CM Johnston thanks Chief Wilson for her comments and explained that due to time constraints we wouldn't be able to have a back and forth questions. CM Johnston states she is aware that homelessness is a regional issue, especially

with the City of Aurora having three counties within and have great partnerships with all these counties. CM Johnston asked Arapahoe County Sheriff Brown if he had any comments he would like to add.

Sheriff Brown thanked CM Johnston and states he has worked with Mayor Coffman and CDOT. Sheriff Brown states his biggest concerns are that individuals that fail to adhere to the notices and continue to live in a specific place being held at the county jail. Sheriff Brown states that we're looking at legislation right now that would require us to just issue a summons and release these individuals. Sheriff Brown continues to comment that right now, because of the low level and nature of that offense, it costs 108 dollars a day right now to house individuals. Sheriff Brown believes there are better options for that 108 dollars to be used to try to help. Sheriff Brown acknowledges there are so many programs out there and listening to what the city of Aurora has to offer is encouraging. He is concerned the county jail will become a depository for individuals that are experiencing homelessness and taking the criminal element out.

CM Johnston thanks both Chief Wilson and Sheriff Brown for their time and input and recognizes their busy schedules.

Chief Wilson states she would like to remain on the call and continuing listening in.

CM Johnston asks if Pastor McBride or Cheryl from Restoration Christian Fellowship if they have any comments or feedback.

Pastor McBride comments she is thrilled to hear the conversation surrounding not criminalizing these individuals that are unhoused and hopefully finding resolution to such. Pastor McBride thank the group for their support with Restoration Christian Fellowship.

CM Johsnton thanked Pastor McBride and asked for more feedback that the individuals that were invited from Denver, for the purpose of minutes, state their name, title, and the work they do

Ean Tafoya the founder of Headwaters Protectors Mutual Aid Group that formed during the pandemic to provide drinking water and sanitation to those experiencing homelessness, provided some comments and feedback. Ean stated he has done with the Mayor of Denver as well as the City Council of Denver. Ean states that back in 2015, he ran for city council member in opposition to the camping band offering better solutions that have been brought to reality in recent months. Ean also stated he was a spokesperson to legislature regarding human rights of 300 people. Ean states he believes that the camping band in Denver continues to go back and forth and will ultimately be held to be unconstitutional. Ean states he believes this to be an economic issue giving the example of how much it costs daily for those who are in jail. Ean states that we have seen that it costs us more resources, law enforcement resources to contact these on a regular basis and though people may say that the are not being contacted, they are also being ticketed for being homeless. Ean feels that those who are experiencing homelessness are being targeted and picked up on other offenses. Ean believes that due to lack of sanitation services, trash begins to add up and there is no where for these individuals to properly dispose. Ean acknowledges the efforts from the community and trying to guide resources to the homeless community. Ean states he is asking for a better resolution. Ean also offered to be a resource.

Maura Proser from Tri-County Health Department commented that she is committed and appreciates the city's commitment to get more people into safe, affordable and attainable homes. Maura states we share concern for the growing number of individuals in Aurora and the metro area and understands the health and environmental concerns associated with encampments. Maura states she is committed to working with you to mitigate these hazards through proactive means. Maura shared some of the things Tri-County Health and City of Aurora have collaborated on such as the syringe access and production education, outreach program. Maura explains working directly with people experiencing homelessness, as well as direct outreach to reduce the heart caused by injection drug use. Maura explains the program staff have also trained APD officers how to use a particular medication, which is an opioid overdose reversal medication and we're very proud to say that your officers have saved lives

and that medication is saving lives across the state. Maura adds encouragement to the city to invest in more things, like public restrooms and hand washing stations and trash collection and disposal for the protection of the health and environment. So, rather than just banning the encampment, helping to make safer cleaner areas and we are supportive of that. Maura explains Tri-County Health are here to be your partner, we also do want to remind you that homelessness is a very complex issue. Many people experiencing homelessness, have complex needs. A lot of them are dealing with trauma and other needs like that and sweeping them from an encampment can be an additionally traumatizing environment and it can trigger some other trauma in their lives. Maura also stated camp when sweeps are done, individuals are forced to disperse which leads to disconnection from services. Maura states we believe that a more important step to reducing homelessness would be to invest in mental health services, substance use disorder treatment, harm reduction services, sanitation services and other health environmental needs, job training, GED and other higher education preparation and economic programs that help with sustainable income attainment.

CM Johnston thanked Maura for her comments. CM Johnston asked if there were any others that wish to provide feedback since we have had law enforcement, faith-based community partners, and City of Denver advocate.

Mayor Coffman commented he didn't properly prepare the presentation, he was under the impression this was just being presented to committee members and apologized.

CM Johnston asked if there were any others who were in support of Mayor Coffman. CM Johnston understands there will be more time to have a more robust conversation but wanted to give an opportunity to speak now. CM Johnston then opened the floor to council member Coombs and Berzins for questions and comments.

CM Coombs had some questions for staff to see how many permanent beds the city has available for shelter.

Jessica Prosser responded 150 permanent beds were available not counting any domestic violence beds or emergency shelter beds.

CM Coombs asked if we do include a domestic violence, what is the number at that? Jessica Prosser responded that sometimes our domestic violence provider, utilizes hotel and motel vouchers and so there's probably anywhere from 15 to 20 housed at the shelter and the vouchers give some flexibility

CM Coombs then responded with the question of confirming the number of people that have counted in the point in time count and then any information we may have that gets us closer to definitions of homelessness in the city? Lana Dalton answered as of 2020, our last count was 427 individuals experiencing homelessness. We were not able to do a point in time, count this last year. There are discussions with the Metro, Denver, homeless initiative to gather this information. Lana is hopeful to complete a summer I'm possibly doing a summer count. Lana continues to state that with this population, trying to get a better understanding of the impacts of pulpit, we're looking at the account, specifically at anyone who is that is sleeping in shelters, on the streets, or sleeping in vehicles. That is what that count takes into consideration. Lana also states that we can't go into people's homes where folks are doubled up, or at risk of being kicked out of a family or friends' home to count those folks that are experiencing homelessness, or don't have a home of their own. Essentially couch surfing, so it does not take that into account some folks that also stay in hotels that are very temporarily housed due to loss of the home, or things of that nature many of those individuals are not counted as well.

CM Coombs thanked Lana and explained that we have a proposal that would require us to triple or potentially the amount of shelter space that we currently have. CM Coombs referred to Mr. Tafoya's previous comments that we seem to be getting ahead of ourselves. CM Coombs states we are at less than 30% of what we need to be doing. CM Coombs states that in order to really address this issue and so, rather than putting in a ban and then saying that's how we going to address this issue. CM Coombs believes we should continue working with staff in bringing forth proposals and once we are offering what we need to offer, then have a conversation about that.

CM Berzins states she was taking notes and wanted to clarify if Mr. Tafoya represents the Mayor of Denver?

CM Johnston clarified Mr. Tafoya is not.

CM Berzins continues to comment and suggest that Mayor Coffman get a statement from mayor Hancock of Denver, regarding how the ban is working or worked. She also mentioned that she noticed several other cities have this. CM Berzins also suggested maybe gathering data or statements from these other cities. CM Berzins states she is interested in knowing if this is helping or hurting the homeless population. CM Berzins explained the impact the camping ban has had, many people reached out via email and social media. CM Berzins recognizes it's a national issue.

CM Marcano commented that he wanted to thank everyone and the mayor for this ordinance presentation. CM Marcano states that if camping bands worked, he would support them, but the evidence is clear this isn't quite the solution. CM Marcano mentions the people feel their government hasn't done anything about this issue is wasting time with law enforcement city, staff and setting taxpayer dollars on fire.CM Marcano continues to state that we have heard about how much it costs to jail somebody. We know that there are tremendous costs and it costs the city many dollars to abate camps. CM Marcano agreed with the prospective Ean Tafoya shared. CM disagrees with this ordinance and does not believe this is the first step to resolution.

CM Murillo stated over the past three years the city has been focusing on getting the necessary data pertaining to housing needs and needs to start having the necessary conversations. CM Murillo mentions the findings of the housing market study and housing strategy and how it is all evidence-based practices, creative solutions, borrowed from other communities. CM Murillo feels this ordinance is left field and not productive. CM Murillo expresses she is disappointed in the timing and feels it will derail the progress that has been made in the past three years. CM Murillo states she recognizes there are socioeconomic issues that need to be addressed. CM Murillo expressed she is not in support of this ordinance. CM Murillo expressed she is agreeing with previous comments made regarding other data points.

CM Bergan commented that she does not believe this to be a negative policy. CM Bergan believes the intent is to provide assistance to those experiencing homelessness in the camping site. CM Bergan is interested in knowing if we do have a location where we would be able to provide that alternative site. CM Bergan is also curious if we have been providing adequate resources to get people out of their situations and curious as to what services the counties are providing. CM Bergan recognizes the work being done by our partners but would like to have a conversation regarding some of the deeper issues regarding homelessness and its big picture and its data hopefully at study session.

CM Johnston thanked CM Bergan for her comments. CM Johnston states she would like for the committee members formally make a decision regarding this ordinance. CM Johnston states she would like to briefly comment. She states this ordinance is not quite ready and we are a bit premature. CM Johnston states she personally does not support moving this to study session.

CM Berzins commented that she would like to see this go to voters and let the voters decide. CM Berzins states there was a huge response in Denver. CM Berzins asked Mayor Coffman if he would be interested in a vote.

Mayor Coffman advises he initially did not regard the vote. Mayor Coffman explains he'd be open with this option and may take it into consideration.

CM Berzins agreed to move this item to study session.

CM Coombs commented the suggestion of looking at new and effective proposals. CM Coombs states that we should redirect and take a look at proposals that do work instead of focusing on what does not work. CM Coombs

states she would not like to move this item forward. CM Coombs explained she does not think this item is quite ready and needs to be revised.

CM Murillo commented that she thinks the timing of this is curious at best being that we are just starting the implementation of our housing strategy.

CM Murillo expresses concern as it is an election year, the intention of this ban as well as the conversation is potentially putting it to the voters. CM Murillo states she is disappointed that this issue is being used as a campaign issue. CM Murillo states she wants to be on record that is not in agreement with this ordinance.

CM Johnston thanks the councilmembers for there comments and votes. CM Johnston states she would like to move forward with the remaining items on the agenda.

Outcome – The Committee agreed not to move this item forward to study session.

A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Aurora, Colorado Expressing the Aurora City Council's Support to Fund Restoration Christian Ministries with a Rehabilitation Grant Using Community Development Block Grant COVID

Summary of Issue and Discussion

Due to time constraints, CM Johnston advised we would not be able to go through all the presentations for the remaining agenda items and try to condense. CM Johnston asked staff if they had anything pressing that needed to be presented. Rodney Milton commented that there were no pressing presentations. Rodney explained we are good with moving forward with that suggestion to condense and gain back some time. Rodney advised that we would be combining two sets of resolutions, one set being from COVID-19 funding and the other set from the GAP Financing round. Rodney explained he would be able to present more in depth at Study Session if needed. Rodney explained he would be happy to answer any questions or concerns.

Questions/Comments –

CM Johnston asked the Councilmembers if they were in agreement to move all these items forward to study session.

CM Berzins commented that she agrees to move these items forward to Study Session. CM Berzins commented that she is in support of using the funds as they are needed.

CM Coombs agreed that she is in agreement to move these items forward to study session.

Outcome – The Committee unanimously agreed to move this item forward to study session.

A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Aurora, Colorado Expressing Support to Fund Ready to Work Aurora with a Rehabilitation Grant Using Community Development Block Grant COVID-19 Dollars Summary of Issue and Discussion

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CM Coombs agreed that she is in agreement to move these items forward to study session.

Outcome – The Committee unanimously agreed to move this item forward to study session.

A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Aurora, Colorado Expressing Support to fund Asian Pacific Development Center of Colorado with Community Development Block Grant COVID-19

Summary of Issue and Discussion

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CM Coombs agreed that she is in agreement to move these items forward to study session.

Outcome – The Committee unanimously agreed to move this item forward to study session.

A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Aurora, Colorado Expressing Support of the 2021 Winter Round Affordable Housing GAP Financing Program funding Recommendation for the Aurora Housing Authority Gateway Apartments

Summary of Issue and Discussion

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CM Coombs agreed that she is in agreement to move these items forward to study session.

Outcome – The Committee unanimously agreed to move this item forward to study session.

A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Aurora, Colorado Expressing Approval of a Loan from the City's General Fund for Various Projects by Elevation Community Land Trust
Summary of Issue and Discussion

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CM Coombs agreed that she is in agreement to move these items forward to study session.

<u>Outcome</u> – The Committee unanimously agreed to move this item forward to study session.

MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

CM Johnston asked the committee that due to time constraints if we could keep the updates limited to a few minutes if possible.

<u>Housing Strategy Update</u>- Rodney Milton provided a brief update. Rodney explained that the intention is to have a full update in July.

<u>Mental Health Co-Responder Program Update</u>- Jessica Prosser explained we are continuously meeting with partners and continuing the hiring process. Jessica Prosser advised that some of our partners will be in training this upcoming week and still working to launch this program this summer.

Youth Violence Prevention Program Update- Christina Amparan provided the following update. Christina states she is working on putting together the youth advisory council and the release of a recruitment video that our communications department is helping with June 9th. Christina also mentions the release of their first round of funding for organizations to request funding. There are 11 applications that are currently being reviewed. Christina also mentions the program is continuing with the hiring process. There will be two outreach specialists starting on Monday. Lastly, the program is working on putting together work groups to move some of the work forward, including our regional compact, a group meeting with Denver representatives.

<u>Updates form Community Members-</u> CM Johnston states the reminder that this section was moved up to the discussion following the ordinance presentation that was presented by Mayor Coffman.

Questions/Comments-

CM Johnston announced this is the last meeting as a councilmember with HORNS. She thanked staff and the other councilmembers present for their time and work. She advised the vacancy will not be filled in time before the next HORNS meeting, explaining Councilmember Coombs is the co-chair.

CM Berzins thanked CM Johnston for her leadership and work with HORNS. CM Berzins suggested moving the next meeting that was initially scheduled for July 2nd to a different day due to scheduling issues.

CM Coombs suggested she is in agreement to schedule the following meeting a week after.

CM Berzins suggests having a conversation via email to setup the upcoming meeting.

All councilmembers agreed to have this conversation via email and get the upcoming meeting scheduled with a new time.

Next meeting: Thursday, July 8, 2021 at 8:30 a.m. Meeting adjourned at 10:03 a.m.

APPROVED:

Committee Vice Chair, Allison Coombs