

MINUTES - REGULAR MEETING

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT AND CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Community Meeting Center Council Chamber  
11300 Stanford Avenue

Monday, June 6, 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: Muneton, Ramirez

ALSO PRESENT: Allison Mills, Neighborhood Improvement Manager; Nida Watkins, Project Manager; Alana Cheng, Senior Administrative Analyst; Jimmy Nguyen, Program Specialist; Danny Huynh, Housing Authority Division Manager; Thyana Phi, Senior Housing Specialist; Judy Moore, Recording Secretary.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Commissioner Constantino.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – PUBLIC: None.

MINUTES: It was moved by Chair Brietigam and seconded by Commissioner Blackmun, to receive and file the Minutes from the March 7, 2016 Meeting. The motion carried by a 5-0-2 vote as follows:

Ayes: (5) Blackmun, Brietigam, Constantino, McIntosh, Pham  
Noes: (0) None  
Absent: (2) Muneton, Ramirez

MATTERS FROM STAFF: Danny Huynh and Thyana Phi from the City's Housing Authority, presented an overview of the Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS). Staff and Commissioners discussed and received input on the subject.

To participate in the FSS program, families must be Section 8 participants of the Garden Grove Housing Authority (GGHA) in order to benefit from programs such as credit counseling, job search, job training, home ownership, family counseling, and child care and transportation; that participation was voluntary with the requirement to seek employment and a desire to become self-sufficient; that families would start by completing an application then develop short and long-term goals for the

next five years; that they would sign a participation contract and receive case management and referral as needed to achieve the goals; that families would meet with the coordinator at least annually to discuss progress and any additional services needed; that once goals were completed they could apply to graduate from the program; that the incentive to join was a unique savings opportunity known as the Escrow Account maintained by the GGHA; that at enrollment, a baseline was established according to current income; that the escrow deposit was generated when the family reported a wage increase that exceeded the baseline; that the participant, or head of household, must achieve all the goals, be employed, have all family free from any cash welfare system for twelve consecutive months prior, and be in good standing with the GGHA in order to receive the escrow funds.

Current statistics include 124 families that had completed the FSS contract; 55 were self-sufficient from housing assistance; eight have purchased homes; and more than one-million dollars had been paid out in escrow money, and that average escrow funds received per family was approximately \$11,000.

Vice Chair McIntosh asked when the program began and how many families were currently in the program. Staff replied the early or mid-1990's and that there were 42 participants.

Commissioner Constantino asked if the 124 number was the total from the 1990's. Staff replied yes, that the contracts were five years, however, some families could take up to seven years to achieve the goals.

Vice Chair McIntosh asked where the courses were and how were they advertised. Staff responded that participants designed their own education plan for a college or training school that they pay for; that each case was unique; that what stops them from achieving their goals may be that they need an AA (Associate of Arts) degree or college, or better English; that the program was exclusive to existing Section 8 participants only, not walk-ins, and that those that qualified were briefed as a group and encouraged to join, though joining was not a requirement; that flyers, pamphlets and booklets were distributed; and that those on the waiting list did not qualify.

Commissioner Blackmun asked what the participants would receive upon graduation. Staff described that 'regular' housing tenant's rent was based on their income and as the income would go up, the rent would go up; that on FSS, the tenant would pay the increased rent, however, the increase portion would be set aside in an escrow account; that after the fifth year and if goals were completed, a check would be issued to the cost of approximately \$10,000 or more and be tax free; that long ago, families could use that amount for a down payment on a home, however, in today's market that would not be sufficient.

Commissioner Constantino asked what the graduation rate would be. Staff stated approximately fifty percent.

Commissioner Pham asked staff for the ethnicity of the families. Staff responded that similar statistics of GGHA participants were approximately sixty-percent Asian, twenty-five Hispanic, with the remainder being others.

Commissioner Pham wondered who taught the workshops for the educational opportunities as he had a resource, Recovery Education Institute, which provided courses in financial incentives, financial literacy, educational workshops, and ESL (English as a Second Language) for free, and offered students, who want an AA degree, to go through Community Coastline College for free.

Staff was happy to take the information and stated that every quarter, staff meets with community partners and shares the needs of the FSS participants. They also refer them to organizations such as One Stop, 211, Work Center and UPS office at a community college, and added that most get assistance with financial aid to pay for the courses, as the GGHA did not have the funds for tuition assistance.

Vice Chair McIntosh asked if detailed information on the program was available on a website, along with the escrow budget numbers. Staff replied that the escrow numbers would come from the Finance Department and would require a records request to obtain, and that the program details would be in the Housing Authority Admin Plan.

Commissioner Blackmun asked where the funding comes from. Staff replied that the HUD (Housing and Urban Development) escrow funding was Federal funding.

Commissioner Pham asked if there were demographics on client's mental health or substance usage. Staff replied no.

MATTERS FROM COMMISSIONERS: Vice Chair McIntosh asked to agendize a request to meet with the Police Department's Homeless Task Force. He noted that Officer Hatfield had assembled four officers dedicated to homeless issues and that he had participated in a similar meeting with the Garden Grove Downtown Business Association.

It was moved by Vice Chair McIntosh and seconded by Commissioner Constantino, to agendize a presentation by the Police Department's Homeless Liaison and Task Force. The motion carried by a 5-0-2 vote as follows:

Ayes: (5) Blackmun, Brietigam, Constantino, McIntosh, Pham  
Noes: (0) None  
Absent: (2) Muneton, Ramirez

Vice Chair McIntosh referenced the GGHA's sale of the Civic Center properties to a commercial developer in order to create the 'cottage' properties, which were former HUD housing locations, and asked for clarification on how the GGHA became a realtor, who they answer to, and what were the noticing obligations for properties. He also noted the rapid sale, and that immediate residents were against the project, however, other residents favored the project. He also had concern for the Main Street west parking lot, now under the jurisdiction of the GGHA, but formerly

under the Parking Commission, which was dissolved in 2013. In addition, he inquired as to how the GGHA could acquire and sell properties, and wondered what would happen to the current families in the cottage project homes. Staff responded that in regard to the Main Street parking lot, other properties, and the families, he would need to contact the City Attorney's office as these subjects were beyond the scope of the Neighborhood Improvement Commission, and that a records request to the City Clerk's office was required for a list of GGHA owned properties.

Vice Chair McIntosh then mentioned an Orange County Register article of May 31<sup>st</sup> called 'Looming HUD Funding Cut Could Affect Homeless Women and Children' by Theresa Walker, and stated that money would be taken away from transitional programs. Staff responded that HUD had shifted focus regarding the ESG (Emergency Solutions Grant); that a cap would be placed on the amount of ESG funding for the shelter services component; that the program was not cut; that the City would get the maximum amount of funds that they could spend on shelter; and, that essential services would be funded such as street outreaches and supportive services.

Vice Chair McIntosh asked for an update on the Tri-City collaboration. Staff replied that a follow up was reported out during the Action Plan; that the recommendations that came from the meeting, with input from Commissioner Pham and staff, were incorporated and approved at the last meeting; and, that the contract would be effective on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016.

Vice Chair McIntosh then mentioned that several other Orange County cities have a 'Giving Wall', located in their downtown, at which items of clothing could be donated for the homeless, and that what was not picked up was given to charitable organizations. He wondered if the City could implement such an activity. Staff responded that the request should be addressed at the City Council level.

Vice Chair McIntosh then added that the hotel outreach idea was not mentioned in the Minutes. Staff replied that the issue was beyond the Commission's purview.

Chair Brietigam asked staff to prepare an informational sheet that would clarify the discussion topics allowed under the Commission's purview, and the limitations, so as to not violate law during the Matter from Commissioners portion of the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m. to the next Regular Meeting of the Neighborhood Improvement and Conservation Commission to be held on Monday, September 12, 2016, at 6:30 p.m., at the Community Meeting Center, Council Chamber, 11300 Stanford Avenue.

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Judith Moore  
RECORDING SECRETARY