

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

April 3, 2007
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Seltzer

STAFF PRESENT: Emily Leslie, Alex O'Reilly, Camron Parker, Joy Hawkins, 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 Hoople who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

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

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 6, 2007

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Stout. Second was by Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese and the motion carried without dissent; Commissioner Yantis abstained from voting.

4. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Debbie Doane with the Children's Response Center informed the Commission that April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. She shared with the Commission the proclamation signed by Mayor Degginger. She noted that in 2006 the local child protection offices investigated 271 claims of child abuse in the Bellevue area. Any

suspicion of child maltreatment can be reported to the proper agency by calling 1-866-END-HARM. The Children's Response Center aims to heal the hearts of children who may have suffered sexual abuse or other life-impact trauma, including other forms of abuse and neglect. The agency supports families in protecting their children from harm through counseling advocacy and education. Rather than the customary blue ribbon acknowledging Child Abuse Prevention Month, for 2007 the pinwheel is being used to represent the innocence of children. Ms. Doane shared with the Commissioners the child abuse prevention poster and asked them to put them up in places of prominence in the community.

5. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Stout reported on her attendance at two focus groups aimed at generating information for the Needs Update, a caregivers group at the adult senior service center of Overlake Hospital and Medical Center, and a parent support group at Kinderling Center where the desperate need for respite care was highlighted.

Commissioner Beighle said she attended three focus groups: 1) a Bellevue school district nurses meeting where it was noted that ESL students struggle and need family and social support after they stop their ESL classes, that there is a need for basic public health services after hours and good dental care, and that there is a need to have the immunization program brought back to the schools; 2) a case managers support group at Overlake Hospital where the need for respite care was voiced along with general transportation and other senior needs; and 3) a teen mediator in-service meeting where the issues discussed included a lack of trust of adults by teens, parents not trying to understand teens, underutilization of the mentoring and tutoring programs offered in the schools, the need to train more teens to serve as counselors, and the increasing number of teens who are running away from home but not staying in approved shelters.

Chair Hoople said he attended a focus group with veterans. Several who attended agreed to fill out the survey forms. He said he also participated, along with Commissioner Stout, in the ARCH housing planning process.

6. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Human Services Needs

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

Grant Coordinator Camron Parker informed the Commission that the week of April 9 to 15 is National Community Development Week, a recognition of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. He said staff from every local King

County government that receives CDBG funds worked together to develop a packet of information highlighting what each jurisdiction does with its allocations.

Ms. Susan Rogel, director of homeless programs for Friends of Youth, said under the Becca law, youths are not permitted to go to a shelter without parental permission or contacting the police. Accordingly, many youth who run away from home choose to stay with friends instead. She thanked the Commission for its continued support of the Friends of Youth shelter programs. She also offered her thanks for the funding provided for The Landing shelter at the Bellevue Family YMCA, which includes healthcare by a nurse practitioner for two hours every other week for any homeless youth. Because The Landing is only able to be open five nights per week, many youth who would otherwise use the services are lost to Seattle and other places for two nights each week. Those who elect to stay at the shelter must agree to receiving case management services. Friends of Youth would like to provide a drop-in center available to youths during the day where they could gain education, job training, and services. Affordable housing continues to be a great need in the community, especially for youths who are skilled enough to have paying jobs but who are not earning enough to pay for housing. Friends of Youth is collaborating with DASH to offer six units with a rent of only \$175 per month; there is already a waiting list of ten kids.

Mr. Juan Hernandez with Hopelink thanked the Commission for its ongoing support. He noted that Bellevue and the region is undergoing great economic development which brings with it both positive and negative consequences. The need for affordable housing remains near the top of the list; many who work in Bellevue must live in other jurisdictions and travel. Transportation costs are rising and that is placing an additional burden on low-income families. Those who must travel great distances to and from work have a great need for affordable childcare, which is also a serious issue. Typically, families see costs rising but not incomes, so they elect to reduce their food budgets. The vast majority of Hopelink's clients are the working poor; most have full-time jobs, and a large number of them work a part-time job as well. Where there are two parents in the household, the chances are good that both will be working two jobs and will still barely be able to make ends meet. The population in Bellevue and on the Eastside is very diverse. Multiple languages are spoken, and that brings with it a need for ESL classes and help in accessing basic services. The Hispanic community is growing, as are the Somalian and Cantonese communities. Agencies must be very creative in addressing needs and they are always looking for additional support. Hopelink is working with United Way in helping clients receive Earned Income Tax Credits, a practice that has helped to keep more than \$1 million in the community.

Ms. Lynda Wolfe, manager of the family development program at Hopelink, said she works with family clients. Some are the working poor while others are the non-working poor. Hopelink works with them for up to two years by providing wrap-

around services in an attempt to help them become stabilized and moving forward. There is a great need in the community for transportation assistance, rent assistance, eviction prevention, car repair assistance, and access to legal assistance. Hopelink would like to see opportunities for paid or unpaid internships and on-the-job training. There is a large demand for medical and dental assistance; many with very poor dental health are finding it difficult to be hired for jobs. There is a need for financial literacy training and asset development in the community. Hopelink, like other agencies, has seen a downward trend in CDBG funding support. Funding for emergency food programs and eviction prevention programs have seen a ten percent reduction. Absent an increase in the level of support, Hopelink may face staff reductions.

Ms. Wendy Randall explained that AtWork! is an agency that supports individuals with disabilities by offering employment services. Some 236 individuals in King County are currently being served. There are approximately 1,800 individuals on the Eastside with developmental disabilities who are waiting for services, some of whom are still in schools, and others of whom are out of school and are seeking to enter the adult world of employment and housing. Individuals with disabilities are living much longer than they did in the past; many are old enough to be retiring, so AtWork! is providing a retirement services program. The need for services to persons with developmental disabilities continues to increase. In the general community there is the perception that persons with developmental disabilities are taken care of, by their parents or through social and health programs. The truth is, developmentally disabled persons, like all low-income citizens, have special service needs that are not necessarily being met. There is a strong need for community education and for collaboration between agencies and funders.

Ms. Melinda Bocci, also with AtWork!, explained that in Washington state, everyone with developmental disabilities between the ages of 21 and 62 must be moving toward community employment. Accordingly there is a need to reach out to those before the age of 21 to prepare them for employment. Moving away from sheltered work to community-based work means there is a need for more one-on-one support. There is a need for a large community planning effort focused on the array of needs from transportation to finances. The AtWork! board is fully behind the notion of getting the developmentally disabled into community employment and are seeking creative ways to fund the effort.

Ms. Chris Brandt with AtWork! thanked the Commission for choosing to spend a portion of the city's CDBG allocation to meet the needs of the developmentally disabled, and for taking a leadership role by going to the City Council to seek additional funding for human services. The community liaison position at AtWork! is new and is primarily funded by Bellevue. When other funders see that Bellevue is on board, they are more willing to step up with financial assistance. AtWork! is on the cutting edge in looking at new best practices and trying new approaches, and the

support of the city is vitally important. Community education is needed to get people thinking about those with disabilities in a new way. AtWork! can imagine the day when disabled persons will be able to operate their own businesses because those in the community have opened their minds to the possibilities, even if it means a need for attendant caregivers and job coaches. Developmentally disabled persons can become employees, business persons, and productive workers giving back to their community.

Ms. Eileen Rasnack, program manager for the Volunteer Chore Services program at Catholic Community Services, thanked the Commission for its commitment to making Bellevue a quality place in which to age. She said the agency is seeing more people who are falling into the gap between being able to pay for services on their own and qualifying for state-paid services. The agency is seeing more of a funding emphasis that does not include older adults; the Volunteer Chore Service for the current year has experienced a reduction of \$1,600. Transportation services are becoming more restrictive which is overloading programs that rely on volunteers. The Access program has some 8,000 applications monthly for transportation services. Access is working with the service provider, Laidlaw, in providing training for those who might otherwise be able to use regular bus transit services. Catholic Community Services is excited about its partnerships with business organizations in the community aimed at providing emergency transportation services. Many clients are finding it necessary to make multiple calls in order to access services. Aging is a long and strenuous process and it takes a large amount of coordination on the part of a community.

Ms. Mimi Siegel with the Kindering Center said the childcare consultation program offered by the agency was in fact created at the behest of the city. She said the program has been very successful and is an example of what can happen when the city takes the lead. According to the 2000 Census, about 6,200 children under the age of five in Bellevue had disabilities. Using the growth predictions, that number can be inflated to 7,300 for 2007. About half of them are in childcare. The Gates Foundation believes that 23 percent of the children living in Washington state have two or more risk factors for disability or special needs; that means about 1,700 children in Bellevue. One in eight are born prematurely, so it can be assumed that in Bellevue just under 1,000 children in Bellevue have the health concerns and risk factors associated with premature birth. Some five percent of children under the age of five have an established disability, which for Bellevue equates to just under 400 children. One in every 150 children has autism, so for Bellevue that means 49 children. The numbers are concrete and can be dealt with; it is not an unmanageable task. One out of every 12 workers in American has a child with a disability, which causes stress on the families. The need to find the children and screen them is great in order to make sure they get the services they need. The research that early intercession works is absolutely incontrovertible. Twenty percent of the children who have been through the Kindering Center no longer require and are not eligible for special education in the public schools.

Ms. Faith Bean explained that Community Health Centers of King County offers primary medical and dental care at 12 centers in suburban King County, including supportive services, acupuncture, chiropractic, behavioral health counseling, in-house pharmacy, and health visits. All services are available at no or reduced cost based to anyone based on need. In the past two years, the program has seen a doubling in the number of seniors, and there has been an 15 percent increase in requests for interpreter services. It was at the urging of clients that in-house pharmacy services were added; the clients continue to highlight the need for dental services and specialty medical services. Transportation continues to be a barrier for clients in getting to the clinics; other barriers include eligibility for medical services and the capacity of the agency to provide needed services. Nationally, federal funding levels have decreased. Regionally, funding for core medical services has given way to homeless services.

Mr. Steve Roberts with Congregations for the Homeless thanked the Commission for its past support, noting that Bellevue is in fact a model city in many ways and is ahead of the curve. With regard to the Eastside Homelessness Advisory Committee, he said the goal of the organization is to end homelessness within the ten-year timeframe of the ten-year plan established by King County and approved by Bellevue; there are only seven years left. The needs in the community have not dramatically changed, but the level of awareness in the community has. The true need is for low-income housing; housing is the key factor in ending homelessness. Eastside agencies work together very well, a fact that is reaping positive benefits both for those in need and for the funders. The barriers include a lack of available housing options; Pacific Apartments has a waiting list 26 pages long for its studio apartments. Landlord acceptance of the homeless population is another barrier, as is the fact that the numbers from the Department of Housing and Urban Development have not increased in three years. In Bellevue, the 30 percent average median income level is below minimum wage; many working 40-hour jobs cannot qualify for housing because they earn too much, yet they cannot afford housing on their own.

Ms. Liz Dufault said Harrington House is a transitional housing program located in Bellevue and offered by Catholic Community Services. The program serves homeless adult women who are pregnant or newly parenting. Over the last two years there has been an increase in the diversity of the residents. The primary issues being faced by the clients are affordable permanent housing, legal services, and transportation. The barriers cited most often are lack of affordable housing, lack of financial stability, and a need for parenting skills and education.

Mr. Parker informed the Commission that Alaric Bien with the Chinese Information and Service Center had to leave the meeting before testifying but submitted his comments in writing. There was also written testimony received from: Jill McLeod, Early Child Development – Bellevue School District; Garnet Templin-Imel,

Developmental Education – Bellevue Community College; Nina Auerbach, Child Care Resources; Sue Hanlon, VIBES – Bellevue School District; and Deborah Doane, Children’s Response Center.

Motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese. Second was by Commissioner Stout and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Yantis said he recently worked on a project that involves the use of used shipping containers as housing units. The units can be safely stacked quite high and have insulation, windows and doors added at very reasonable cost. The practice is occurring in Europe and a local company is attempting to do the same. The potential is there for some very inexpensive housing.

7. DISCUSSION

A. Update on CDBG Funding for 2007-2008

Mr. Parker informed the Commission that the Department of Housing and Urban Development requires the city to submit a Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report. He said the report outlines all CDBG activities carried out by the city during the previous funding year, including reports on how many people were served and the types of services provided along with some general demographic information.

Mr. Parker reported that the city has received its CDBG award letter for 2007. He said the final allocation amount is some \$2,000 less than what was received in 2006, which is better than was anticipated. The contingency plan adopted by the Commission will be implemented and will add \$13,000 for human services planning activities and \$37,000 to the Home Repair Program.

The federal budget process has begun for fiscal year 2008. The process begins with the administration presenting a budget to Congress; the budget presented for 2008 includes the same 25 percent cut in the CDBG program that has been previously proposed. The House and the Senate each have budget committees; they work to establish the broad budget parameters. Each chamber develops a budget proposal, as does each party within each chamber. In the end, the House and the Senate must work together to hammer out a budget both chambers can agree to.

Ms. Leslie noted that the City Council had approved a proclamation encouraging Congress and the administration to recognize the outstanding work being done locally and nationally as a result of the Community Development Block Grant program, and supporting an increase in funding for the program for 2008. Increasing the CDBG program has been part of the Council’s federal legislative agenda for many years. The National League of Cities has the same priority.

Ms. Leslie said the CDBG award for 2007 is the same that was awarded the city in 1995. There is hope that the funding level for 2008 will allow the city to entertain some new proposals.

8. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. O'Reilly reminded the Commissioners about the Focus on the Future Forum slated for April 5 from 10:00 a.m. to noon at City Hall.

9. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. O'Reilly reported that the department recently posted a job announcement for the summer intern position. She said the person hired will primarily be focused on the Needs Update.

10. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

11. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Hoople adjourned the meeting at 8:07 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date