

City of Alameda, California
SOCIAL SERVICE HUMAN RELATIONS BOARD
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2022
DRAFT MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

President Sarah Lewis called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: President Sarah Lewis, Vice President Scott Means, Board members Samantha Green and Gerald Bryant

Absent: Dianne Yamashiro-Omi, Bernie Wolf & Michelle Buchholz (all excused)

City staff: Marcie Johnson, Eric Fonstein, Lisa Fitts, Amanda Olson and CivicSpark Fellow Yasamin Obaidy

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3-A Review and Approve October 27, 2022 Draft Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of October 27, 2022 was made by Vice President Means and seconded by Board member Green. Ayes: President Lewis, Vice President Means, Board members Green and Bryant. Nays: none. Motion passed 4-0.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Josh Altieri, Community Relations Manager, Alameda Housing Authority (AHA), provided the following update on current AHA projects:

- Thanked the Recreation and Park Department for the continued support on the Mobile Recreation program, which is intended to serve families that either cannot afford or have transportation barriers to after school recreation. The program hosts two event per month at the Esperanza Housing Community.
- AHA continues to work with social service partner, LifeSTEPS as well as Alameda Food Bank, providing weekly food distribution at senior sites; Independence Plaza and Anne B. Diament Plaza (rotating each week)
- Holiday Gift Card program with Alameda Fire Department, where roughly 200 to 210, \$35 gift cards will be distributed to eligible and registered families.

- Hosted an event on November 19, where over 21 Housing Authority households received free bicycles. Bicycles, helmets and locks were donated by Alameda Bicycle.
- Pending state funding, 1628 Webster Street (formally Hawthorn Suites) will be converted into affordable housing (50 studios).

President Lewis thanked Mr. Altieri for his updates. There were no other public comments.

5. AGENDA ITEMS

5-A Discussion with Nonprofit Organizations and Recommendation to Direct the Preparation of a Needs Statement to Confirm the Ongoing Needs for the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Community Development Block Grant Action Plan; and to Designate the President of the Social Service Human Relations Board and/or another Board Member to Review the Statement and Represent the Board at the January 3, 2023 City Council Needs Public Hearing.

Staff member Amanda Olson presented on the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Community Needs for FY 2023-24 Action Plan, highlighting the following key segments:

- What is CDBG? Federal funds to assist low – and moderate – income persons by providing; decent housing, suitable living environment and expanded economic opportunities.
- In 2020 the City of Alameda submitted the five-year strategic plan, outlining the housing and community development priority needs. Priorities submitted by Social Service Human Relations Board (SSHRB) included; affordable and fair housing, food security, food services, homeless services, mental health services, safety and crime prevention, and transportation and pedestrian safety.
- City staff reached out to 23 local service providers and asked them the following three questions:
 1. What services does your organization provide?
 2. What do you see as the biggest need for the communities you serve?
 3. What do you feel is often unknown or unseen about the communities you serve and would be helpful for the public to understand?
- City staff received 12 written responses, which were provided to SSHRB
- As part of the Annual Action Plan, there are a few key dates for SSHRB where individual actions will be required.
 - December 12, 2022 – SSHRB's Needs Statement letter to be finalized
 - January 3, 2023 – City Council public hearing on community needs
 - January 10, 2023 – CDBG & HOME Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) Request for Proposals (RFP) released
 - February 9, 2023 – RFP responses due
 - February 27, 2023 – Public Service scoring due from SSHRB

- March 23, 2023 – SSHRB meeting to review proposed funding levels
- Spring 2023 – SSHRB finalizes community needs assessment
- May 2, 2023 – City Council public hearing
- July 1, 2023 – Start of the program year

In closing, Ms. Olson stated that representative from various organizations were in attendance as they wanted to address the Board (during public comment) and answer questions.

Erin Scott, Executive Director with Family Violence Law Center (FVLC), highlighted the following key segments:

- Provides 24-hour, crisis intervention services to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. Free legal services, civil legal services, family and housing law services.
- Two of the biggest issues facing survivors are financial instability and sexism.
- California State Bar conducted a study in 2019, which highlighted their findings that survivors of domestic violence experience eight times as many legal problems as other litigants accessing legal aid service.
- Noted that the City of Alameda is the only city (which FVLC interacts with) which does not allocate general funds for these type of services.

Gitanjali Rawat, Director of Programs with Eden I&R, highlighted the following key segments:

- Eden I&R is the operator for Alameda's 2-1-1-Line, which is the 24/7 multilingual phone line that connects individuals and families to critical, health, housing and human services.
- Last fiscal year Eden I&R processed 3202 calls and two-way text message conversations, 3807 health, housing and human service referrals. This included screening for eligibility and the transfer of 111 callers to the Mid-County West Housing Resource Center, through the County's coordinated entry system.
- The number one reason for Alameda residents contacting 2-1-1 year after year is housing (rental assistance, utilities assistance, emergency shelter and transitional housing).
- Successfully launched a public safety power shutoff program, where callers (particularly those with access and function needs) are connected to a coordinator to create a safety plan in the event of a large scale power outage.
- Eden staff is extremely grateful for the many years of partnership with the City.

Stephen Van Lare, Board member with Shelter in Peace, highlighted the following key segments:

- Shelter in Peace was established in 2017.

- Seek to identify transition housing opportunities for refugees, immigrants and low income families in Alameda.
- They operate by working with landlords to provide units at affordable rates.
- Currently housing 38 individuals in Alameda, in a number of different units.
- Every family which has received help over the last several years, have found a permanent living situation upon moving out of transitional housing.

Sabrina Thomas, Emergency Services Program Director with Building Futures with Woman and Children (BFWC), highlighted the following key segments:

- Their mission is to build communities with underserved individuals and families, where they are safely and supportively housed, free from homelessness and domestic violence.
- Staff is concerned about the mental health crisis and would like to see long term engagement in services (not only crisis management).

Angie Watson Hajjem, Fair Housing Coordinator with Eden Council for Hope and Opportunity (ECHO), highlighted the following key segments:

- ECHO is one of the oldest fair housing agencies in the country (started in 1960) and has been working with the City since 2008.
- ECHO's ultimate goal is to promote equal access in housing and provide support services which would aid in the prevention of homelessness and promote permanent housing conditions. Some of the primary objectives and purposes include:
 - To provide education and charitable assistance to the general public in matters relating to obtaining and maintaining housing;
 - To promote fairness and equality of opportunity for all persons regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, sexual orientation or disability;
 - To provide rental assistance, housing assistance, tenant/landlord counseling, home seeking, home sharing, and mortgage and home purchase counseling.

Casey Farmer, a consultant for the Alameda Collaboration for Children, Youth and their Families (ACCYF), wanted to share the project, Community Action Discussions. This project was designed to listen to the community - about their needs, opportunities, challenges, etc. Ms. Farmer stated she wanted to share a preview of the report which will be finalized in January 2023. Focusing on the youth perspective, a \$500 stipend was offered to anyone who could convene one of these discussion groups. The following are some examples of questions and answers, produced from various discussions:

- Question: What does it feel like to be a person of color or an LGBTQ person or a person with a disability in the city of Alameda?
 Answer: "It feels like I'm less than a person because I am Black."
 Answer: "It feels like I get followed around in stores."
- Question: What could make the community safer?
 Answer: Enhancing safety for bicyclist and pedestrians.

Answer: Have stronger relationships with the Police.

Answer: If we had accessible recreation spaces, specifically close to Alameda Point.

- Question: Do you feel that your community has access to mental health services?

Answer: Individuals were asking for help dealing with some of the childhood trauma they've endured or the volatile home lives they're currently enduring.

Ms. Farmer thanked SSHRB for its time and stated that she is looking forward to sharing the full presentation at a later date.

Gregory Bedard, Development Associate with Legal Assistance for Seniors (LAS), highlighted the following key segments:

- LAS provides free legal services to seniors, including free legal advice and information, representation in court and administrative hearings, referrals to other community resources, and community education and training on legal issues.
- Housing clients almost always have additional needs, outside of their legal needs (e.g. transportation, paperwork, online research, etc.).
- Last fiscal year, LAS provided legal services countywide to roughly 1200 individuals, health insurance counseling and advocacy assistance to roughly 1800 and community education to roughly 6000.

Kevin Leong, Board member for Meals on Wheels stated that the organization has been around for 49 years, and has yet to fundraise, other than among its Board. He requested additional information regarding the CDBG Block Grant, as well as the reporting requirements. Staff member Lisa Fitts replied, that the goal for this meeting was to allow, stakeholder representatives in the community a chance to share the needs of Alameda residents and the unhoused. Following the meeting, SSHRB will make a recommendation or give direction to President Lewis to present those needs to City Council on January 3. Once those needs have been presented to City Council, the Community Development Department (CDD) will post a notice of funding availability and request for proposals (on the City website). Additionally, CDD will be hosting a workshop to talk through some of the questions raised at this meeting.

President Lewis opened for Board discussion and comment – noting that the Board will be formally voting on the recommendation to prepare the Needs Statement at the conclusion of the discussion.

President Lewis asked for City staff to provide additional context regarding the Needs Statement as some of the Board members are new. Staff member Fitts provided an overall summary and shared a copy of the Needs Statement from last fiscal year 2022-23.

Following Board discussion, President Lewis summarized the highlighted priorities; affordable housing, homeless services, mental health services (elevating

the need for greater racial and social equity), food security, food services, domestic violence, information and referral services and youth services. The Board emphasized that racial equity concerns are at the core of many of these issues. Finally, SSHRB strongly encouraged the City Council to supplement the CDBG funding with other resources, such as General Funds, as it was noted that the needs of local residents are outpacing the resources available to meet the basic necessities of living in the Bay Area.

A motion to accept the items as discussed was made by Vice President Means and seconded by Board member Green. Ayes: President Lewis, Vice President Means, Board members Green and Bryant. Nays: none. Motion passed 4-0.

5-B Discussion of Social Service Human Relations Board Work Plan

President Lewis asked if there were any public comments. There were no public comments. President Lewis then opened the item for discussion among the Board members.

President Lewis stated she would like to have a short conversation discussing individual Board members expectations for the year, as well as spend some time getting to know each other.

Vice President Means shared that he originally applied to be on the Recreation and Parks Commission. However, following conversations with City staff, decided to join SSHRB instead. It has been a great choice for him personally, working in government and bearing witness to change within the City.

Board member Bryant shared that he has been working with the McKay Avenue Project for the last couple years and he felt his next step should be, a voice for change. Adding that his initial goal when joining SSHRB was to provide a Black perspective, which is not always seen, heard, or represented.

Board member Green shared that she was drawn to SSHRB in particular, as it embodies her principles and resonated with her previous work and current skillset.

President Lewis shared her own experience and goals for SSHRB in 2023, and asked for Board member input. The following is a summary of the recommendations made by the Board:

- Community needs assessment
- Conduct deep dives into needs areas with key stakeholders during future SSHRB meetings
- Determine role of community engagement or events such as the Community Service Awards and Homeless Awareness Week
- Alamedans Together Against Hate
- Focus groups/survey/engagement based – listening sessions with smaller community groups in advance of monthly SSHRB meetings

- Homeless Strategic Plan
- Season for Nonviolence student speech contest

5-C Social Service Human Relations Board Workgroup Reports

- Domestic Violence Task Force – Staff member Eric Fonstein reported that the task force met on November 10, and shared slides detailing current domestic violence statistics.
- Alamedans Together Against Hate (Yamashiro-Omi, Bryant) – Board member Bryant reported that he and Board member Yamashiro-Omi attended the November 17 unveiling of the Japanese-American community sites for Japan Town businesses. Additionally they discussed placing an ad in the newspaper highlighting SSHRB's, Alameda Together Against Hate program. Finally, he suggested that SSHRP may want to revisit and/or revised the 1997 City Council resolution declaring Alameda a hate free city.
- Infrastructure Workgroup (Lewis, Means) – President Lewis mentioned there was nothing to report and recommended disbanding the group for 2023

5-D Recommendation to Approve the 2023 Social Service Human Relations Board Meeting Schedule with Any Necessary Changes

A motion to approve the meeting schedule was made by Board member Bryant and seconded by Vice President Means. Ayes: President Lewis, Vice President Means, Board members Green and Bryant. Nays: none. Motion passed 4-0.

6. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

6-A Status Report on Homeless Services

Staff member Johnson provided the following status on the City of Alameda's Homeless Services:

- The Winter Warming shelter contract with Building Futures with Children and Families (BFWC) was approved by City Council at the November 15 meeting. BFWC has secured local hotel spaces. Individuals were able to be referred and served in the program, effective November 15.
- Five individuals and one family consisting of seven family members have moved into Emergency Supportive Housing. Village of Love (VOL) Executive Director Joey Harrison reported that the residents are grateful and happy to be sheltered comfortably in a home. VOL is planning to move another family into the second family home shortly and two more individuals will be offered beds in the "Big White" houses at Alameda Point. Staff will bring a proposal to open a fourth home to City Council in early 2023.

- A community interest meeting for Dignity Village took place on Tuesday, November 8 from 6 to 7 pm at Alameda Point Collaborative. The meeting was offered in a hybrid format. Two community members attended in-person and nine via Zoom. Present were representatives from the City, the service provider Five Keys Schools and Programs, and DignityMoves, the developer. The meeting went smoothly with community members wanting information on issues like the timing of the opening, design of the village, services to residents, and costs to residents. The next community meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 13 from 6 to 7 pm at the Breakers at Bayport community room. The meeting will be in-person. Another community meeting will be scheduled in January and will be held virtually.
- Dignity Village development is progressing well. Staff member Lois Bulter and Marcie Johnson visited Factory_OS, the residential modular builder, on November 18. They were able to walk through a completed prototype with the architect, engineers, representatives from the construction company, and the developer, DignityMoves. Everyone was pleased with the product. The anticipated delivery date for the residential units is late December and mid-January for the common buildings.
- Bi-monthly clean ups around the Main Street encampments are continuing and going well. Through a collaborative process, Community Development, Recreation and Parks, and Public Works departments have expanded the scope of areas that are being serviced. Staff member Amanda Olson has taken the lead to spearhead and organize logistics around the clean ups.

7. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS, NON-AGENDA

Vice President Means expressed his appreciation for City staff and fellow Board members for their continued dedication and service.

8. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

9. ADJOURNMENT

President Lewis adjourned the meeting at 9:24 p.m.