

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

July 24, 2012
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Bruels, Commissioners McEachran, Stout, Yantis

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners Beighle, Perelman and Plaskon

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

GUEST SPEAKERS: Councilmember Kevin Wallace

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioners Beighle, Perelman and Plaskon, all of whom were excused.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. June 5, 2012

Commissioner McEachran called attention to page 11 of the minutes and noted that under the discussion of the application for Imagine Housing, Francis Village, the sentence "Commissioner McEachran disclosed that the program is operated out of his church" should be revised to read "Commissioner McEachran disclosed that the program was founded by his church, which continues to be involved in it."

Commissioner Stout also referred to page 11 and noted the need to add an "s" to the end of the word "work" in the sentence in the penultimate paragraph that reads "Domestic Violence Program and is a very good model of how collaborative impact work successfully." Commissioner Stout also noted that on page 2 the motion to approve the May 15, 2012, minutes should include "as amended." She also called attention to the penultimate paragraph on page 15 and suggested it should be revised to read "Commissioner Stout questioned why other religious organizations

are able to fund these services through church instead of looking for government funding.”

Commissioner McEachran moved to approve the minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Stout and the motion carried unanimously.

B. June 12, 2012

Commissioner Yantis moved to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Stout and the motion carried unanimously.

4. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

5. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Councilmember Wallace reported that on July 23 the City Council conducted its second budget hearing. He said the only human services organization to offer testimony was Sophia Way. The Council will be holding a budget retreat on July 30 in Crossroads. He thanked the Commissioners for the work they do in reviewing the applications for funding.

6. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Funding Recommendations for General Fund and CDBG

Grant Coordinator Joseph Adriano noted that two public hearings are conducted by the Commission during every funding cycle. The first is held prior to applications being submitted, and the second is conducted after the Commission has developed a preliminary recommendation. The second public hearing also considers testimony on the recommendation for CDBG allocations, as required by the federal government.

Commissioner Stout moved to open the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McEachran and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. June Loveall spoke representing the YWCA. She thanked the city for its ongoing support of the organization. She said the YWCA offers wraparound services in Bellevue through the employment services program, Angeline’s day center, and the Family Village in Redmond. The Family Village in 2011 served 26 Bellevue residents, and to date in 2012, 15 have been served in transitional housing.

Ms. Cristina Wheatley with Kindering Center thanked the Commission for its ongoing support of the agency. She said the program provides a variety of comprehensive services to typically developing children and children with special needs. Services are extended to the families and teachers of the children as well. Services to childcare providers include training and screening for special needs.

Ms. Tracee Parker with Sound Mental Health said she serves as manager for the Safe and Sound Visitation program which provides supervised visitation and safe exchange services for families involved in domestic violence situations. The program has been in operation for more than seven years, but under the proposal for funding it will for the first time be funded by Bellevue. At any given time, between seven and ten percent of the clientele are Bellevue residents. The program is the only one of its kind in the area and clients even come from out of state to use the program. With a sliding fee scale in place, money is not an obstacle to services. Interpreters are provided as well and no one has ever been turned away due to a language barrier.

Ms. Susie Winston with Sound Mental Health said the large community mental health organization provides services countywide. One office is in Bellevue and another is at the Together Center in Redmond. The organization has appreciated support from Bellevue for a long time. The low-income counseling service is provided to those who otherwise could not be receiving services. Medicaid payments are accepted, though they do not cover the full cost of providing services. Between 300 and 400 Bellevue clients are served annually. Low-income clients are also benefited from funding used for counseling of domestic violence survivors and their children. Another program, children's community services, provides home- and community-based services to children and families throughout the county who are the hardest to serve. The organization spends thousands of dollars driving to and from homes, but it receives no reimbursement for the costs. Funding from Bellevue helps defray those expenses.

Mr. Ken Schlegel with Therapeutic Health Services said the organization provides alcohol and drug addiction treatment and has for a number of years on the Eastside. He thanked the Commission for its continued support of the important work done in rehabilitation and recovery.

Ms. Debra Grant with Hopelink said she oversees the emergency services programs for the agency. She thanked the Commission for its commitment to Hopelink which has allowed the organization to help move families out of crises and toward self sufficiency. On behalf of the Alliance of Eastside Agencies of which she is co-chair, she said the dollars allocated to agencies in the community are very important in providing a safety net for the community. The direct service and staffing dollars are critical to being able to provide crucial professional services in the community.

Ms. Janet Olin with Sophia Way said she is very impressed with the city of Bellevue and its commitment to human services. She thanked the Commission for its past and ongoing support for Sophia Way. The city's generous support have made it possible for 102 women since December 2008 to move from the streets into housing and start new lives. Bellevue funds have also contributed to the operation of the Eastside winter shelter for women and children. The proposed financial support will go toward the opening of a new shelter at St. Luke's church and will double the number of women who can be served, and toward rent subsidies for women in transitional housing.

Ms. Barbara Keightley expressed concerns about siting the Eastside Winter Shelter operated by Congregations for the Homeless at St. Peter's Church on NE 8th Street. She said in the first year of the program there were many negative impacts on the surrounding residential neighborhood. She said the plan is to provide shelter at the church to homeless men who will only appear at the church doors during the coldest months of the year. The congregation is compassionate and wants to help. The church, however, is located in the middle of a residential neighborhood. The shelter doors do not open until 8:00 p.m., and the homeless men must find places to spend their time and keep warm until then. Some of the homeless men are simply down on their luck; some have jobs, some have social, mental and physical deficits, and some are addicted to alcohol and drugs. For up to 16 hours per day the neighborhood is home to up to 50 such men, far from the services they need. The men have nothing more to do than walk the neighborhood. The men are one of the biggest headaches for the Crossroads area and a security nightmare. The men travel from all over, including outside the county, to access the winter shelter. Statistics show the crime rate in the neighborhood is up, including at least three burglaries; one man arrested is known to have stayed at the winter shelter. The local police department has shown itself to be very helpful. Homeless persons need access to showers, laundry facilities, meals, attention to medical, dental and social issues, and job searching opportunities, none of which are provided by the St. Peter's shelter. The Eastside has good programs in place, some of which include screening.

Ms. Susan Allen, a resident of the Lochmoor neighborhood, said St. Peter's Church is located in the middle of a residential community. The shelter program began its operations of providing shelter for up to 50 men each night without any input from community members or notification to the community. Lochmoor residents are concerned about the plight of the homeless, but it should be recognized that members of the community have become victims and have suffered consequences directly due to those inhabiting the shelter. With all good intentions, the shelter program has failed to mitigate impacts to the surrounding neighborhood, causing great concern to residents on a daily basis. The shelter drew in people who would not ordinarily be in the community. The homeless men, when not in the shelter overnight, congregate in the neighborhood, public parks, bus shelters, Crossroads Mall, community centers, the library, and local businesses. The men also panhandle throughout the community, and many proved to be aggressively argumentative. Parents of children began driving them to school instead of allowing them to wait at the bus stops with the homeless men present. Shelter personnel conduct only visual screening of the men; no background checks for criminal histories were made. Men are allowed in the shelter even if they had been drinking or were drunk. The neighborhood's crime rate increased 2.6 times during the time the shelter was in operation. Some local residents are talking about taking legal action against those they feel should be held responsible for problems, including the church, the winter shelter program, Congregations for the Homeless, and possibly the Human Services Commission and the city of Bellevue. After the shelter closed for the season, many of the homeless men were found to be camping out in the area of 164th Avenue NE

and NE 8th Street, and Crossroads Mall experienced loitering, littering and other problems. The Eastside winter shelter has created unintended harm to the community, namely by placing the shelter in a residential area. To fund and continue with the program, those involved should ensure it is well run with definite parameters, and steps should be taken to ensure better screening. Alcohol and drug use should not be tolerated.

Mr. Philip Keightley, also a Lochmoor neighborhood resident, said he was impressed by the work of Bellevue staff and the Commission to help those less fortunate in the community. The Commission, city staff and St. Peter's church were not fully aware of the magnet effect of the shelter in drawing homeless men to the neighborhood, or of the significant negative impacts associated with having the shelter at the church. The 2.6 times increase in the crime rate in the neighborhood surrounding the church is one such negative impact. The effect on the business community in Crossroads has been significant. There is a growing discomfort on the part of the neighborhood regarding the shelter impacts. The number of calls to 9-1-1 concerning homeless persons wandering the neighborhood impacted the police department. There is a question as to how helping the homeless can be accomplished without collateral damage to residents and businesses in the local community. The neighborhood is not the right place to dump 50 or so homeless men for up to 16 hours per day during the winter months. At the neighborhood block party on July 21, 25 people signed a sheet pledging their help in organizing the neighborhood. There are three block watch areas affected by St. Peter's Church, and many of them have expressed concerns about the shelter. The neighborhood does not want the winter shelter at St. Peter's Church, and the city should not fund it. A plan to mitigate neighborhood and business impacts should be in place ahead of distributing any funds allocated to the shelter, or distribution of the funding to the shelter should be held until the shelter has been moved. Funding for the Eastside Winter Shelter should be increased to allow for mitigating measures, or else the shelter should be moved to a location where homeless services are provided.

Mr. Steve Roberts with Congregations for the Homeless said the concerns raised are both serious and surprising. He noted his willingness to work with the local community to make sure their concerns are mitigated. He said there have been discussions with local neighbors and suggested many of the concerns can be addressed. It is a difficult thing to find a place in which to house a homeless shelter, and the congregation at St. Peter's Church is offering an invaluable service. He thanked the Commission for its support of Congregations for the Homeless, a program that has done a lot to take people off of the streets and move them to long-term housing. Since 2006, more than 400 men of been assisted out of homelessness. In addition to the shelter and the housing program, the organization is looking to start a drop-in center in the center of Bellevue to provide for the first time ever a place for people to go during the day to receive the services they need. There are more homeless persons on the Eastside than previously thought, and strides are being taken toward decreasing the numbers.

Ms. Patti Skelton-McGougan, executive director of Youth Eastside Services, thanked the Commissioners for the time and energy they volunteer to help better the city. She also thanked the Commission for recommending continued funding for Youth Eastside Services. Much of the money received by the agency has been shifted to basic services, which given the economy is understandable. The services provided by Youth Eastside Services, however, are also critical; they include mental health and substance abuse services, as well as a wide range of prevention services. Violence, aggression and family problems are all on the rise, and no one at the agency wants to lose another kid as a result. The cost of doing business has continued to rise for the agency, and the modest four percent increase in the allocation from the city will help to defray those expenses.

Ms. Melissa Galvas, a counselor with Youth Eastside Services assigned to Ground Zero and director of the SUCCESS mentoring program, introduced two persons paired up through the SUCCESS program.

A student of the SUCCESS Program said she has enjoyed the experience she has shared with her mentor and said she has been thankful to have the experience.

Ms. Claudia Browsers, the mentor, said she also is a teacher in the Bellevue School District and that in the past she had utilized services from Youth Eastside Services for her daughter. She said she is a believer in getting in on the front end as a way to solve problems further down the road. The SUCCESS program is unique in that it allows one person to matter in the life of a younger person.

Mr. Dan Aznoff, member of the board of directors of Eastside Friends of Seniors, explained that the organization provides services to seniors aimed at allowing them to remain independent. Services include taking seniors to doctor appointments and to the store. Services have previously been offered in Issaquah and Sammamish and plans are being made to move into Bellevue. The organization is disappointed that the Commission's preliminary funding recommendation does not include funding for the program. The Commission concluded that the program's services duplicate those offered by Catholic Community Services, but as of June 15 that is no longer the case. He invited the Commissioners to attend a welcome to Bellevue event that is planned for September 13.

Ms. Anna Cherkorsov with the Eastern European Counseling Center explained that the agency was founded in 2008 to work specifically with the eastern European community in providing mental health services. One of the largest programs offered focuses on victims of domestic violence. The clients often do not speak English and do not have the resources they need to combat domestic violence on their own. About 44 percent of the women in Washington are abused in one way or another, and immigrant women are far more likely to be abused and to die as a result of it. Eastern European Counseling Center provides professional and confidential services in the language of its clients. The access line set up for domestic violence victims to call for help is staffed with those who speak English, and it takes time to get an

interpreter. Distressed callers often become frustrated and hang up before working through the system and getting the help they need. Eastern European Counseling Center offers culturally sensitive services to its clients.

Ms. Sume Mondal with Senior Services said the agency provides services to older adults in King County. In 2011 the agency served 59,691 individuals. The Meals on Wheels program provides nutritious meals and delivered 2961 meals in Bellevue in 2011. The Volunteer Transportation program assists seniors in getting to medical and other appointments, and in 2011 22,520 volunteer miles were traveled in Bellevue. The Minor Home Repair program provides small low-cost home repairs to low-income seniors, and in 2011 661 repair jobs were carried out in Bellevue. The Commission was thanked for its past and continued support.

Ms. Rachelle White with the Children's Response Center thanked the Commission for its continued support. She said in the past year the agency provided services to over 500 children who had been physically or sexually abused, neglected, trafficked or affected by another crime. The agency has been helping kids for over 25 years, but the recent Penn State case is a recent horrific case that serves as a reminder that the work is not yet done. The agency's advocates, therapists and educators are committed to continuing the work of ensuring that every child has the safe and healthy life they deserve. The Commissioners were invited to attend the fundraiser Taste of Main on August 18 on Main Street in Bellevue.

Mr. Klaas Nijhuis, Senior Planner for A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH), thanked the Commission for recommending continued support for the ARCH Trust Fund. He said the CDBG dollars, when combined with CDBG funds from Redmond and the northeast subregion of King County and general fund dollars contributed by the 15 member cities, will help to create affordable housing units. The funding environment is highly competitive and local contributions are critical. The Trust Fund has been used to create some 2700 units of housing, which is about 75 units annually. More than a third of the units are located in Bellevue.

Mr. Jeff Bradt with Elder and Adult Day Services thanked the Commission for its ongoing support. He noted that in October 2011 the agency took a huge funding cut due to changes in Medicaid funding for people on developmental disability waivers. That proved to be a huge challenge, but at the same time the agency elected to improve the quality of its services. To do that the amount of licensed nursing and occupational therapy provided was increased. Earlier in the month the state survey team visited the site, scoured the files and talked with agency staff and participants. At the end, the survey team actually applauded. The city's contribution to the program equals only about two and a half percent of the total budget, but it is a vital component.

Commissioner Yantis moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Stout and the motion carried unanimously.

****BREAK****

7. DISCUSSION

A. Finalize Recommendations for General Fund and CDBG

Mr. Adriano briefly reviewed the Commission's preliminary recommendation.

Chair Bruels said he had been moved by the testimony offered by the Eastern European Counseling Center representative. He suggested that by shaving a few dollars from a number of programs funds could be found for the application.

Commissioner Yantis said it would take shaving about \$500 from each of 18 programs to fund the Eastern European Counseling Center requested amount. That amount would not be significant to any of the 18 applications.

Commissioner Stout said there are a number of specialized groups in the city serving the 82 languages in evidence in the schools. To give special treatment to one could open the flood doors to others. The better approach would be to encourage each sub-group to work within the greater system. The city simply cannot continue to add administrative costs for unlimited numbers of cultural groups.

Chair Bruels allowed that the cultural competence issue is significant, but suggested that it is more impressive that the agencies that provide programs to specific groups are overwhelmed; the need is far greater than what there is money to fund.

Commissioner Stout pointed out that Jewish Family Service came to the city initially to serve a particular population, but since then they have reached out and expanded their services, adding staff who are very competent in a number of different cultures. She encouraged the Commissioners not to work in a way that will spin off a number of new non-profits; the better approach will be to strengthen the existing infrastructure by adding new cultural competencies to existing agencies.

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly noted that Refugee Women's Alliance is being funded for a domestic violence support group that is focused on the Russian-speaking community. Commissioner Stout added that the agency has expanded significantly over the last 15 years ago to include far more cultural groups.

Commissioner Yantis suggested it would be in order to conduct some research before the next funding cycle to determine what Eastern European Counseling Center adds to the overall picture that is not already covered by another agency or program.

Commissioner McEachran stressed the need to look for the collaborative impact when looking to fund any particular program or agency. Chair Bruels and Commissioner Stout said they both noted very little by way of collaborative impact

after reviewing the Eastern European Counseling Center application. Commissioner Stout concurred with the need to do a little more study before the next funding cycle.

Commissioner Yantis pointed out that the Commission has kept the funding for Youth Eastside Services flat for a number of years based on the argument that the agency has been successful at fundraising. Commissioner Stout agreed but stressed that the agency has been able to increase its local funding during those years.

Returning to a discussion of the Eastern European Counseling Center application, Commissioner Stout said she would like to know what kind of a needs assessment was done by the agency that justifies their coming into Bellevue.

Commissioner Yantis acknowledged the input of the community around St. Peter's Church. He said while he was not suggesting any change in funding for the Eastside Winter Shelter, the concerns voiced certainly did not fall on deaf ears. He said he would like to hear what Congregations for the Homeless does about addressing the concerns. Commissioner Stout concurred and suggested Congregations for the Homeless and the concerned neighbors should be encouraged to work together and come back to the Commission and the Council with a report within the next several weeks. Commissioner Yantis argued in favor of adding to the funding rationale a statement indicating the Commission's interest in the neighborhood's concerns.

Commissioner Stout moved to forward to the City Council the Commission's funding recommendations for 2013-2014. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Yantis and the motion carried unanimously.

8. OLD BUSINESS

Human Services Manager Emily Leslie reported that the Budget One process continues to move forward. The second round of rankings by the Results Teams has been completed with funding attached; the findings will be shared with the Council at its retreat on July 30. The human services proposal, including the funding package just recommended, was ranked number one in its goal area. The leadership team will next review all of the rankings and dollar amounts and may recommend adjustments, and their recommendation will go to the city manager to use in developing his budget proposal, which will be presented to the Council on October 1.

Ms. O'Reilly reported that she will be meeting on August 6 with Commissioner McEachran to review the previous format of the faith community survey.

Ms. Leslie reminded the Commissioners that there would be no Commission meetings in August, and said the first meeting in September will occur on Thursday, September 6, because of the Labor Day holiday. The regular meeting on September 18 will be a forum with four city boards and commissions focused on the work to update the transit master plan.

9. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. O'Reilly announced that in August the city will be co-hosting two activities with the Poverty Action Network, a statewide advocacy group that is housed in Seattle. Both events will be held at the North Bellevue Community Center, the first on August 22 and the second on August 29.

10. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Susan Allen voiced concern over the fact that the Commission's minutes relative to funding the men's winter shelter at St. Peter's church say nothing at all about what is to be done to keep the community safe. The shelter was operational in 2011 and appears to be online for 2012 as well, and the community is left to work with Congregations for the Homeless, but many things have already happened. The Commission should be looking at criteria for allowing such shelters long before electing to fund them, and should seek input from the local community.

Ms. Leslie said the men's shelter was very difficult to site. A location was identified only shortly before it needed to open last winter. Siting a shelter in the city falls under the Development Services Department, which is the land use arm of the city government. She said she shared the concerns voiced by the neighborhood with staff from that department. The fact is, shelters located within a church facility are protected by federal and state laws, and Bellevue does not require a temporary use permit for such uses.

Mr. Phillip Keightley thanked the Commission for adding to its funding recommendation a recognition of the fact that there are concerns in the neighborhood regarding the men's winter shelter. He suggested that the contract with Congregations for the Homeless should include an emphasis on criteria required to operate the shelter. It would be an enormous process to seek a change to the zoning code to disallow the shelter in residential areas.

Ms. Leslie reiterated that under federal and state law religious organizations are exempt from certain zoning regulations.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Bruels adjourned the meeting at 8:28 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date