

Minutes
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CITIZENS' COMMITTEE (CDCC)
March 12, 2009 - Hunt Branch Library

Call to Order

Chairperson Miller called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

I. Roll Call

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Glenna Axe
Robert Elliott
Ernest Hernandez
Jay Kremer
Mark McGee
Kay Miller
John Shipman

MEMBERS ABSENT: Simon Karmarkar

STAFF PRESENT: Sylvia M. Chavez, Housing Programs Assistant
Kim Radding, Clerical Assistant

II. Approval of Minutes

A MOTION was made by Member Axe to approve the Minutes of March 5, 2009 with a correction to indicate that Member Hernandez was present. The MOTION was SECONDED by Vice Chairman McGee and CARRIED unanimously.

III. 2009-2010 NON-PROFIT AND CITY DEPARTMENT PRESENTATIONS

Chairman Miller reviewed the order and duration of presentations to be offered during the course of the meeting and invited the first speaker to begin.

Southern California Housing Rights Center (Housing Rights Center)

Fullerton Fair Housing

Frances Espinoza, Executive Director

Ms. Espinoza provided written materials and referred to specific statistics during the presentation, inviting members to review the additional data at their convenience. Ms. Espinoza explained that although the Housing Rights Center does not currently serve Orange County, the organization has experience with introducing their services to communities as they have expanded their services throughout Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. A staff of 25, including a full team of attorneys, will be available to serve Fullerton clients via a toll free telephone number and the internet. Internal policy dictates that client phone calls received prior to 4:00 p.m. are responded to on the same day and all email correspondence is answered within 24 hours; excluding weekends. Monthly walk-in clinics will be hosted within the City limits, as well as two educational workshops. Extensive outreach will be conducted to inform the community about the housing counseling, landlord/tenant dispute resolution and housing discrimination investigation services that would be available through the agency.

Ms. Espinoza stated that agency funding is diversified to include private fundraising and income generating activities, in order to diminish dependence upon City-based contributions such as CDBG grants.

Question (Q): Will there be an office located in the City of Fullerton?

Answer (A): Monthly walk-in clinics can be offered at the level of funding requested. However, if additional cities within Orange County contract with the Housing Rights Center, there may be a potential to open an Orange County location.

Q: What is the annual budget for the Housing Rights Center?

A: \$2 million

Q: Is the funding request of \$28,000 in line with cities that have a similar population or is this an estimate that you may expect to increase in future?

A: The request for funding is derived from the number of client inquiries we anticipate handling based upon activity experiences with similar cities, rather the specific population.

Q: What other Orange County cities does your organization serve?

A: A proposal to Santa Ana is currently pending.

Q: How do clients access the lawyers on staff?

A: Callers are first assisted by a counselor. If the matter concerns potential housing discrimination it is then referred to the investigation department. Investigators conduct further research and, in some instances, testing. If the matter is not resolved at either of these phases it may then be advanced to the attention of a lawyer on staff.

Q: Are all levels of service available to landlords as well as tenants?

A: Yes. It should also be noted that one of the two workshops to be conducted in the City will focus on landlord education and the second will provide information to tenants.

Q: Are you an attorney?

A: I possess a law degree, but I am not currently practicing.

Q: When was the Housing Rights Center founded?

A: It was started 41 years ago in 1968 when the Fair Housing Act was initially passed.

Q: Why is the Housing Rights Center interested in expanding into Orange County?

A: We are interested in offering Orange County cities an alternative choice to the current provider.

Women's Transitional Living Center (WTLC)

WTLC Shelter Programs

Kathy Strong, Director of Contracts Administration

The organization began in 1976 and currently provides four shelter programs; the Safety Net motel program, 45 day shelter program, 90 day substance abuse treatment program,

and a transitional housing program with the duration of up to two years. The combined programs assist individuals that are excluded from services provided by the other agencies offering shelters to domestic violence victims in Orange County. WTLC will take in boys over the age of 13 years, victims of human trafficking, male domestic violence victims, and persons suffering with mental health issues and/or drug and alcohol dependencies.

Ms. Strong described a new program being offered in conjunction with Orange County Parole in which females that have previously been victims of domestic violence may be referred directly to a WTLC shelter program upon their release from custody. The program goal is to break an established pattern of high risk behavior. Eleven women have participated during the last six months with strongly positive results.

All shelter programs have begun to offer an increased amount of career guidance in order to prepare graduates for a career that will allow them to sustain themselves. Scholarships are available for schooling.

Q: During the past few months there has been quite a bit of media attention regarding the financial hardships encountered by WTLC this year. Have circumstances improved?

A: Because the State of California has been involved in an on-going budget crisis, several grants went unpaid last year. Four grants totaling nearly \$500,000 were outstanding. Subsequent to media coverage the State resumed payment of the grants and additional private donations were received; which returned the agency to a solvent status.

Q: Are Fullerton residents accepted into the local shelters?

A: In past years Fullerton residents were only housed in shelters located outside the City in order to insure their security. However, improved security measures have allowed the safety perimeter to be reduced to approximately six blocks. Thus, most Fullerton residents are eligible for local shelter housing.

Q: Does WTLC interface with other programs, such as Shelter Plus Care to make referrals?

A: Yes. There is also outreach through the Orange County Mental Health Department.

Council on Aging Orange County
Long Term Care Ombudsman Program
Marsha Williams, Program Director

Ms. Williams thanked the members for past support and provided a review of the Long Term Care Ombudsman program, sharing examples of patient rights advocacy. She explained that a California State Line Item Veto resulted in a 51% cut to the agency budget; approximately \$331,000. Staff has been reduced, with only the Ombudsman positions funded by CDBG retained. The program is also supported by approximately 70 volunteers.

Q: How many clients are located in Fullerton?

A: There are 1500 clients residing in six Fullerton skilled nursing facilities and 50 residential care facilities.

Q: Do you anticipate a greater need for funding this year?

A: Yes. Costs do continue to rise in an environment where alternative funding is diminished.

*Member Shipman arrived at this time.

Q: Are there any other agencies in Orange County that provide this service?

A: This program operates under both State and federal mandates. There are no other organizations, County programs, State programs or national programs that provide this type of advocacy.

Q: Do any agencies address in-home care?

A: Ms. Williams was not aware of any program that advocates for patients being cared-for in private homes that are not licensed facilities.

* Vice Chairman McGee excused himself from the meeting at this time.

Boys and Girls Club of Fullerton (BGC)

BGC Fullerton After-School Program

Chris Olson, Grants Coordinator

Fred Johnson, Executive Director

Mr. Johnson provided an overview of the after-school program that operates at four sites within the City of Fullerton and serves approximately 500 children. He shared national statistics that indicate significant improvement in the grades achieved by students that attend study programs after school. The BGC "Power Hour" utilizes incentives and recognition to promote student achievement.

Mr. Johnson stated that funding normally contributed by the United Way may potentially decrease this year due to a 30% decline in Orange County donations.

Q: Do you anticipate an increased demand for after-school services due to the budget cut-backs being imposed upon the public schools?

A: Yes. An increase in referrals of at-risk children is anticipated.

Q: BGC programs across the country have proven to be a deterrent to delinquency. Has this been your experience locally?

A: Yes. Delinquency prevention has been a focus, particularly at the Richman site.

Fair Housing Council of Orange County (FHCOOC)

Fullerton Fair Housing

David Levy, Development Director

Mr. Levy explained the "fair share" methodology utilized by the FHCOOC in determining their funding request. During the most recent complete fiscal year Fullerton client activity represented 6.08% of the total activity generated. This shows an increase over the 5.42% from the prior year, which can be attributed to an increase in housing discrimination cases that were addressed by the agency. He reviewed specific case load statistics and acknowledged that internal personnel issues may have resulted in slowing the case load for a period of time during the performance year. Mr. Levy expressed optimism regarding

organization changes and noted that in addition to direct telephone access, the FHCOC office located in Santa Ana is open for walk-in service daily until 6:00 p.m.

Q: Does the FHCOC anticipate other Orange County cities choosing to utilize another provider, and thereby increasing the share of cost to Fullerton?

A: Costa Mesa and two other smaller cities went to another provider this year. However, FHCOC has reapplied for the upcoming fiscal year. The fair share method could become an issue, but would also likely result in staff reductions in accordance with diminished workload and this would reduce overall cost. Because budget estimates lag the behind program year, adjustments to funding requests would not be apparent until the 2011-2012 funding request.

Q: A recent news article reported that the FHCOC tends to advance cases to litigation without taking full advantage of the potential for resolution through negotiation.

A: Litigation is a last resort. The FHCOC does investigate. The FHCOC will refer any investigations that indicate discrimination to file complaint with an administrative agency such as the Department of Fair Employment and Housing. If the case gets charged, then typically the conciliation process will advance to the court/judicial process. Litigation is not foremost.

Q: What is a HUD certified agency?

A: HUD certifies agencies to handle specific types of housing issues. For example the FHCOC has recently begun to offer education and counseling assistance with regard to foreclosures.

Q: Will the FHCOC be involved with NSP?

A: Not in an official capacity, but the agency will stay abreast of changes. It is unclear at this point whether there will be an opportunity for non-profit agencies to apply directly.

Fullerton Interfaith Emergency Services (FIES)

New Vista Shelter Life Skills Training Program

Judith Bambas, Executive Director

Ms. Bambas described the services offered through FIES, which has been active in the community for 34 years, and focused upon the New Vista Transitional Living Center for which the grant request is submitted. This center provides temporary housing for 12-13 families (48-50 persons) at one time. The families are required to save 80% of their income during the three-to-four month stay at the facility. During their stay they must also attend life skills training classes that cover various subjects including budgeting, career guidance and parenting. The program goal is to enhance the potential of graduates to maintain self-sufficiency after leaving the shelter.

Q: Does the shelter supply more than living quarters?

A: Yes. The housing is shared by participant families. Food is provided, career counseling and life skills training.

Q: Does FIES determine when it is time for participants to leave the program?

A: The program requires that participants remain drug and alcohol free, find employment within the first 30 days, save 80% of their income, and attend the required life skills training classes. When these obligations are not met, participants may be removed from the program.

Q: What percentage of the participant families successfully complete the program?

A: There is a 75% success rate. Many participants return to share their continuing success stories after graduation.

Q: Does the program offer job placement assistance?

A: Career guidance is provided and includes counseling, creating a resume and job search skills. FIES is also involved in building referral relationships with local employers.

Meals on Wheels of Fullerton, Inc.

Maintenance of Meals and Supportive Services

Sandra White, President

Ms. White described the Fullerton meal service program that consists of seven routes serving two meals per day to 95 clients. Seventy volunteers are needed to meet the demand each week. The program employs two staff members; one to manage the volunteer scheduling and one case worker. The meals are obtained from St. Jude Medical Center, Morningside and Community Senior Serve (which is funded under the Older Americans Act and based in Anaheim).

Ms. White explained a recently emerging trend of a decline in client turnover. She stated that, in past years, clients were often being served for a temporary period of time related to a medical recovery. However, the typical client currently is more elderly and remains on the program indefinitely due to on-going chronic medical conditions. This results in slower turnover and has created a larger waiting list. The wait list grew to 40 people, but has been addressed by increasing the referral of clients to Community Senior Serve routes. There are now approximately 15 clients on the waiting list.

City of Fullerton, Community Development Department

Community Preservation

Kirke Warren, Community Preservation Supervisor

Mr. Warren narrated a Power Point presentation defining the various aspects of the Community Preservation Department goals and objectives. He highlighted the specific expenditures of CDBG funds for the salary of three Officers, a portion of a clerical support position and related supplies and equipment. During the past fiscal year 3428 inspections were conducted in CDBG areas, with a predominance of housing and property maintenance issues. The program continues to focus on proactive enforcement in deteriorated and declining areas with an increase in foreclosure related concerns.

Q: Has the caseload increased due to the economic down turn?

A: Yes. There are currently 800 homes in foreclosure within the City. This causes a caseload increase as well as additional man hours due to the difficulty in determining a responsible party for each property.

Q: What percentage of the 800 homes in foreclosure do you anticipate will become a problem property?

A: Nearly 100%. Compliance is difficult to achieve when the home owner leaves. Once another entity assumes responsibility for the property deferred maintenance quickly becomes an issue. The most frequent concerns include green pools, overgrown landscaping, and abandoned personal property.

Q: How many Officers are on the Community Preservation staff?

A: Six Officers, one Clerk and a Supervisor.

Q: Will Community Preservation receive any funding through NSP?

A: That is not known at this time. The NSP program details have not yet been finalized by the State.

Q: If CDBG funds are not allocated to Community Preservation, will the staff be reduced?

A: That is a determination that would be made by City Council.

Fair Housing Foundation

Fullerton Fair Housing

Barbara Shull, Executive Director

Ms. Shull stated that the Fair Housing Foundation currently provides a comprehensive fair housing program to one county and 19 cities. She provided a list of performance goals outlining an estimated number of discriminations investigations, general housing services and education/outreach that would be provided to Fullerton area landlords and tenants. Client requests are handled in the order that they are received, with a typical response time of 2-4 hours. The Fair Housing Foundation proposes to inform the Fullerton community about the available services through literature distribution, public service announcements, paid advertisements, a poster contest for children, local workshops, and providing personnel in booths at local public events. The agency would host twelve walk-in clinics per year at a local public access site.

Ms. Shull reviewed printed materials outlining examples of case management and standard reporting that can be provided on monthly, quarterly and annual basis. A copy of a recent annual audit was provided. She noted that three Orange County cities are currently utilizing the program; Costa Mesa, San Clemente and Mission Viejo.

Q: What is an unlawful detainer?

A: This is a form that a landlord gives to a tenant when the tenant fails to comply with the obligations of the rental agreement. This most frequently occurs due to failure to pay rent. The Fair Housing Foundation may advise a landlord regarding how to complete the form and may advise the tenant regarding how to complete their portion of the form and what rights they have in responding.

Q: How were the estimates provided in the handouts derived?

A: Volume estimates are based on activity experienced with cities of similar size.

Q: Is the total budget for the agency \$536,000?

A: Yes. There are eight employees and if the grant request is funded the staff may be increased to nine.

IV. Public Comment

Chairperson Miller opened the meeting for public comment. None was offered.

V. FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting of the CDCC will be conducted at the Hunt Branch Library at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 19, 2009.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Member Elliott MOVED to adjourn the meeting, the MOTION was SECONDED by Member Shipman and supported unanimously by the members present.

Chairperson Miller adjourned the meeting at 8:45 P.M.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

KIM RADDING

CLERICAL ASSISTANT III