



Monday, September 9, 2024

MINUTES

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT
AND CONSERVATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

COMMUNITY MEETING CENTER
11300 STANFORD AVENUE
GARDEN GROVE, CA 92840

REGULAR SESSION - 6:30 P.M. – COUNCIL CHAMBERS

CALL TO ORDER: 6:35 P.M.

ROLL CALL: COMMISSIONER BLACKMUN
COMMISSIONER KEARNEY
COMMISSIONER KESTER
COMMISSIONER RUBIN
COMMISSIONER TRAN

ABSCENT: COMMISSIONER BELL
COMMISSIONER DE LA O

ALSO PRESENT: Monica Covarrubias, Sr. Project Manager; Timothy Throne, Sr. Program Specialist; Svetlana Moure, Recording Secretary

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Commissioner Kearney

A. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – PUBLIC: None

B. MINUTES: Commissioner Blackmun moved to receive and file the Minutes from the March 4, 2024, meeting and Commissioner Kearny moved to second. The motion was carried by a 5-2 vote as follows:

Ayes: (5) Blackmun, Kearny, Kester, Rubin, Tran
Noes: (0)
Absent: (2) Bell, de la O

C. MATTERS FROM STAFF:

1. PUBLIC HEARING – Presentation of the FY 2023-24 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) by Senior Program Specialist, Timothy
- The purpose of the report before you is to conduct a Public Hearing regarding the City's FY 23-24 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report, otherwise known as the "CAPER"; and to
 - Transmit the report to City Council.

DISCUSSION

- The CAPER details how the City carried out the projects and activities identified in the previously approved FY 23-24 Annual Action Plan.
- During FY 23-24, the City utilized Federal funding to expand or preserve affordable housing opportunities, improve low-income neighborhoods through public infrastructure improvements, and assist special needs groups such as senior citizens, homeless and those who are at-risk of becoming homeless.
- The City assisted approximately 18,068 low-income individuals through various programs and services. Highlights include the following:
 - Created and retained 28 jobs, provided assistance to 22 businesses, and assisted 258 families access childcare through the Boost Program;
 - Created 14 jobs and assisted 7 businesses through the Jobs 1st Program;
 - Completed the Stuart Drive Permanent Support Housing development that supports 8 households who are chronically homeless, with supportive rental housing;
 - Provided rental assistance and wrap around supportive services to 33 homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless households through the HEART Program;
 - Provided homeless services to 214 individuals;
 - Assisted 4,265 low-income residents through infrastructure development;
 - Assisted 21 low-income residents through the Home Repair Program;
 - Assisted 6,314 low-income residents with community services; and

- Provided community outreach and education to 6,555 individuals.
- The City expended an additional \$264,137 in CARES Act and HOME-ARP funding in FY 23-24 to develop and expand programs in response to the Coronavirus.

ESG-CV Accomplishments are included in the CAPER and allowed the City to:

- Provide another 329 homeless individuals with street outreach, homeless prevention, rapid rehousing and emergency shelter services.
- A public notice was published in English, Spanish and Vietnamese newspapers announcing the public comment period, which began on August 23, 2024, and will conclude at the end of City Council's September 24th meeting. All public comments received are included in the final submission of the CAPER to HUD.

RECOMMENDATION

- It is recommended that the NICC hold a public hearing to receive comments concerning the FY 23-24 CAPER; and
- Recommend its transmission to City Council.

This concludes the report and staff was available to answer any questions the commission may have had.

Commissioner Kester had a question about the Cares Act funding, and how we are moving forward since COVID-19? Staff responded that these funding sources have specific expenditure deadlines, meaning we have a set period to spend the funds. For instance, the ESG-CV funds mentioned in the report had a deadline of September 30, 2023, which marked the end of our program cycle for COVID-related funding. In contrast, CDBG-CV funds will expire at the end of the fiscal year 2024-2025. HOME ARP funds have a much longer expenditure deadline of 10 years. This extended timeframe is needed to accumulate additional HOME funds for affordable housing projects, which require more time to develop and implement. We are required to report accomplishments to HUD once the projects funded by these sources are completed and funding has been expended.

Commissioner Kester also had a question about the HOME funds. Are they essentially a safety net to help people keep their homes or cover their rent? Staff responded that we took the HOME ARP Allocation Plan to City Council for approval and awarded funds to the tenant based rental assistant activity, as well as development of permanent supportive housing units. Approximately half of the funds are allocated to the development of permanent supportive housing, and the

other half is being allocated for tenant based rental assistance, which is designed to assist individuals who are homeless.

Commissioner Kester asked if the disbursements of funds are “as needed” or locked into the account. Are some carried over? Staff replied the ESG-CV dollars are carried over every year until we reach the expenditure deadline. We have ESG funding which is for homeless services in general and includes street outreach, homeless prevention, rapid rehousing, and emergency shelter. The City received over 4 million dollars in ESG-CV funds which flowed a significant amount of funds into those activities during COVID-19. The City had a surplus of funding for three years and we were able to fund homeless services with one-time funding over the last couple of years.

Commissioner Kester stated that he read an article/report where the Governor is saying some cities are not using the funds correctly and he is threatening to take away funds from jurisdictions. Are our funds secure? Is there a lot of red tape/bureaucracy to get them? Staff replied that these funds are secured once we get an award letter, as long as we meet the expenditure deadlines and spend it on the activities we are tasked to spend the funds on.

Commissioner Kearney asked, based off of the current report, how will the statement by the Governor and his desire impact what we are doing? Staff replied that we cannot speak for the Governor’s report, but from our understanding of the report it was to keep jurisdictions accountable. The report was addressing those jurisdictions who are not necessarily addressing the homeless issues in their jurisdictions. In the last 5 years Garden Grove has done a lot in regard to homelessness. We just recently opened up our Central Cities Navigation Center and we developed the City’s first permanent supportive housing development last year. The City of Garden Grove has done all we can in addressing the homelessness issue, and that has been made possible through the Emergency Solutions Grant and the HOME funds that we were awarded by HUD. We are going to be looking at expending the HOME ARP funds over the next 10 years and adding additional affordable and permanent supportive housing units. The City is constantly looking to improve our system of care for the homeless.

Commissioner Blackmun stated that staff indicated there is money left over that has to be spent by the end of the year. How much is there? Staff replied that when we started the fiscal year it was approximately \$80,000 dollars. There were 3 million dollars that we received in CDBG-CV funds and the remaining funds are for the Workforce Activation and Readiness Program (WARP). The City awarded *OCAPICA* and *Stand Up For Kids* funding to operate WARP to transitional aged youth individuals as well as adults looking for workforce development services. They get them prepared for the work force by providing resume development, Dress for Success classes, and they connect them to internships and apprenticeships to get them work experience. Some statistics to date include: 59 job placements and 103 individuals assisted through WARP. Stand Up for Kids are specific to transitional aged youth 14-24, and then anyone 25 and older is assisted by *OCAPICA*.

Commissioner Blackmun asked about the approximate 18,000 persons served – are these people who were removed from the streets? Staff replied that this is the total number of people in all of our HUD funded programs.

Commissioner Blackmun asked if there had been any turnover at the Stuart Drive development? Staff replied as of right now there has not been any turnover.

Commissioner Kester mentioned that he noticed a trend in the CAPER on page 39. The chart is showing a decrease from year to year. Staff responded that funding was left unexpended under the Rapid Rehousing activity because the service provider had issues receiving eligible matches through coordinated entry system for most of the year until the 4th quarter where they received a match. They were able to spend a portion of the money in that couple of months for the rental assistance, but they were unable to spend their allocated amount for most of the fiscal year. With our Central Cities Navigation Center online there will be plenty of Garden Grove residents being referred into those programs so hopefully that will resolve the issue and they will be able to spend their money as anticipated.

Commissioner Kester asked if the City has a task-force to clean the corridor area on Lampson towards Beach Blvd. Staff replied that is in the City of Stanton. Staff also replied that we do have a Public Works team that partners with our SRT team to clean up areas that need it. Staff also responded that our Public Works team goes out often and when they clean up any encampment area, another group of individuals come in and take over the encampment very quickly because they are transient individuals. When one city cleans up and starts to enforce the issues, the groups move into another city. They continue to migrate to where they are least likely to be targeted and most likely to be left alone.

Commissioner Kester asked, how is our relationship with Stanton? Staff replied that we try to collaborate with them whenever there is an issue near the border. For instance, we have implemented a program with Caltrans to fence certain areas of their properties which are right under the overpasses of the freeway. A big portion of the problem was that our Police Department did not have lawful action on Caltrans property. We now have a cooperative agreement with Caltrans to access their private property - not only to put the fences up, but to provide outreach to those homeless individuals living under the overpasses.

Commissioner Kearney stated that there have been assaults on our residents by homeless individuals. Is our outreach team noticing an increase in violence? Staff replied that either the SRT can address those calls or Be Well or VOALA, who is our new street outreach team. Staff also replied that if it is a violence issue, 911 should be called immediately. The SRT is a specialized team of police officers who deal exclusively with our homeless population and know all the resources to offer them. Staff responded again, please reach out to us on the side if there are multiple incidents, and we may be able to encourage more patrolling in the area.

Commissioner Blackmun mentioned a family with 4 kids, who were living in their car. Staff had provided her with some phone numbers, but the individuals called

and were placed on a waiting list. They called a different number and could not leave a message. Is there one number that they can call to get help right away? Staff stated yes, 2-1-1. But that is not the most effective way to get to a housing referral. When it comes to homeless individuals, our SRT phone line and VOALA lines are the best starting points. They will do an intake and ask them details that then get put into the coordinated entry system through 2-1-1, the referral system. When it comes to domestic violence, we use a provider called Interval House, who has been a long standing provider for the City of Garden Grove. We provide them with HOME funding to operate the Heart Program. The Heart Program is rental assistance and supportive services for individuals who are literally homeless and at risk and are experiencing domestic violence as well. Please feel free to reach out to Timothy Throne and he can do the warm hand-off referrals to Interval House and that will speed up the process. If there are any instances where you want to make a referral, please reach out to Timothy Throne directly and he can make the warm hand-off with the service provider.

The appropriate service provider to call also depends on bed availability at local emergency shelters. Yes, the Central Cities Navigation Center serves the homeless population in Garden Grove but they do not serve children. That is why we have family shelters that we fund with the Emergency Solutions Grant. So if there is a family with children, please make that referral to Timothy Throne, and he will call one of the housing providers and make that warm hand-off.

Commissioner Blackmun asked that since they are trying to keep kids in school, would GGUSD be responsible since they have homeless resources? Staff responded that it is not solely their responsibility but they do have a lot of resources. Because they have the resources, they may be able to get there faster than the City or 211 to access the resources. Whether it is the City, GGUSD, or the faith-based community, these organizations will provide help for a few days and another can take over for a few days after that until the resources have been depleted.

Commissioner Kester stated you mentioned churches. Some churches have food, but end up throwing the food away. Staff responded if you do know of churches that provide food, we would be happy to put them on our list of resources. Please let us know.

Commissioner Rubin wanted to reiterate - for violent incidents related to the homeless, may we have the numbers to call again? Staff replied call 911 first. The non-emergency Police line for the SRT is 714-741-5704. The homeless service flyers have the outreach phone numbers on them and please direct them to both numbers, as well as all the other organizations we fund. If those numbers don't work, please feel free to reach out to Timothy Throne and he will do the warm hand-off to the correct service provider.

Commissioner Rubin asked how the City's relationship with the school district was? Staff replied, in recent years, we have grown our relationship with the GGUSD because the McKinney-Vento list that GGUSD maintains have a lot of individuals experiencing homelessness that do not know what our resources are. The City has

funding for the *housing* component to GGUSD's *service* component. They do not have a lot of housing options through the services they provide to the student households experiencing homelessness. The City has contacted them to try to conduct outreach to the households on the McKinney-Vento list, because they are homeless or at risk homeless households and we can help connect them to shelter or rental assistance.

Commissioner Tran asked how the City accounts for meals provided. Staff replied that we provide funding to Meals on Wheels, a non-profit organization, and they provide statistics to us for the meals they deliver to Garden Grove residents. Staff also replied that they provide meals to the seniors that participate in our Senior Center to eat there or to take the food home. They also provide meals to individuals who are immobile and unable to get to the Senior Center, so they will deliver the meals to their homes. The individuals need to register with the Senior Center to receive a meal(s). Meals on Wheels has to keep track of all the meals they deliver to the individuals.

Commissioner Rubin asked when you meet a homeless veteran, is there a veterans connection for them? Staff responded yes. Our street outreach team VOALA, who runs our Central Cities Navigation Center, started out as a veteran's organization so they are very connected with veteran services. Also, 211 has a list of services available for veterans specifically. Staff also responded that anytime we meet someone homeless on the street, we do an initial intake to see what kind of resources they qualify for. We would tap into any veteran resource in Orange County that is available. 211 is the hub of all resources in all of Orange County. It can be arduous trying to make a referral through that system, but ultimately it brings all of these services together to serve the homeless population. All of our non-profit service providers use that system to make their referrals.

Commissioner Blackmun: Does VOALA provides street medicine? Staff responded no. VOALA has a team that goes out to the streets to areas where the homeless population congregates, to do outreach to them and tell them about the services, including the Central Cities Navigation Center. Staff mentioned that VOALA services are specifically for our unhoused individuals, to get them into housing and services that will help them become self-sufficient. *Be Well* is for anyone experiencing a mental health crisis, and a lot of that transfers over to homelessness. Be Well responds to a lot of house calls, though a majority of their calls are for the homeless or unhoused. You can be housed or unhoused to receive services from Be Well.

Commissioner Tran asked if we were tracking to see which referrals are coming from which City to the navigation center? Staff replied yes. We track that very closely. We track where the individuals are exiting from, their demographic information, what types of services are being provided to the individuals and what their needs are. We receive all that information daily from VOALA.

Tran: I know it is early, but is there any kind of gauge as to which City has the majority of the referrals? Staff responded that each city has a specific amount of

beds and each city has a percentage of the capacity and they are trying to keep to those percentages. There are 85 beds currently, but the center can go up to 100 beds in total.

It is recommended that the NICC hold a Public Hearing to receive comments concerning the FY 23-24 CAPER and recommend its transmission to City Council.

It was moved by Commissioner Blackmun to approve and seconded by Commissioner Tran to close the Public Hearing and to accept staff's recommendation to transmit the FY 23-24 CAPER, along with any public comments, to City Council for adoption. The motion was carried as follows:

Ayes: (5) Blackmun, Kearney, Kester, Rubin, Tran
Noes: (0)
Absent: (2) de la O, Bell

D. MATTERS FROM COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Rubin thanked staff for all that they do and what the City does to help the community.

Commissioner Tran stated he recently heard that the City adopted two trucks to remove graffiti. How can we extend that contract to continue to deal with the issue of graffiti? Staff replied that the City starts with a two-year contract. If they see that it is working, they will extend the contract. If it is not working or if there is no improvement, then they will make changes to the program.

Commissioner Tran asked who, in the City, is responsible for trees in new developments? Does that fall under the Planning Commission? Staff replied that this is done through the Planning Division. Whenever a project is submitted, Planning will decide what percentage of the project goes to landscaping and they will approve or deny proposal for landscaping.

E. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:40pm. The next Meeting of the Neighborhood Improvement and Conservation Commission will be a Regular Meeting on Monday, December 2, 2024, at 6:30 p.m., in the Council Chamber of the Community Meeting Center, 11300 Stanford Avenue, Garden Grove, CA.