

MINUTES - REGULAR MEETING

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT AND CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Community Meeting Center, 'B' Room
11300 Stanford Avenue

Monday, September 12, 2016

CALL TO ORDER: 6:30 P.M.

ROLL CALL:

CHAIR BRIETIGAM
VICE CHAIR MCINTOSH
COMMISSIONER BLACKMUN
COMMISSIONER CONSTANTINO
COMMISSIONER MUNETON
COMMISSIONER PHAM
COMMISSIONER RAMIREZ

Absent: Blackmun, McIntosh, Constantino

ALSO PRESENT: Omar Sandoval, City Attorney; Allison Mills, Neighborhood Improvement Manager; Nida Watkins, Project Manager; Jimmy Nguyen, Program Specialist; Officer Hatfield, Police Department; Officer Pham, Police Department; Judy Moore, Recording Secretary.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Commissioner Ramirez.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – PUBLIC: None.

MINUTES: It was moved by Chair Brietigam and seconded by Commissioner Pham, to receive and file the Minutes from the June 6, 2016 Meeting. The motion carried by a 2-0 vote, with Commissioners Muneton and Ramirez abstaining, and Blackmun, Constantino, and McIntosh absent, as follows:

Ayes: (2) Brietigam, Pham
Noes: (0) None
Absent: (3) Blackmun, Constantino, McIntosh
Abstain: (2) Muneton, Ramirez

Commissioner Constantino joined the meeting at 6:33 p.m.

MATTERS FROM STAFF: At the request of Vice Chair McIntosh, Omar Sandoval, the City Attorney, reviewed the scope of the Neighborhood Improvement and Conservation Commission's (NICC) duties as defined under Municipal Code Section 2.58.080. He stated that the main purpose of the Commission was to review, evaluate, and provide advisory assistance on the documents used for the ongoing housing and Community Development Block Grant programs, which were Federal

grant programs that provide funding for different community improvements given to cities and counties. Many programs require noticing and reports which need to be published, and this Commission serves as an advisory body to the City Council to review the reports and provide comments to staff before the reports are taken to City Council. The City Council adopted responsibilities, which are delineated to the Commission, and the Council may designate additional duties or may ask for items to be reviewed before actions are taken. Also, an advisory body does not have governmental powers or authority, such as to commit the City to spend money or resources. Those powers are reserved for the City Council. The Council also adopts the budget for spending during each fiscal year and new items not budgeted need pre-approval and an allocation from the Council. Typically, if funds are needed for a new program, some other program must be set aside, therefore, advisory bodies must be mindful of requests brought to City Council.

The Commission also has the responsibility to identify and recommend to the City Council, eligible programs and geographic target areas in the City to allocate funds for neighborhood improvement and energy/water conservation for homes, apartments, and neighborhoods. The State asks the cities to fast track energy projects ministerially for single-family home solar installations in order to conserve energy and the environment. Another responsibility is to promote citizen awareness for neighborhood improvement support, not for commercial areas, and to identify community goals to preserve and improve neighborhoods, and energy resources such as the tree canopies, which have their own regulations. There is also a property maintenance ordinance.

Additionally, the Commission can ask City Council to send items to the Commission for review, and if an item in the Municipal Code, under the Commission's jurisdiction, needs the attention of the Council, a member, or the Secretary, should be designated to write a report to the Council, or a member could come before the Council and bring up the item during public comments.

HOMESLESSNESS TASK FORCE PRESENTATION: Police Officer Brian Hatfield gave a presentation on the Homelessness Task Force.

Officer Hatfield explained how his team became organized. In west Garden Grove, his boundaries were from Dale Street/Beach Boulevard to Valley View Street. He stated that a majority of the homeless population living in the flood control channel off Knott Street, both underground and inside the tunnels, were responsible for many of the crimes in the industrial areas. Early on, Hatfield took on the role to arrest the criminals to solve the problem, however, this did not solve the issue. Just as he began to get creative, Officer Hatfield was injured and was temporarily off work, during which time he conceived the idea for a 'special resource team' in regard to homelessness. While off, he volunteered to help the homeless population, which fostered a different perspective, especially since he now knew of organizations to help the homeless. He also realized that the homeless did not have, or claimed not to have, the knowledge base he did, for drug rehabilitation, mental health, or housing programs.

Once back at work, Hatfield networked and helped to get the resource office workers out in the field to see the actual homeless situations. He wanted to create resource events, however, he first needed a tracking system for the types of calls for service relating to homelessness. The Police Department would receive repeated calls for the same person, so with a tracking system, both the street issues and police issues could be treated. The Police team would also be trained in crisis intervention and verbal techniques to limit the use of force and liability.

Hatfield's one-day field event at the Garden Grove flood control channel included representatives, materials, and contact information from 13 different help organizations such as drug rehabilitation, mental health, and homelessness advocacy, and was covered by ABC7 News. The catalyst for the event was that the homeless at the flood channel were trespassing as the channel was not a public right-of-way. In contrast, in the City of Orange, the homeless camps in the riverbed area of the 57 Freeway were not technically trespassing as the area is open to public access. At the Garden Grove flood channel event, the homeless were detained, without enforcement, unless an individual was wanted for a major heinous crime. All of the homeless were to leave, however, if they wanted assistance, the organizations were there to help with information.

With the success of the flood channel event, the Police Department decided to invest more time and resources with their full support and the Special Resource Team (SRT) was created to help the needs of the community. The Training section of the program, headed by Corporal Haller, includes crisis intervention, verbal techniques, meetings with the Orange County Outreach and Engagement Team, enforcement procedures, and current case law. The Administration side, headed by Officers Flanders and Shelgren, deals with tracking numbers and statistics relating to dedicated Police time, implementing Municipal Code enforcement, and creating community partnership agreements. Hatfield added that private property owners need to use their right of citizen's arrest to arrest people on their property. The Field Operators, headed by Officers Hatfield and Orozco, respond to community related concerns and assist individuals. He also mentioned that some of the homeless population was transient from outside Garden Grove and when needed, attempts to contact family members would be part of the support system.

Officer Hatfield then stated that the goals of the SRT are to reduce the calls for service, educate officers, address community concerns, document department actions to limit City liability, and network with resource organizations. He added that law enforcement faces three types of homelessness:

- Cannot – Physical or mental disability that prevents person from living with normal pressure of everyday life.
- Have not – The largest population because of lost job, divorce, major life-altering situation where the bottom fell out, but persons are willing to accept assistance.
- Will not – Choose the homeless lifestyle.

Officer Hatfield then quoted a portion of the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics, "I recognize the badge of my office as a symbol of public faith and I accept it as a public trust to be held so long as I am true to the ethics of the police service." Hatfield stated that as law enforcement officers, it is their duty to address the most pressing issues related to our community and the SRT program is designed to address these issues. He added that forty percent of the calls for service were homeless related and that historically, the transient population was pushed from area to area. If a group was trespassing, a team would be sent out to arrest people, but instead, if representatives could go out and assist in getting a few people to a better place, which would reduce calls for service with less demand on the Police Department.

Officer Hatfield offered his contact information: Brian Hatfield, West Patrol Division, (714) 240-1562, brian@ggpd.org, and opened the floor for discussion.

Ms. Liz Raganold thanked Officer Hatfield and asked for clarification regarding resource volunteers. Hatfield responded that he networked with agencies such as Volunteers of America for Veteran-related services and Step House for drug and alcohol addiction recovery, and to find others, he searched the internet for local resources.

Ms. Raganold then asked about the dividing line for residents who make the calls for service regarding the homeless in neighborhoods who may just need help. Hatfield shared that his jurisdiction was Brookhurst Street to the west, and that Cindy Orozco had Brookhurst Street to the east. For community concerns with someone sleeping inside their vehicle, or a continuous presence, citizens should email or call the Police Department's non-emergency line with information and include the car license plate as the person may move the vehicle. Citizens could also call the OC Outreach and Engagement Team. For crimes in progress, citizens should call 911.

Mr. Roberto Herrera asked for a comparison of Garden Grove homelessness procedures versus Santa Ana, who moved the Civic Center encampment to the bus station. Hatfield responded that cities have different interactions, some communities with alcohol and drug issues congregate in certain areas, some have more violent acts of thefts that require police attention, and some homeless areas were quiet.

Mr. Angel Van Stark thanked Officer Hatfield and agreed that arrests were not a good approach as they fill up the jails and were not cost effective; that homelessness was a national problem especially in California; that housing was temporary because a two-week voucher was not enough time; that a large portion of homeless were single mothers who could not work if a child was sick; that the 2013-14 death rate of homeless increased 54 percent; that more restrooms were needed to prevent disease; and that he would like to help with the foster care system and addiction at the City Council level.

Mr. Nel Ramirez mentioned the encampments by Angel Stadium, and that when they get too large, they get pushed out of their secure area; that resources were

temporary and they need homes; that homeless do not feel part of the community; that some families were broken up; and that he suggested foreclosed homes to house the homeless. Hatfield responded that he was not aware of any area with enough housing and that foreclosures were not the answer as they were based on a property owner's willingness to secure the location for housing, and that HUD housing had extended wait lists. Also, at the 57 Freeway, it was illegal to camp or set up the community they have in the flood control channel, and the reported crime statistics show that the environment is not safe due to a select few who run the camps. Also, no enforcement is taken in that area due to civil liability issues.

Mr. Mark Paredes asked if there was a crime increase due to homelessness and stated that Garden Grove resources were limited and homelessness should be a community shared issue, not just a Police Department issue. Hatfield stated he would like a proactive approach to prevent homelessness by having preventative training programs in high school senior classes before students get out into the real world, and added that it is not a crime to be homeless, however, activities create the issues.

Mr. Demian Garcia Monroy thanked Officer Hatfield and stated that the County, State and Federal government were approving funds for more resources and Garden Grove would be ahead of the game.

Mr. Rick Montoya asked if the crime rate had gone up due to the homeless. Hatfield responded that multiple issues were at fault; that Los Angeles County transplants come into the City because Orange County has more money and the resources are better; that outreach has to be coordinated because some food has to be thrown out due to too much in certain areas; and, that AB109 early release from the jail system program raises the crime rate.

Chair Brietigam closed the floor to public comment.

Commissioner Muneton thanked Officer Hatfield and the audience and liked the different approach.

Commissioner Pham thanked Officer Hatfield and asked if his team was trained for culturally sensitive and LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) clients. Hatfield responded yes, that emotional and financial support was addressed.

Commissioner Ramirez thanked Officer Hatfield and asked what the recourse was for people panhandling with signs at major chain businesses and on street medians in the context of preserving neighborhoods and businesses. Hatfield stated that panhandling was a location specific issue; that the first amendment right allows people to hold whatever sign they want as long as they were on the sidewalk; that standing on the median is breaking the law as the median is part of the road; that the issue cannot be enforced on private property without the permission of the business owner; and, that a call for service could help resolve the issue.

Commissioner Ramirez commented that several approaches to reduce homelessness include state bills that require cities to evaluate land uses related to

affordable housing, sober living homes, transitional care facilities, support care facilities, and emergency shelters that mandate the local jurisdictions and that this overrides the local jurisdiction's ability to regulate the homes; that hopefully, the police outreach would create a relationship between the homeless and permanent neighborhood communities, who try to protect, preserve, and conserve their neighborhoods; that due to a lack of perspective, permanent communities do not want these types of homes; and, that after ten o'clock at night, the corner of Gilbert Street and Chapman Avenue was not safe.

Chair Brietigam asked for the response time for a call for service to the west side relating to transients and why had the homeless population in west Garden Grove increased. Hatfield stated that typically, the next available officer would be dispatched for a call and that the west end had more resources. He added that most homeless have funds, food, and phones available, and that for the homeless transients from Los Angeles County, there were more financial benefits.

Chair Brietigam asked if the Police Department had sufficient resources to handle the issues. As a full-time patrol officer, Hatfield stated he would like two full-time officers as his work was done in his spare time.

PUBLIC HEARING - 2015-16 CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION REPORT REVIEW (CAPER):

Chair Brietigam opened the public hearing to receive comment. Seeing none, the public portion of the hearing was closed.

Staff presented the 2015-16 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report Review (CAPER), which will be submitted to Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The report is a HUD requirement and substantiates funds received to be able to continue to receive such funds in the future, which help serve those in need in the community. The report covers the period of July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016. Before submittal to HUD, the CAPER is available for public comment for at least fifteen days. City Council will hold a public hearing on the CAPER at its September 27, 2016 meeting.

The CAPER is part of an ongoing citizen participation process, which happens in three stages.

- Consolidated Plan - The City created a 5-year Consolidated Plan (2015-20) for Housing and Community Development, which identifies the community's priority housing, homeless, and social service needs. This CAPER covers the first year.
- Action Plan - Each year, staff recommends an Action Plan of specific projects and budget allocations to address needs identified in the Consolidated Plan. This Commission participates in reviewing the Action Plan before Council adoption. With an approved Action Plan, contracts are executed, projects are implemented, and funds are expended in accordance with the Plan.

- CAPER – This report measures the City’s performance regarding the number of people served, the number of housing units rehabilitated, and the amount of money spent. The progress of each project is evaluated in the Action Plan, and progress or challenges encountered in meeting the 5-year goals in the Consolidated Plan are reported.

Unlike the Consolidated Plan or Action Plan, the City is not required to adopt the CAPER, rather, the report is submitted directly to HUD. This Commission is asked to hold a public hearing to hear any comments from the audience or Commissioners, to be considered at a future Council meeting.

Several first year accomplishments include:

- Assisted 3,400 individuals and households with Fair Housing services.
- Abated 351 units in low- and moderate- income neighborhoods for unsafe, indecent, or unsanitary living conditions.
- Assisted 561 persons to avoid or recover from homelessness with homeless prevention and intervention.
- Provided services and/or meals to 1,227 seniors.
- Assisted 49 low-income households with rental assistance with tenant-based rental assistance vouchers.

After staff’s summary, there were several comments and suggestions from the Commissioners:

1. Commissioner Ramirez acknowledged the plan’s first year accomplishments and encouraged those present, who expressed passion about homelessness and those with special needs, to get a copy of the CAPER report to familiarize themselves with Garden Grove’s resources and to also attend the City Council meeting on September 27th.
2. Commissioner Pham noted the CAPER Notice was in Vietnamese and asked if it was published in other languages. Staff responded that notices were also in English and Spanish, and that the notice could be found on the City’s website, at the Public Library, the Community Meeting Center, and City Hall.
3. Commissioner Constantino asked for clarification on the Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) Subrecipients, located on Page 28 of the report, Item 3a, which lists vendors from Fullerton (Women’s Transitional Living Center), Seal Beach (Interval House), and Santa Ana (Mercy House Transitional Living Centers). Staff responded that these vendors fall under the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program to provide services to the City.
4. Chair Brietigam acknowledged the detailed report and asked for clarification on the recommendation. Staff explained that the ‘action’ was to hold a public hearing for public comment and that the Commission

could recommend that staff transmit the CAPER report to the City Council for their public hearing, however, the recommendation was not required.

5. Commissioner Ramirez recommended that Officer Hatfield's homelessness intervention and assistance were included in the accomplishments section of the CAPER report. Staff responded that the efforts of the Special Resource Team were mentioned in the Outreach portion of the report.

MATTERS FROM COMMISSIONERS: Commissioner Pham liked the Special Resource Team presentation at the request of Vice Chair McIntosh, and encouraged more presentations for a larger audience and civic engagement. He thanked Planning Commissioner Mark Paredes, and Parks and Recreation Commissioner Rick Montoya, for attending. Also, he asked if ESG would play a larger role in county for shelter in the winter months. Staff responded that the Mercy House armory shelter was only open during the cold weather months and funding was provided to service the Garden Grove population. Commissioner Pham then asked if more money was allocated this year for the increase in homelessness. Staff stated that funds were finite and that if one fund were increased, another would be decreased.

Commissioner Pham also would like more presentations.

ADJOURNMENT: Chair Brietigam adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m. to the next Regular Meeting of the Neighborhood Improvement and Conservation Commission to be held on Monday, December 5, 2016, at 6:30 p.m., at the Community Meeting Center B Room, 11300 Stanford Avenue.

Judith Moore
RECORDING SECRETARY