

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION  
MINUTES

April 7, 2009  
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Stout, Commissioners Beighle, Hoople, Huenefeld-Gese, Seltzer, Yantis

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Plaskon

STAFF PRESENT: Emily Leslie, Alex O'Reilly, Joseph Adriano, Warren Leyh, Department of Parks and Community Services

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Stout who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Plaskon who was excused.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. February 19, 2009

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Seltzer. Second was by Commissioner Beighle and the motion carried unanimously.

B. March 3, 2009

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Seltzer. Second was by Commissioner Hoople and the motion carried unanimously.

C. March 17, 2009

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Beighle. Second was by Commissioner Hoople and the motion carried unanimously.

4. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

5. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Hoople reported that he attended both the Human Services Levy Oversight Board and the Veterans' Levy Oversight Board meetings during the month of March. He noted that he was re-elected as chair of the latter.

Commissioner Hoople said he and Commissioner Seltzer attended the March 20 meeting focused on community safety for older adults.

Commissioner Hoople said he also attended the Communities Count meeting on March 25 held at City Hall.

Commissioner Hoople said that on April 1 he attended the Veterans Town Hall meeting conducted by Bob Ferguson; the vets who attended were mostly older and not from the Gulf War or Iraq campaign. Efforts are under way to contract with the National Guard to have a family resource person; King County does not have one and thus none of the King County programs have access to the National Guard phone lists. When National Guard soldiers return, they simply disperse throughout the county and no one can say for sure where they are. The soldiers work through their post-assignment debriefings as quickly as possible so they can go home again; they are unwilling to highlight any problems they may be having. What they need is a contact person so they can know who to go to even before they get back home.

Chair Stout asked what kind of outreach is being done to the agencies that might see veterans families in a secondary response mode. Commissioner Hoople said part of the strategy is to do more outreach. An office has been established in Renton, and there are monthly scheduled times when services are available in Auburn, Enumclaw, and other areas. The mobile medical van working south King County is part of the response.

Commissioner Beighle said she attended the Friends of Youth fundraising luncheon. The speaker was very dynamic. The event did not raise as much funding as it has in past years.

Commissioner Beighle said she participated in two community conversations on April 6. At the first meeting, held at the Boys & Girls Club, the highlighted issues were dentistry for adults; lack of childcare close by; lack of fresh fruits and vegetables; the need for teen counseling for those without medical coupons; and lack and cost of transportation. At the second community conversation, held at The Landing, the issues were a need for adult dentistry; a lack of jobs; and a weekend shelter.

Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese said many at The Landing indicated they have found it very difficult to find a job, especially if one has a criminal record. She said they

clarified that the assumption that juvenile records disappear at the age of 18 is not true; the fact is it costs money to have the record sealed. They could use some legal assistance to help them in that regard.

Commissioner Beighle said one of the positive things said by the participants at the Boys & Girls Club conversation was that it feels safe in Bellevue.

Commissioner Beighle suggested one thing the city could do for the homeless is to provide them with lockers in which to keep their valuables. She said one woman she spoke with lost her photo album while living on the streets.

Commissioner Seltzer said the Network on Aging brought state Attorney General Rob McKenna to City Hall to address issues relating to the senior population, including identity theft. His presentation was well received.

Human Services Manager Emily Leslie said the Recession Response Task Force with representatives from all city departments is being spearheaded by Parks and Community Services and the Planning and Community Development Departments. During the first meeting of the group the time was spent brainstorming ideas around what the city could do for residents and city employees. The group will meet again on April 9 to start the process of prioritizing the list.

Ms. Leslie said on April 14 the City of Kirkland will be convening a meeting of staff from various cities and representatives from various providers to talk about a regional food drive.

## 6. PUBLIC HEARING

### A. Housing, Community Development and Human Services Needs In Our Community & Use of 2010 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds

Chair Stout explained the reason for the public hearing and noted that the information gathered would be used by the Commission in determining how the anticipated 2010 CDBG award and potential federal stimulus dollars should be allocated.

Motion to open the public hearing was made by Commissioner Hoople. Second was by Commissioner Yantis and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Sarah Sena, Community Program Director at Eastside Domestic Violence Program, said the agency is seeing an increase in the number of clients seeking services. She said the increase has been especially significant in the area of crisis services, most notably from those needing housing assistance. Housing is the primary issue, and everything that can be done to help prevent homelessness should be done. Economic stress on families leads to an escalation of violence. Often when people are out of work they spend more time at home and are prone to abusing

alcohol and substances in an effort to cope, and that only complicates domestic violence situations. By keeping clients in stable situations, victims are not forced by economics to go back to their abusive partners. The agency is very concerned about the potential loss of funding from King County and other sources; the scramble to replace funds is on.

Ms. Debra Grant, Director of Client Services for Hopelink, said she oversees all emergency services, energy assistance, and case management. She said the support given the agency by the City of Bellevue is integral to the success of the organization. Needs are increasing in the community, with housing being a very big concern for many. The number of persons seeking rental assistance to remain in their homes is steadily increasing, and the crisis for each family is lasting longer on average; funding shortfalls, capacity and eligibility requirements, however, make it necessary to turn away 37 people for each one that is served with transitional housing. The number of persons seeking food assistance has increased by some 400 families per month representing some 1700 individuals. It costs the agency about \$200 per month to serve each family, and that represents a budget outlay increase of some \$80,000. Hopelink is grateful for the fact that the community is faithful in supporting the agency with food donations every time there is a call made. The demand, however, is moving toward exceeding the supply, and that will result in turn-aways. The amount of rental assistance has been increased, and the agency is looking at its service delivery models and accessibility issues. The increased workload for the agency comes at a time when it is not able to increase staffing levels, so the community volunteers are more appreciated than ever. The biggest needs are for affordable housing; helping people stay in their affordable housing units; employment; and food.

Ms. Eileen Rasnack, Volunteer Chore Services Program Manager for Catholic Community Services, explained that the program is focused on assisting seniors and adults with disabilities to help them live independently in their own homes. The program is coordinated by a network of volunteer coordinators in King County, including one specifically focused on the Eastside. Seniors are seeing their nest eggs shrink and they are concerned about their ability to handle monthly expenses. Seniors face the same concerns everyone faces: affordable housing, transportation, and basic needs. A number of citizens who are approaching retirement age are having to dip into their savings to meet their basic needs, and when they do retire will face large hurdles in trying to meeting their expenses. The agency is facing the same issues as other agencies, primarily because of actual or pending funding cuts. Volunteer Services received word a week ago that the Senate was proposing cutting the statewide program as of April 1 and cutting it for the next biennium; efforts are under way to get a proviso in place to continue the funding stream for the balance of the current fiscal year and for the next two years. The funding reduction recommended by the House was \$3.3 million. The agency is looking at inside changes, most notably the merging of Catholic Community Services with the Archdiocese Housing Program into a single organization as of July 1.

Mr. Richard Wilson with AtWork! thanked the Commissioners for their support of his agency, which is focused on people with disabilities and assisting them in obtaining jobs in the community. The agency serves as a bridge between those who need a little extra support and guidance and those who have misconceptions about the abilities of the disabled. The biggest challenge facing the disabled community is poverty. When the ADA was passed, it was widely accepted that people with disabilities were the largest poor demographic in the country. AtWork! works tirelessly in finding ways to help people get jobs, and in carving out positions that work for them and for the employers. The economic recession is resulting in cuts to human services agencies. AtWork! has already taken a ten percent cut along with all other employment providers obtaining funding from King County; how the current legislative session plays out will determine what impacts will be faced as a result of state funding cuts. AtWork! offers outsourcing for other organizations but is seeing a downturn in that area; the revenues that used to go back into the business to be used in helping others get jobs has been greatly impacted. AtWork! has reduced its workforce, has frozen wages, and has reduced other forms of compensation. An application is out for the Division of Services for the Blind. The state is apparently going to cut transition funding, so students with disabilities who are leaving high school will not have support in going into work situations.

Motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Yantis. Second was by Commissioner Beighle and the motion carried unanimously.

## 7. DISCUSSION

### A. Update on Federal Stimulus Funds

Grant Coordinator Joseph Adriano informed the Commissioners that as yet staff did not have a lot of solid information from HUD to go on with regard to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). He noted, however, that as the timeline moves forward things could start happening pretty quickly. The ARRA was passed in February 2009, and it appears that some \$40 million will be coming from HUD to King County. Bellevue's share is in two components. First is the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) which likely will be handed to King County and allocated based on a state formula. Second is a supplemental CDBG allocation of about \$191,000.

The estimation is that Bellevue's share of the HPRP will be about \$262,000. The funds will be administered by King County. There have been meetings of city staff with county staff to figure out the best usage of the federal funds. There have been agreements to try to use existing proven programs, primarily for the sake of consistency, and to target the funds at preventing homelessness. The Housing Stability Program has been earmarked as a candidate program. For Rapid Re-Housing, a portion should go for singles and couples without children.

Ms. Leslie said the plan should be solidified by the end of April.

Mr. Adriano said HUD is calling the supplemental CDBG allocation CDBG-R, with the R standing for recovery. It is expected that the feds will require the funds to be used for customary CDBG projects. The funds are intended to sustain or create employment and to generally stimulate the economy. The CDBG-R allocation will be subjected to a separate accounting and reporting process.

The expectation is that there will be a minimum of four weeks between the time HUD makes the funds available and the time the city will have to submit to HUD plans for how the CDBG-R allocation will be handled. Presumably that will include the recommendation of the Commission passed on to the Council.

HUD has tabled its regular CDBG allocation notification. That means the city still does not know how much it will be getting for 2009. The understanding is that the regular CDBG allocation will remain on hold until HUD completes authoring the guidance for the CDBG-R.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese, Mr. Adriano said if the assumption that the CDBG-R funds can be targeted to regular CDBG projects, the Home Repair project and other similar capital projects will qualify. Ms. Leslie added that the Hopelink employment program might also be eligible given that it is currently funded with CDBG dollars.

Commissioner Hoople asked if the Council has been made aware of the short timelines involved and the fact that they will need to act quickly once the Commission develops a recommendation. Ms. Leslie said the Council is up to speed. She added that the funds do not have to be spent within 120 days, but everything must be under contract within that timeframe.

Commissioner Yantis asked if the Commission will be bound by its previous recommendation for how to allocate the 2009 CDBG funds, given that economic conditions have changed since the recommendation was developed. Commissioner Yantis said any change in direction on the part of the Commission would need to be ratified by the Council.

## 8. OLD BUSINESS

## 9. NEW BUSINESS

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly announced that a new community conversation opportunity emerged since the last Commission meeting. She said the Bellevue Diversity Task Force, which was formed at the direction of Police Chief Pillo, meets quarterly. Chief Pillo has provided an opportunity for a community conversation to be part of the next meeting on Wednesday, April 15. She said there would be room for only one Commissioner to participate, and Commissioner Seltzer volunteered.

Ms. O'Reilly said Latino Heat, a group of Latino students that meets at Sammamish High School, has consented to participate in a community conversation on April 9 from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Ms. O'Reilly reminded the Commission that the Loan Review Committee for the Home Repair Program was established at the direction of the Commission in March 1989. The committee from time to time reviews client requests for exceptions to the established program policies. One such requirement is an asset limit of \$50,000. Of course, incomes must follow the HUD guidelines as well. On occasion, clients with more than the maximum allowed assets seek assistance through the program. Exceptions have in the past been made to the policy where there were major medical issues involved that required extensive in-home care that quickly were eating up the available assets.

Ms. O'Reilly said the anticipation is that requests for exceptions to the rules may come up more in the near future. For that reason, an active Loan Review Committee should be in place. Ms. O'Reilly noted that currently there is no Commission member appointed to serve on the committee along with Assistant Parks Director Terry Smith, Sam Ezadean, director of the Home Repair Program, and herself.

Commissioner Beigle volunteered to represent the Commission on the Loan Review Committee.

Ms. Leslie reminded the Commissioners that at the end of May there will be a vacancy on the Commission as Commissioner Seltzer's second term expires. She noted the need to begin recruiting for a replacement. Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese's first term will end at the same time but she will be eligible for reappointment.

10. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

11. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Stout adjourned the meeting at 8:01 p.m.

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Secretary to the Human Services Commission

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Date

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Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date