

## Sonoma County Community Development Committee



Human Services Dept. Representative: Oscar Chavez (Chair), Tenant Representatives: Stephanie Hiller, Jessica Vega  
1<sup>st</sup> Dist: Betzy Chavez (Vice Chair) 2<sup>nd</sup> Dist: Vacant 3<sup>rd</sup> Dist: Karin Davis 4<sup>th</sup> Dist: Willie Lamberson 5<sup>th</sup> Dist: Linda Garcia  
Executive Director: Margaret Van Vliet

### **Public Hearing Wednesday, May 22, 2019**

#### **Minutes**

##### **1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Oscar Chavez called the meeting to order at 10:06AM and roll was called

CD Committee Members Present: Willie Lamberson, Linda Garcia, Oscar Chavez, Jessica Vega, Betzy Chavez, Stephanie Hiller

CD Committee Members Absent: Karin Davis

CDC Staff Present: Geoffrey Ross, Assistant Executive Director; Martha Cheever, Housing Authority Manager; Janelle Wetzstein, Policy & Communications Liaison, Valerie Johnson, Compliance Specialist; Diedre Duncan, Asset Manager; Cynthia Meiswinkel, Senior Office Support Supervisor; Bryan Kroll, Senior Office Assistant

##### **2. Public Comments for Items Not on the Agenda**

Duane DeWitt: Thanks the committee for their support of the Brownfield Grant work being done in Roseland and particularly on Roberts Avenue. Mentions handing committee members a flyer about a related national conference and another Brownfields grant application opportunity. Mr. DeWitt, yesterday at the BOS meeting, Glenn Price funding was approved for grant writing. He also mentioned that the BOS made clear they want to work with SB 2, and Roseland is the perfect spot for the CDC to work with the city on community planning grants.

##### **3. Approval of Minutes from April 17, 2019 Meeting**

Linda Garcia moved to approve the minutes from April 17 meeting, Willie Lamberson seconded.

Ayes: Oscar Chavez, Betzy Chavez, Stephanie Hiller, Jessica Vega

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Karin Davis

##### **4. Committee Member Report Out: Fair Housing Conference Take-Aways**

This item was moved to next agenda due to expected public comment for item 5.

##### **5. Staff Report: OC asks the community to use speaker cards and directs**

**attendees to the lobby and in the back of the room for those cards.  
Commences with public comment.**

Geoffrey Ross, Assistant Executive Director, introduces himself and encourages the community to speak so that we can hear comments and fix the system that is unfortunately not working as it should. The Commission had already received a couple of hundred comments which are captured in the agenda packet and were distributed. Martha Cheever, Housing Authority Manager, walked the Committee and public through the recommended changes.

The Housing Authority has had a continually open waiting list since 2005 with preferences for living and working in this jurisdiction. This has turned into a requirement resulting in a system that makes it so that some residents will never be served. Management recognized the disparate impact of this system and that there is no equitable way to utilize the current waiting list. Staff is proposing to cancel the waiting list completely and start a new one. The proposed waitlist changes limits the number of people on the wait list to those that can be served within two years and remove all preferences except for seniors and those with disabilities.

The Committee had questions about whether other counties that are using the same model, whether HUD is requiring this and why the preferences were being lifted. Geoffrey Ross: The most large public HAs use this open and closed waiting list process and a blind lottery. He referred back to the core tenets of what this program is.

The Committee asked if they could hear public comment now and take action at the next meeting.

Geoffrey Ross responded that that is at this committee's discretion. Not acting today will maintain that the current program is closed for the time being. Over time, the inability to draw names effects our lease-up rates and the flow of funds slows due to these declines. The Commission would like to open the program up upon the new fiscal year, but it is within this committee's discretion.

The Committee and staff continued discussion about the existing Housing Authority waitlist and the proposed changes.

## **6. Public Comment**

Several members of the public expressed their opinions of the proposed changes. These comments were captured by staff.

Oscar Chavez thanked participants and brought the discussion back to the committee. Committee members asked about voucher turnover rates, and asked about how the changes were publicized.

Staff responded that there are approximately 300 vouchers made available every year, and the proposed changes were widely publicized. Everyone who wants to apply when the list opens can, and the Commission is still going through a process of trying to notice everyone when we will open the list. More discussion was had between Committee Members, staff and the public.

### **Motion**

Stephanie Hiller moved to approve the Commission's proposed changes to the Housing Authority Administrative Plan. Willie Lamberson seconded.

Ayes: Betzy Chavez, Linda Garcia, Willie Lamberson, Stephanie Hiller, Oscar Chavez

Noes: Jessica Vega

Abstain: None

Absent: Karin Davis

## **7. Adjournment**

Oscar Chavez adjourned the meeting at 12:17PM

Respectfully submitted,  
Diedre Duncan, Asset Manager