

Sonoma County Community Development Committee



Human Services Dept. Representative: Oscar Chavez (Chair), **Tenant Representatives:** Stephanie Hiller, Jessica Vega
1st Dist: Betzy Chavez (Vice Chair) **2nd Dist:** Michael Regan **3rd Dist:** Susan Hollingsworth Adams **4th Dist:** Willie Lamberson
5th Dist: Linda Garcia **Interim Executive Director:** Barbie Robinson, CHC, JD, MPP

Public Meeting
Wednesday, July 15, 2020
10:00am-11:30am

Minutes
Approved August 19, 2020

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Oscar Chavez called the meeting to order at 10:07a.m. and roll was called
CD Committee Members Present: Oscar Chavez, Betzy Chavez, Jessica Vega, Stephanie Hiller, Michael Regan, Susan Hollingsworth Adams, Willie Lamberson, Linda Garcia
CD Committee Members Absent: None
CDC Staff Present:

2. Public Comments for Items Not on the Agenda

No comments were made for items not on the agenda.

3. Approval of Minutes from May 20 and June 3 Meetings

Betzy Chavez moved to approve the minutes as-is from the May 20, 2020 and June 3, 2020 meetings of the Community Development Committee. Linda Garcia seconded the motion
Ayes: Oscar Chavez, Betzy Chavez, Michael Regan, Willie Lamberson, Linda Garcia
Noes: None
Abstain: Jessica Vega, Stephanie Hiller, Susan Hollingsworth Adams
Absent: None

4. Swearing In: 3rd District Representative

Item #4 was postponed as the Interim Executive Director was not yet present.

5. Discussion: Uses for CDBG-CV and ESG-CV Funding

Felicity Gasser, Equity and Compliance Manager, presented background on the process for the approval of ESG-CV and CDBG-CV funds. Staff is asking for input on how CDBG-CV is allocated. A final plan will go to the Board for approval at the end of August.

There are a number of eligible uses for these funds, as we've seen at the County and from the news, the most pressing need is the concern about people who don't have access to resources who are having to continue to pay rent. The easiest way to deploy these funds quickly to provide relief for households most impacted is to provide a short-term emergency assistance



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program which would pay to landlords. The plan would be geographically equitable, and be accessible to all incorporated cities and unincorporated County. Still deciding if funds would go through nonprofit partners or our Housing Authority. We need to get legal guidance to ensure we are serving the most households.

ESG-CV is limited in use, and HUD has given strong direction to ensure that funds go to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Eligible uses include emergency shelter, rapid rehousing, homelessness prevention, street outreach. We have an immediate need to provide funding for non-congregate shelters to ensure most vulnerable homeless (elderly, chronic illness) have a safe place to go where they can shelter in place and physically distance from others. Some efforts have been arrangements with hotels and are providing services in hotels and be able to provide path to permanent housing. At least \$1.2 mil for RRH and a portion for Los Guilicos, which meets standards for a non-congregate shelter. The balance of funds is still being worked out, and we will come back to CD Committee and Leadership Council who will provide direction on that.

Stephanie Hiller: So money won't be used for new housing?

Felicity Gasser: Generally it's difficult to use CDBG for new housing construction. The best use of funds specific to COVID would be a short term rental assistance.

Stephanie Hiller: How will people find out that this program is available?

Felicity Gasser: We don't have program design finalized, but we have track record in the Housing Authority of doing broad community outreach and would want to engage non-traditional partners in getting word out. We may run funds through nonprofits based in the community.

Martha Cheever: Like we did with the Housing Authority Waitlist, we got word out widely. Community partners assisted in distributing information. We will also use our landlord contacts to identify tenants who are struggling to pay rent.

Oscar Chavez: Community Action Partnership has the community fund and Seasons of Sharing, their application is online and they work with CBOs throughout the County so they can quickly deploy and generate reports around who is being served. We would want to use an existing infrastructure rather than create something from scratch.

Linda Garcia: I realize you want to be able to serve as many people as possible. When you distribute through other agencies, they're taking a cut off the top for administration. I support a reporting of geographical outcomes and recording where funds go. Also, other counties are doing the same thing and have they developed a process already that we can take and tweak if we can prevent some evictions. October is a long way away, and if a neighboring county has developed a process then we shouldn't have to develop a new one. I support reporting in general and geographically. Thank you so much for what you are doing.

Stephanie Hiller: When we say the awards will be proportional to geographic distribution, is



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that also proportional to concentrations of people that are in need? And what's verification that would be used to prove people are in need?

Felicity Gasser: We would be relying on our partners to ensure geographic distribution of the program. Then we would accept applications and run lottery. The lottery is a random selection and we would hope would reflect geographic distribution as best possible. We won't do a quota from each jurisdiction – that would lead to some fairness issues. We would rely on outreach and lottery. Not everyone will qualify and not everyone will accept assistance and we will run with that data at the back end.

Susan Hollingsworth Adams: When does the CARES deadline pass that allows landlords that is back past due?

Felicity Gasser: In terms of the CDBG-CV program design, there isn't the same deadlines as Coronavirus Relief Fund. CDBG does not have strict deadlines – just a timeliness test.

Susan Hollingsworth Adams: Is there a way to give priority or is it appropriate to give priority to those who would be able to stay in their place long-term?

Martha Cheever: That could raise equity issues. People who are at such high risk for eviction may be eligible for the ESG-CV program. We are working on trying to weave all of the programs together.

Felicity Gasser: There is a design element to the rapid rehousing program in the homeless system of care, that's the model that is closest to what you're describing when you pick and choose what someone might qualify for. We don't have that level of design with this program at this time.

Susan Hollingsworth Adams: That makes sense if you're going to be using an RRH model. But for equity issues, the money is going to the landlord, not the person being evicted. So it would be prioritizing equity for the landlord.

Felicity Gasser: At least \$1.2 million will go into the Rapid Rehousing program. The numbers served as we calculated would serve 32 households because it's longer term, so it won't serve complete need but it will make sense for those households to receive that assistance to stay or become housed. Can also do homelessness prevention through ESG funding and that may be more appropriate to ensure someone doesn't get displaced after their landlord.

Public Comment

No public comment was made on item #5

6. Discussion: PLHA Program Guidelines

Felicity Gasser, Equity and Compliance Program Manager, explained that the PLHA funds are distributed using the CPD/Formula Grant. Sonoma County's allocation for the 2020 year is \$899,393, and we are estimating about the same amount coming through the state each year for the next five years. We have to submit by July 27 an application. We have to have plan



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before we submit the plan to HCD. The plan is available online and comments will be accepted until July 21 end of day.

This money will run concurrently with the County Fund for Housing dollars. We have priority in terms of those funds for deep targeting, readiness of projects and projects that exist in the urban core to ensure that we have housing that is resilient and promotes sustainability. We plan to use a similar framework for distributing these dollars. It would be for multifamily housing productions and with deep targeting priority we hope to have housing for homeless or PSH as part of a package for what's awarded. It would be competitive NOFA. We are required by HCD to include 20% funds for set aside for affordable workforce ownership housing projects/programs so we will have applicants indicate that on their application. Must be income-restricted from 120% and below.

Staff requested feedback and approval from the Committees so the Commission could enter into agreement with HCD and distribute these funds concurrently with the County Fund for Housing.

Committee members did not have comment on this plan.

Public Comment

No public comment was submitted for Item #6.

Linda Garcia moved to recommend the PLHA plan for approval. Betzy Chavez seconded the motion

Ayes: Oscar Chavez, Betzy Chavez, Michael Regan, Willie Lamberson, Linda Garcia, Jessica Vega, Stephanie Hiller

Noes: None

Abstain: Susan Hollingsworth Adams

Absent: None

Item #4

Barbie Robinson, Interim Executive Director, joined the meeting at about 11:25AM and swore in 3rd District Member Susan Hollingsworth Adams.

7. Update: Proposed Changes to the CD Committee Ordinance and Bylaws

Felicity Gasser, Equity and Compliance Manager, provided an update for the Committee on the Ordinance change material that staff presented this to the Board on July 7th. The changes clarify the purpose of the Committee and memorializes those changes. Nothing should be surprising.



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Willie Lamberson: This is all fine and good except that the word “all” is left out of the ordinance and the bylaws. So to my mind it should read to review and make recommendations on all matters to come before the CDC and all matters concerning housing etc. The reason all should be in there is because we don’t know what the future is going to look like. Leaving out “all” restricts us to what is written down here, and I don’t think that we should be restricted.

Barbie Robinson: Those issues were raised with the BOS with respect to the scope and intent of responsibility with the CD Committee. You’re speaking to the specific concern in regarding policy for example of the Home Sonoma Leadership Council. Given the fact that a great deal of the work of the CD Committee has been the Housing Authority and Community Development, it was the intent of the Board to delineate those roles as they transition into having the homeless work and other work rest with other bodies or entities that have been established for those purposes.

Willie Lamberson: We’ve known that we as the CD Committee became the Housing Authority. What you say is good, but former Director Geoffrey Ross gave us a memorandum and we were given a meeting explaining the different roles. We’ve been operating under that already. I can’t support this change without the word “all.”

Linda Garcia: I agree with Willie. There needs to be a representative from this Committee attending Leadership Council meetings, they don’t have to be a voting member, but should be part of the committee of the Leadership Council. We can resolve differences if a member of this committee is a member of that board as well.

Oscar Chavez: Has Board already approved this Ordinance?

Barbie Robinson: They have approved the ordinance and language, but we haven’t begun the process of first and second readings. We’d do that in August.

Oscar Chavez: I think because there has to be a first and second reading, feedback the Committee provides to staff will be provided to the Board based on their initial approval of the Ordinance.

Tina Rivera: We will take that feedback to the Board.

Oscar Chavez: Recap – the Committee wants to be sure “all” is included in the CD Committee Ordinance in Bylaws.

Betzy Chavez: I agree with Willie and Linda. I wonder if these decisions were made a bit prematurely. There has been some transitioning happening recently and I’m not sure it is well known what has happened within our Committee between the leadership of Margaret and Geoffrey. I wonder if we can have a discussion about our role or ask a member of the Board of Directors to attend so they can understand how we operate. I agree with the intent but I think there should be more discussion and the word “all” should not be omitted.

Stephanie Hiller: What are the implications of changing this? Whether we keep “all” in or not?

Felicity Gasser: We’d have to defer to Director Robinson or Legal Counsel in including that word



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‘all’.

Oscar Chavez: It might be a good idea to invite Legal Counsel to our next meeting so that we have someone who can answer those questions.

Tina Rivera and Felicity Gasser: Referred to the slide and redlined Ordinance – the wording still includes *all* policy matters and programs of the Housing Authority and that that the word “all” was in the ordinance, but moved further down in the paragraph in question.

Willie Lamberson: Thank you. I would also recommend staff go back to the August 15, 2018 meeting of the CD Committee where AED actually explained the different roles of the CD Committee and the Home Sonoma County Leadership Council. We voted on it and accepted it.

Oscar Chavez: Sounds like we will have Legal review and clarify the implications of moving forward with this. Thank you for feedback.

8. Adjournment

Oscar Chavez adjourned the meeting at 11:52 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Holly Kelley, Equity and Compliance Program Specialist



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