



HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Thursday, November 12, 2020

7:00 PM

REGULAR MEETING

DRAFT

******BY VIRTUAL TELECONFERENCE ONLY******

Commissioners Present: de Turreil, Regehr, Savage, Smith, Stinger,

Council Liaison: Council Member Tanaka

Staff: Minka van der Zwaag, Mary Constantino

I. ROLL CALL

Chair Smith: I'd like to welcome everybody to the Human Relations Commission's regular meeting for November 12, 2020. At this time, I'd like to do roll call.

II. AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, DELETIONS

Chair Smith: Do we have any agenda changes, requests or deletions? None.

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Chair Smith: Right now, I'd like to open up the Oral Communications from members of the public. This is to address any item that is not on our agenda tonight. If you can raise your hand in the participant chat, where you hit *9 if you're calling in by phone.

Ms. van der Zwaag: I do not see any raised hands, Chair.

IV. BUSINESS

1. Public Hearing: Review of Amended Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Citizen Participation Plan

Chair Smith: At this time, we want move to into our public reviewing of the amended Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the Citizen Participation Plan. I'm grateful to Erum for sending such a detailed packet, which actually included paperwork from 2010

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explaining a lot of stuff that I didn't have visibility to before. We'll turn it over to Erum, and she will start us down the process on this. Thank you.

Ms. Erum Maqbool: Good evening, Commissioners and Chair. I manage the Community Development Block Grant program. I'm here tonight to request the Commission to review the Community Development Block Grant Citizen Participation Plan that the staff prepared. Staff is proposing minor amendments to the existing Citizen Participation Plan to provide for an expedited process for the City to allocate emergency CDBG funding, to bring the plan into compliance with current HUD regulations and reflect general formatting updates. The HRC recommendation will be forwarded to the City Council for consideration on November 30, 2020. I'll start with providing a brief introduction of the Community Development Block Grant, commonly known as the CDBG program and why we need a Citizen Participation Plan. The City of Palo Alto receives an annual grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, also known as HUD, as an entitlement city under the CDBG program. CDBG is a federal program that provides grants to improve the physical, economic and social conditions, primarily for persons of low and moderate income. In order to receive CDBG funding, HUD mandates the preparation of a consolidated plan, which is prepared every five years to identify priority housing and community development needs and sets forth a strategy to address those needs. An action plan, which is prepared annually to identify specific projects to be funded to implement the goals and objectives identified in the Consolidated Plan, also known as the ConPlan, and a Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report, also known as CAPER, which is the annual performance report that evaluates goals achieved with the annual CDBG grant. In order to ensure maximum citizen participation in the development of the Consolidated Plan, Action Plan and its associated Performance Report and to enhance program accountability, HUD requires that the CDBG entitlement jurisdictions provides its citizens a reasonable opportunity to be part of the CDBG activities from the beginning to the end of the program year. As a CDBG grantee, the entitlement jurisdictions must have a Citizen Participation Plan for involving the citizens in the CDBG program process. The plan must be written and adopted by the governing body, and the plan itself needs to describe how citizens are able to provide input into the program throughout its duration. The Draft Citizen Participation Plan, which is under review, is divided into sections covering rules and responsibilities for the City Council, Human Relations Commission, staff and the general public. As for the rules and responsibilities in regard to the City Council, the City Council sets policies, priorities, and approves the overall CDBG allocations. As per the Draft Citizen Participation Plan, the City Council will conduct a minimum of two public hearings per fiscal year for the purpose of obtaining citizens' views and formulating [gap in recording]. The two public hearings will be held at different stages of the program year, and the actions of the City Council will direct the implementation of the CDBG-funded projects. Through the Citizen Participation Plan, the general public and other stakeholders are also encouraged to participate in the various stages of the CDBG program by attending and commenting at the noticed public hearings. They are also encouraged to express their views, comments or concerns directly to the City or directly to HUD. Interested citizens are advised to review the plans, reports and other pertinent program documents online or by downloading files, or by requesting the physical copies of the files or the plans, and they can provide comments and suggestions via letters, emails or phone calls. The Citizen Participation Plan provides guidance to persons with disabilities who require assistance in using either City facilities or service or programs on how

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they can be facilitated. The roles and responsibilities of the Human Relations Commission are also specified in the Draft Citizen Participation Plan. As per HUD's regulations, a minimum of two public hearings must be held throughout the program year, and they should be held prior to the submission of the Annual Action Plan, or the ConPlan, to obtain residents' views and responding to proposals and their questions. One of the two required public hearings must be held before the Draft ConPlan or the Draft Action Plan is circulated for public comments, so the HRC will conduct at least one public hearing, and this public hearing will be the required public hearing that we are going to do before the circulation of the Draft Annual Action Plan or the ConPlan. This public hearing will be followed by a 30-day public comment period and followed by another public hearing, which will be held by the City Council. Citizen Participation Plan provides detailed information of the staff's responsibilities in ensuring maximum citizen input. Staff is responsible for providing critical program information, such as the availability of funds, activities to be undertaken from those funds, maintaining of a mailing list of interested parties per grant, providing technical assistance to grant applicants. Additionally, staff is responsible for providing sufficient notices regarding the public hearings, which are a required item, and public comment periods on various reports and plans. Any complaints or information requested by the stakeholder pertaining to the CDBG program should also be entertained by the staff as per the Citizen Participation Plan. Planning staff is also directed to arrange for information to be presented in a bilingual fashion at public hearings whenever a significant number of non-English-speaking residents are expected to participate or when a reasonable request is made for such a service. Finally, responding to any complaints and grievances regarding the CDBG program is also staff's responsibility. The Draft Citizen Participation Plan specifies the criteria of what constitutes a substantial amendment to a ConPlan or the Action Plan and how the City will provide opportunities to the stakeholders to provide comments on the activities to be undertaken by submitting the substantial amendment to HUD. Substantial amendments are defined as, number one, a change in the use of CDBG funds from one eligible activity to another; number two, the implementation of an activity that was not previously identified in the submitted ConPlan or the Action Plan; and number three is a change in an activity's program budget which exceeds ten percent of the City's latest annual entitlement grant. Again, this is a HUD requirement. Prior to the submission of a substantial amendment, the City will circulate the amended ConPlan or the Action Plan for public comments for a 30-day period, followed by a public hearing to be held by the City Council. In order to expediate the use of CDBG funds to prevent or respond to the COVID-19 emergency, in June, 2020, HUD waived certain regulatory provisions regarding the public comment period, which was reduced from 30 days to 5 days, and also regarding reasonable notice and opportunity to comment. This was the time period of the announcement of public hearings, reduced from 14 days to 5 days. These waivers apply to Consolidated Plan amendments. In its guidance, HUD directed jurisdictions to make changes to their Citizen Participation Plan to be consistent with the waivers, to acknowledge the ability to streamline the lende grant processes in the time of emergency. The Draft Citizen Participation Plan specifies the citizen participation requirements in the state of emergency, which is to comply with all the HUD memos and notices that direct citizen participation requirements in the event of a local, state or national emergency or disaster. These requirements should overtake any conflicting provisions of the Citizen Participation Plan. Following the HUD standards will allow the City to respond in the most efficient manner to secure and access new HUD funding and to reallocate existing funding. This will give a brief overview of the Draft Citizen Participation Plan

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that's under review. The HRC recommendation – again, I'll repeat – will be forwarded to the City Council for consideration on November 30th. I'm going to conclude the overview of the Citizen Participation Plan and happy to answer any questions that you may have. Thank you so much.

Chair Smith: Thank you so much, Erum, for that thorough presentation and for the packet that you sent us earlier with a lot of detail in it. What I would like to do is offer each Commissioner...Let's do a round robin and start with five minutes per Commissioner.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Erum, would you mind pulling the presentation down and just re-present it if a Commissioner has a question, so we can go back to the screen with all the Commissioners on it?

Ms. Maqbool: You are asking me to stop sharing my screen?

Ms. van der Zwaag: Yes, please.

Ms. Maqbool: Okay, I'll do that.

Chair Smith: We'll do this in alphabetical order. We'll start with Commissioner Regehr. We'll go to Commissioner Savage, Vice Chair Stinger, Commissioner de Turreil, and then...Actually, it's Commissioner de Turreil first. I'm sorry, I messed up the order. Then, Commissioner Regehr, and then I will be the last one on the list. Sunita, do you have any questions? We'll give you five minutes if you have any questions for Erum.

Commissioner de Turreil: It seems that primarily what we're looking at is making sure that we're in compliance with the new rules of decreasing the amount of time in case of an emergency for citizen participation?

Ms. Maqbool: Yes, that's correct.

Commissioner de Turreil: That's primarily the sole thing that we're looking to adopt?

Ms. Maqbool: Yes. That's correct, and there were minor changes to HUD's regulation pertaining to broadband access, like previously, when we were sending out notices of public hearings, we were not required to inform broadband providers, but now we have to include those, too, in our mailing list. So, minor changes like that are also part of the Draft Citizen Participation Plan, but primarily we are amending it because of including the clause of in a state emergency, what the City is going to do.

Commissioner de Turreil: Which is in line with what HUD is recommending that we do.

Ms. Maqbool: Yes, that's correct.

Commissioner de Turreil: I'll stop there. We're going to do a couple round robins, potentially?

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Chair Smith: Take your time now. I think it would be good to get it all in one...I'm trying to only do one round, really. Maybe two.

Commissioner de Turreil: That's the end of my questions at this time.

Chair Smith: Okay, thank you. Commissioner Regehr?

Commissioner Regehr: My question is about community participation and the meeting. Being that we're...It's probably going to be Zoom, all of these things, probably, right? So, one of the things that I've heard from people is that Zoom for people that can't hear very well, they're hearing impaired. Is there a way besides the languages to have...? Because I know you can do it for Zoom, is to have captions? Can we include captions, so people that are hearing impaired can participate that way?

Ms. Clare Campbell: I think that we have the ability to do that. We'll check with our ADA Compliance staff person, just to see what we can do, but I'm sure there are...I know that Zoom has the capability to turn something like that on. It's sort of a normal procedure.

Commissioner Regehr: Right, because part of our...It's not really ADA, because a lot of times ADA does not meet...I mean, they meet the requirements, but they don't go beyond, and I feel like our duty as a Commission is to protect and to help people that are in need. I guess that's my request, that we do that, so that people that are hearing impaired can...?

Ms. Campbell: We'll look into that to see what we can do to accommodate that request.

Commissioner Regehr: Okay, then my next question is to the City Council Member, Greg. We are down to five, and now we are being implemented to all this by November 30th and have a meeting. Is there a way to go back to the City Council and say we need more Commissioners? Because I know that the Parks said, "We can't do all of this from Parks," and we are under the auspices of helping human beings and people, and this is a lot besides what we're supposed to be doing, too, as a Commission. I mean, it's a lot for five of us, especially with the Brown Act. Can we talk to one person? Is there a chance that we can go back, because I know you were really a proponent to helping?

Council Member Tanaka: Well, you're just preaching to the choir here. That vote failed, as you know, so maybe with a new Council it will be different – different opinions perhaps, but at last Council it didn't happen. So, I don't know. I think we have to see if...As I said, you're preaching to the choir. I've supported having more Commissioners.

Commissioner Regehr: Because, how many staff members...? I guess that's my question, is how many staff members are working on this?

Council Member Tanaka: I don't know. Staff would have to say.

Commissioner Regehr: Or Clare? And you guys, we're five.

Ms. Campbell: I'm not going to speak for the HRC. I can let Minka speak for the HRC. I'm from the Planning Department, so I wouldn't be able to speak for this group.

Commissioner Regehr: No, I mean just specifically on this block, this particular issue. How many of you are working on this?

Ms. Campbell: Our CDBG staffing is Erum. Erum is the only staff person that we have with us as a City employee, and she is a part time person, and in addition to Erum, we do have some consultant assistance when it's needed for the work that we need to get done each year, and it just depends on what's going on with the program.

Commissioner Regehr: I guess I just don't feel like being on the Commission – and this is a question – I don't feel like we should just be a rubber stamp. In order to give this time, we all have to participate. That's my only concern, is that... That's my only concern, that I think that the City Council made a mistake. Because they didn't even have any questions. The whole reason was for staff time, the staff efficiency. They didn't think about us in that regard. And now we're making major decisions for the public. I'm done.

Chair Smith: Thank you. Erum, at this phase in the process, what is the deliverables and the work required of the HRC tonight and moving for the November 30th meeting? I just want to make sure I'm clear on what you need from our Commission tonight.

Ms. Maqbool: We would like the Commission to recommend the City Council to adopt the Draft Citizen Participation Plan, with the minor changes that we are making and the substantial change of including the emergency clause in the Citizen Participation Plan. We would like you to recommend that to the City Council to adopt this Draft Citizen Participation Plan.

Commissioner Regehr: So, citizen participation, can we know...? I know I was done, but I'm... Can we know what your Participation Plan is before we say we're adopting this? What is your plan to reach out, because it says a little bit, like social media, but what is the plan that we're adopting, or we're recommending adopting?

Ms. Maqbool: The plan was part of the parcel that was sent last week, last Friday.

Commissioner Regehr: But it seemed pretty general. I read that.

Ms. Maqbool: Can you be a bit specific in terms of exactly -?

Commissioner Regehr: Okay, so what did they do last time to let participants be aware of it?

Ms. Maqbool: As per our existing Citizen Participation Plan, we are conducting two public hearings. We are required to conduct and publicly notify public hearings. But our current process that we are doing, we are doing five public hearings instead of two. That is part of the existing Citizen Participation Plan. We are informing the general public, through newspaper ads and blast emails about the public notices, when the funding is available and the kinds of activities that we are going to take. We publish newspaper ads. We publish that on the CDBG web page. We are providing technical assistance to the grant applicants if they need. We publish the NOFA every

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year in November, the Notice of Funding Availability, and after publishing that, within two weeks, we conduct two pre-proposal conferences with all the applicants if they have any questions regarding the regulations of the CDBG program, or if they need any assistance with the applications. After that, we bring the applications to the HRC Selection Committee, which you were part of last year, and after those recommendations go to the full HRC. That's our process that we do.

Commissioner Regehr: Minka, can we put it on our page, too?

Chair Smith: Patti -?

Commissioner Regehr: Can we put it on our...? I'm just saying that if we're going to do be doing this and stamping it, then I'd like to know how much outreach are we doing. Can we put it on our Human Relations Commission that we're going to have these meetings and put it in the *COVID Notes*? It just seems like...

Ms. van der Zwaag: The Planning Department can decide if they want to send it for inclusion in the *COVID Notes*. We can include it on the HRC page.

Commissioner Regehr: Okay. Thank you.

Chair Smith: Thank you. Commissioner Savage?

Commissioner Savage: It seems like there's just a few changes from the way it was in previous years, so I'm good. No questions.

Chair Smith: Vice Chair?

Vice Chair Stinger: Thank you. That was very detailed, and I appreciated your report. I just wanted to make sure I understood the HSRAP CDBG overview – is that something, do we do that among our subcommittees right now and at our HRC review? Was that to be more formalized in the proposal?

Ms. Maqbool: That was actually part of the adopted Citizen Participation Plan, too, because we just want to... The only reason why we include that is – it's not a HUD regulation – we just want to make sure that we are avoiding the duplication of benefits, that if we are providing a grant to one agency and HSRAP is also recommending grant for the same agency, the Scope of Services could be similar. But even if it's similar, we are not providing them a grant for the same thing two times.

Vice Chair Stinger: So, it just formalized what we had been doing in the past?

Ms. Maqbool: That's true.

Vice Chair Stinger: Can we also – and maybe this would just be a note to self – when we set up our priority needs, we might want to think of both agencies.

Ms. Maqbool: Yes.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Erum and I are in dialog during the entire process of CDBG and HSRAP. We hold what we call our first meeting, kind of called the bid meeting, and the CDBG and the HSRAP people that are being...Anybody who wants to apply, is required to be at that meeting, and Erum and I both participate. We both present, and then when the applications come in, we are in dialogue together as well, so that dialogue happens all along the way with the goal that we each try to serve the agencies that are applying through the different programs and that we're not considering to fund the same type of activities. That's something that's made very clear during the pre-bid meeting as well.

Vice Chair Stinger: I think you've done a good job of that. I think we need to be a little bit more conscious of doing it upfront. We do it after the fact, and I think we can do a better job of doing it upfront. Thanks. I'm done.

Chair Smith: Okay. I think I made a technical mistake. I did not ask for public comment before I went to Commissioner questions. I apologize to the public for that. If there is anybody that would like to make public comment, can you please raise your hand or hit *9?

Ms. van der Zwaag: I see no raised hands, Chair.

Chair Smith: Okay. I apologize again to the public and Commissioners for that oversight on my part. At this time, I'm willing to entertain a motion.

MOTION

Commissioner Savage: I move that we adopt the Citizen Participation Plan, with the minor changes.

Chair Smith: Thank you. Can I have a second on the motion?

Vice Chair Stinger: I second.

Chair Smith: Thank you. We will go through the vote.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Chair, may I ask just if there's any discussion, and then you can go to the vote?

Chair Smith: Any discussion? Any questions on the vote?

Vice Chair Stinger: My only discussion would be that we need some hand-holding this first year through it, to make sure that we are sticking to the letter of the law. The letter of our motion.

Chair Smith: Thank you. Can I make a friendly amendment to this motion?

FRIENDLY AMENDMENT

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Chair Smith: I would like to add to the motion, to ask City Council to reconsider the number of Commissioners, because of the amount of work required for CDBG, and given the speed and time that is required this year. Is that not part of the goal, Erum?

Ms. Maqbool: Can you repeat the question, Chair, please?

Chair Smith: As part of our goal, part of the reason we're making these changes is because we are doing this to be quicker and more efficient. Is that correct?

Ms. Maqbool: But that's only for emergency funding. We are already done with the emergency funding. It's like in the future, if something like this happens, like COVID-19, how we are going to utilize those funding, not for the regular grant.

Chair Smith: Okay, so I'll take back my friendly amendment. Patti, go ahead.

Commissioner Regehr: I just had a question if our City Council Member had a comment. Because we were on that process, and all of a sudden, the Finance Committee didn't even talk to us, who were on the Commission for the funding. I'm concerned about this process. We put a lot of time into this, and I just want a commitment. I don't know. I don't know how to make that amendment, but if you want community participation, then you have to... We didn't have a meeting at the very end, so we didn't even recommend. You guys didn't come to us, and then it just skipped us, and it went right to City Council, the very end process. So, I'm trying to think ahead for this process, because if we want community participation and stuff, you have to honor the whole process.

Ms. Maqbool: Commissioner Patti, just to clarify, we are supposed to come to the HRC once per fiscal year. We did come last year for the CAPER, so –

Commissioner Regehr: No, at the very end, when three of us... My concern is that we're agreeing on this process for the beginning, but I would like to have a process so that you do come to us at... We didn't vote. We didn't vote.

Chair Smith: I have a question. One of the things I will say is I personally believe I address patterns, not instances, and given the jumble that was last year, I think, by the language that Erum and the Planning staff is putting to deal with emergencies, we should be good. Also, just to be clear, I think for Council, when we make a vote as a Commission or a subcommittee or group, they get that recommendation, and they read the recommendation, and they move ahead with the recommendation. It's not a requirement to come back and talk to us about it. Whatever the recommendation or vote do as a Commission is passed –

Commissioner Regehr: But what I'm saying is that last time, there was a subcommittee –

Chair Smith: They passed up the subcommittee recommendation to the Council.

Commissioner Regehr: No, and then we were supposed to bring it to the Human Relations Commission, and that's what they passed.

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Chair Smith: We did not meet as Human Relations, but the Council did get the subcommittee recommendation. All right. Are there any other -?

Commissioner Regehr: My question was to Greg.

Chair Smith: Commissioner –

Commissioner Regehr: For discussion, because he hasn't commented at all.

Chair Smith: Well, he's an observer at our meetings more than a commenter.

Commissioner Regehr: Okay, never mind. No discussion. We don't have to have a discussion. That's fine.

Chair Smith: All right. Can we have a vote at this time?

MOTION PASSES, 5-0

Chair Smith: Thank you so much, Finance Commission, and thank you for all the work you're doing in the city during this time of COVID, and if everything goes in Washington, we might be getting more funding, so I know you guys have a lot of long hours in front of you, so thank you for the work you do for our community.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Actually, Erum will be on for number two as well.

Chair Smith: I know, but I had to thank her for number one. You know, you give them the roses while you can.

Ms. van der Zwaag: It almost sounded like you were saying goodbye to her, so I just wanted to make sure.

Chair Smith: No, no.

Vice Chair Stinger: You're not that lucky.

Chair Smith: Yes, I'm not.

2. Public Hearing: Review of Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation report (CAPER)

Chair Smith: Let us go over CAPER. Erum, do you have another slide for us?

Ms. Maqbool: Yes, I'm going to share my screen again.

Chair Smith: Thank you.

Ms. Maqbool: Good evening again. I would like to thank the Commission for giving me the opportunity to provide a brief overview of the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report, also known as CAPER. This report is for fiscal year 2019-2020, which ended on June 30, 2020. It started from July 1, 2019 and ended on June 30, 2020. The CAPER is a federally mandated document that the entitlement jurisdiction submits to HUD at the conclusion of the fiscal year. This year the deadline to submit the CAPER is December 27, 2020. The purpose of

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the CAPER is to provide a summary of how the CDBG funds were expended and the accomplishments made through the funding of those projects. Community Development Block Grant, again, commonly known as the CDBG program, is the principle federal program. The City of Palo Alto receives annual funding from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development as an entitlement city under this program. The City uses this grant to fund activities that provide decent housing, suitable living environment and extend economic opportunities, principally for persons of low and moderate income. Activities funded through CDBG must meet one of the three national objectives. Number one is to benefit low and very low-income persons. Number two is aid in prevention or elimination of slums or blight, and number three is meet other community needs that are particularly urgent for the low-income community. All of the activities funded by the City meet the first objective. In fiscal year 2019-20, the total of funding available for allocation was around \$725,000. On the screen you can see the breakdown of that \$725,000. The entitlement grant was around \$500,000; \$88,000 was made available from prior year resources; and the \$136,000 was from estimated program income. Out of this amount, approximately \$90,000 was directed towards the public service activities; \$361,000 was for economic development; \$145,000 was granted to a capital improvement project for the rehabilitation of public facility; \$38,000 was provided to Project Sentinel for Fair Housing services; and \$90,000 was allocated to the City, the Department of Planning and Development services for the administration of this program. There are five funding categories in which the funds can be allocated. Number one is the public service category; number two is planning and administration; three is economic development; four is public facilities rehabilitation and fifth is housing rehabilitation. Per our Regulations, there are spending caps placed on two of the five categories. Fifteen percent spending cap is placed on public services, and 20 percent is placed on planning and administration. The rest of the three categories don't have any spending cap. The first activity was the public service category. The agencies funded under the public service category in fiscal year 2019-2020 were LifeMoves, Catholic Charities, Palo Alto Housing, YWCA and Silicon Valley Independent Living Center. In fiscal year 2019-2020, LifeMoves at the Opportunity Service Center, 33 Encina Avenue, addressed the basic human needs of 326 homeless or very low-income persons. Additionally, 26 residents received intensive case management services to secure employment or affordable housing. Catholic Charities, through the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program, assisted 317 seniors, mostly low or moderate income elderly residents at Lytton Gardens Skilled Nursing, Palo Alto Nursing Center and Lytton Gardens Community Care. Also, through this funding, 82 complaints were resolved, made on behalf of low-income residents by Catholic Charities. Alta Housing, formerly known as Palo Alto Housing, provided one-on-one counseling, case management and educational activities at Alma Place and Barker Hotel to 140 persons through the Resident Support program. YWCA Support Network provided 20 clients with counseling, therapy and legal advocacy service. Crisis counselors provided crisis line assistance to 40 callers from Palo Alto. The fifth agency funded under the Public Services was the Silicon Valley Independent Living Center. That assisted 20 adults with disabilities in developing an independent living plan for housing that resulted in improved accessibility to decent, affordable housing. Additionally, Silicon Valley Independent Living Center provided 83 low income disabled residents with training and education to find and secure affordable housing, or housing-related support. Again, under the planning and administration category, Project Sentinel assisted 16 individuals in investigating the Fair Housing complaints, and 20 residents received individual consultation relating to specific Fair

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Housing questions, and 139 individuals were assisted through outreach and presentations. Under the same category, planning and administration, the Planning and Development Services Department provided administrative support to the CDBG program. Under the economic development category, Downtown Streets Team connected 25 employers with 30 individuals who were meaningfully employed. They were previously unemployed, and 75 percent of those 30 individuals remained employed for more than three months or longer. Under the public facilities rehabilitation, funding was allocated to Ravenswood Family Health Network, formerly MayView Community Health Center. They were provided funding for a capital improvement project for the renovation of their clinic located at 270 Grant Avenue. Through this funding, the overall safety, cleanliness and aesthetics of the clinic were enhanced. This clinic served approximately 1,892 Palo Alto residents with medical care in the past fiscal year. Again, we published an advertisement in the *Daily Post*, announcing the availability of the Draft CAPER for public review and comment. The Draft CAPER was also posted on the CDBG's web page and was available for public comment from October 27 to November 12. We did not receive any public comment or concern. The notice that was placed in the *Daily Post* also provided details of the HRC meeting and public hearing. For the next steps, the staff will provide an informational report to the City Council on December 7th, before submitting the final CAPER to HUD by December 27, 2020. I'm going to conclude the overview of CAPER now, and if you have any questions, please let me know. I'm happy to answer any questions. Thank you so much.

Chair Smith: Thank you again, Erum, for your second report of the evening. Do we have any public comment at this time? You can raise your hand, or you can hit *9 if you're calling in. We have no public comment at this time. What I'd like to do is open up for Commissioners. We'll start with Commissioner Sunita. We'll give everybody three or four minutes to ask questions to Erum, and we'll go from there.

Commissioner de Turreil: Looking at the package that we received, I was just looking at the – I'm actually on page 12, talking about the affordable housing – and the number of...there's the one-year goal and the actual on various topics, and I was wondering, is that something you just normally include in these kinds of forms? Because there's no goal and no actual for the affordable housing. Can you tell me more about that, so that I understand that table?

Ms. Maqbool: Sure. This report, we submit on a HUD-developed website, which is called IDIS. They provide us a template and the tables are self-populated. We don't create the tables. Because we don't have anything to report this year as far as affordable housing is concerned, you see an empty table for that.

Commissioner de Turreil: Okay. Is that something that's consistent year-to-year?

Ms. Maqbool: Oh, no. Because, in fiscal year 2019-2020, there were no applicants for the affordable housing rehabilitation, but previously – I think in fiscal year 2018-2019 – we provided approximately \$250K to the Opportunity Service Center for the rehabilitation, so our goal in 2018-2019, we were actually able to assist 88 households in that category.

Commissioner de Turreil: Okay, great. Thank you. That's the extent of my questions.

Chair Smith: Commissioner Regehr?

Commissioner Regehr: I don't have any questions.

Chair Smith: Commissioner Savage?

Commissioner Savage: No questions. Good presentation.

Chair Smith: Commissioner Stinger?

Vice Chair Stinger: It was a good presentation. I'm pleased to see the results. I do have some questions, more peripheral to the CAPER, but I'd like to understand a little bit more about the five-year plan that's mentioned. When will that be drafted, and what's our role in that?

Ms. Maqbool: For the Consolidated Plan, the new Consolidated Plan for the next five years, starting from 2020 to 2025, was adopted by the Council on June 15, 2020, this year. The County of Santa Clara, they lead the effort for preparation of the Consolidated Plan, and we hired a consultant, and they did an extensive public outreach, and they came up with these goals. I can talk about the goals if you want.

Chair Smith: That would be great.

[crosstalk]

Ms. Maqbool: [inaudible] the Selection Committee Meeting.

Vice Chair Stinger: Okay. Do you want her to speak about the goals, then?

Chair Smith: If it's something that doesn't take like 20 minutes, I'd love to hear the goals.

Ms. Maqbool: Sure. There are five goals. Number one is, topmost, affordable housing goal. Number two is homelessness. Number three is economic development. Number four is fair housing, and number five is community services. So, we have to fund, we have to look for activities that we can provide funding to under these goals, because towards the end, like in fiscal year 2025, HUD is going to see if our funded activities match with the Consolidated Plan goals.

Vice Chair Stinger: Great. Thank you. Just one other question. In the report on page 16, it talks about placing individuals under Section 8. Is that Palo Alto residents and Palo Alto housing, or Palo Alto residents in County housing?

Ms. Maqbool: It's more of Palo Alto residents in County housing, because Section 8 does not come under the CDBG program. We're talking more about the Palo Alto residents, but funded through the County, because the County also provides funding for Palo Alto jurisdiction.

Vice Chair Stinger: Great. Again, thank you.

Ms. Maqbool: Thank you.

Chair Smith: Okay. My question is this – I might have missed it – I did not see the emergency funding in this reporting, and I know that was a significant amount. Where does that get reported? Is that reported in 2020-2021?

Ms. Maqbool: Yes.

Chair Smith: Okay, and what was the total on that amount?

Ms. Maqbool: The total, it was provided to us in two grant allocations. The first was \$294,000, and the second is \$450,000.

Chair Smith: Okay, so it's about one year's worth of grant was given in emergency fundings.

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Ms. Maqbool: That's correct.

Chair Smith: So next year's report, we'd be looking at about \$1.5 million reported out on CAPER?

Ms. Maqbool: That's correct. I would like to mention, Chair, that for this grant, the emergency funding, we have six years to spend that grant. If, for example, we have provided funding to LifeMoves for rental assistance, and they are not able to spend all that grant in one year, they have five more years to spend that grant. So, we might not report all the goals in one year.

Chair Smith: Okay. I know this is not a fair question, but I'm going to ask it. Do you have a sense if there's still funding that has not been used?

Ms. Maqbool: I actually have, because we received the \$450,000 just now, so the projects, I think we are going to spend the \$450,000, but for the \$294,000 that was provided to LifeMoves for rental assistance – because we are constantly in touch – there is not a lot of backlog for rental application at the Opportunity Service Center, so they are not very optimistic that they are going to spend all that funding in this fiscal year, but they think that they will be able to spend it the next two years.

Chair Smith: And what are the criteria for people to receive rental assistance?

Ms. Maqbool: The number one criterion for Palo Alto residents, income should be under 80 percent of the median income. Number two, they should be impacted through COVID – loss of income or anything. Yes, so that's –

Chair Smith: That's an impossible criterion for our area. It's a very difficult criteria, because if our median rental... Okay, you know why it's difficult.

Ms. Maqbool: But this is coming from HUD. Like in San Jose, they were able to expend all the funding so quickly, but in Palo Alto it's a different scenario, so I understand that these are hard regulations.

Chair Smith: Is there any way to get an amendment? And I don't know HUD well enough, so these are just questions out of being naïve.

Ms. Maqbool: You cannot get an amendment on the criteria of funding allocation. What we can do is, if you are not able to spend funding on rental assistance, we can reallocate that funding to another activity.

Chair Smith: When would that discussion be started?

Ms. Maqbool: We'll see, like in a year, we'll see where we are at as far as the \$294,000. If we are at, like, \$225,000, then it might be a good time to start discussing alternatives.

Chair Smith: And that would go to Council or HRC?

Ms. Maqbool: Substantial amendment goes to the – because that would be a substantial amendment – that will go to the Council.

Chair Smith: Okay. Thank you. Council Member Tanaka, do you have any thoughts, ideas, questions on this?

Council Member Tanaka: I don't, thank you.

Chair Smith: Thank you, sir. All right. We don't have to make a vote on this, do we? There is no motion on this? Anybody else have any questions for Erum? Yes, Patti.

Commissioner Regehr: I was just going to go back. When we were doing on liaison and talking to the Opportunity Center, at that point they were saying that that's one of the things that they would like us to do as a Commission, is to help them put out the word that this money was available, and I think that that's...Because they were saying that not everybody that is needy thinks about going to certain places, but if we promote it more. They were asking us to promote it more, because for some people it's a first time. I'm thinking that that's something that we could...

Chair Smith: I think there are some people in the community, and some lists, that me and Minka share in the faith community and in the nonprofit space that could really use it. I think the real challenge is the geographic limitation of Palo Alto and the income limitation. The math, because of the median income, it just doesn't work right here. Erum, if you could send me an email, me and Minka, tomorrow, I will get you...I have two or three contacts that I can give you that have list serves that go out to faith institutions of many different faiths. That probably would be good to reach out and let them know this exists.

Ms. Maqbool: Okay, great.

Chair Smith: All right, if we have no further questions for Erum, I want to thank her supervisor, Clare, for being on the line with us tonight. Thank you. Erum is really good. We enjoy working with her, and she's done a phenomenal job making some complicated stuff somewhat transparent to lay people, so thank you all. We can move to the next item. Staff, are we good?

Ms. van der Zwaag: Actually, we might need to take a couple minute break. I've been off for the last 10 minutes because my internet went down, so I am trying to reload my presentation. If you just give me a minute to try to boot it up, that would be great.

Chair Smith: Let's do this, Minka. It's 7:54 now. I will see everybody back here at 8:00, to give Minka some time to get the presentation together.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Thank you.

Chair Smith: And not have everybody stare at her. Thank you. Erum, can you answer? There is a question in the chat.

Ms. Maqbool: I'm actually looking at that question, and I'm not sure if I can right now answer, but there's noise limit. I just want to tell that. Let me just see if I can respond.

Chair Smith: Thank you, Mora, for bringing that to our attention.

Ms. van der Zwaag: I actually have my presentation up, but if we've told people there will be a few-minute break, Mary wasn't prepared for that, so we don't have the slides, so we can wait 'til Daryl, or we can just keep going. Commissioner de Turreil is taking a short break as well.

Commissioner de Turreil: She's back.

Chair Smith: We are efficient. Thank you, Commissioners.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Thank you for your patience. I just had to slowly let me computer come back. It looks like Council Member Tanaka is on a break, so we do want to wait until everybody

is back, especially since we said that, so we are still live, so if people want to go off-screen until 8:00 p.m., why don't we do that, since that's what we said we were going to do?

[break]

Chair Smith: Thank you, everyone, for being so prompt in your return. Staff, are you ready to present?

Ms. van der Zwaag: Thank you all for bearing with me through my technical difficulties. I am here this evening to present to the Human Relations Commission the Needs Assessment results. I just wanted to give a very quick overview of HSRAP. This slide is duplicate to what I talked about at our meeting last month, but for anybody that wasn't here, I wanted just to quickly give this overview of HSRAP. It stands for the Human Service Resource Allocation Process, and it's the procedure in which we identify, prioritize and support grant allocations in the community. As we are looking at the applications that come to us during that process, the primary goal is to meet the needs and improve the quality of life of low income and vulnerable populations, but the Review Committee also takes into account the financial, social, cultural, psychological and physical barriers that prevent Palo Alto residents from accessing the human services they need. There is currently \$550,000 in that account. We are presuming it will be around the same amount in the next budget cycle, but those decisions, or final decisions, are made when the City Council makes recommendations for our budget for next year. HSRAP is on a two-year cycle. The Priority of Needs, that's the report that's before you tonight. Just to give you a little background on how we have assessed these community needs before, we do it every two years. In 2012, the HRC, with the help of a summer intern, conducted an in-depth survey of the needs in the community, and they spoke with residents, clients, providers, experts in the various fields, and produced a very detailed report for City Council. Since that time, every two years we have continued to update the needs and to reassess the needs in the community. We have done that mostly through the assistance of a survey tool to update demographic information. One year we also did in-depth interviews of each of the currently HSRAP grantees, all with the goal of coming up with a Priority of Needs, which is just a more formal way of saying the allowable funding categories that we include in the HSRAP application, so that anybody who is interested in applying knows if the need that they are meeting in the community, if it's included and if they may apply. This year's process – this year, I sent the survey out to 40 agencies that serve Palo Alto residents. They did not need to be Palo Alto based, and that is current HSRAP grantees. That is also a list of agencies. When I look into the current Priority of Needs and the types of needs that they meet, I try to look at other agencies that are serving Palo Alto residents that also address those needs in the community, and I send them the survey. We received 27 responses. As I mentioned in my staff report, some agencies turned in more than one response, and often that was to amplify the need of a different service agency. For instance, an agency that has a program for seniors, but it also has a program for maybe individuals with special needs. So, they wanted to make sure those different needs were amplified. What we're trying to do with this Needs Assessment is to check the needs, gaps, barriers and trends in the community, check those against years past of the same survey. We also wanted this year, because of the COVID pandemic, we wanted to really see how COVID was affecting our human services providers. We also continue to update specific demographic information, and you will see that that was included in the packet of information. We always try to include the most up-to-date information that is available, primarily through the American Community Survey, which is part of the Census

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survey. Sometimes that's 2019, sometimes it's 2018. Different data points sometimes have different years in which they are collected. I wanted to tell you a little more about the HSRAP's Priority of Needs. HSRAP has historically had a really wide scope of allowable funding categories, and some agencies have been receiving funding for years. Now this is fairly unusual, because most funders, or even other communities that I have looked into, have a very narrow funding category. They will, for instance, say, "We're helping youth and individuals with special needs." Or, "seniors and preschoolers." But HSRAP historically has had a very wide limit of funding categories of agencies that can apply with their needs. In the past, the HRC has recommended to staff some additions based on the results of the Priority of Needs Survey, and you saw that in your report that is included, things such as elder abuse, after school tutoring, and so forth. When you're reviewing the results, what I hope that you did – and I'll just mention this for anybody that is listening – we are really trying to look at the needs that present in the community in a variety of ways. We want to make sure – what are the gateway needs? Or, if you're looking at it in a Maslow's hierarchy of needs, what are the basic needs that people need to meet? And how are they possibly interconnected? So, we ask the HRC to consider that in their review. For instance, how is homelessness connected to mental health? At times it is. At times it isn't. How is hunger connected to economic dependency? We also asked you in your reviewing it, to say, "Are there actually needs that are not included in the Priority of Needs, and can HSRAP play a role?" There are many needs in the community that aren't listed on the HSRAP Priority of Needs, but the real question is, with the limited scope of HSRAP, can it really have a positive impact, or can it really make a difference in this area? I also wanted to point out to the HRC and to those listening that the Need Assessment is just really a snapshot into the needs in the community from the service lens of the providers. So, what you see in the results is very valid information. It's very deep information, but it is from the lens of those who replied to the survey. What we often do with HSRAP and when we're looking at the results, is say, "Okay, from 2016 to 2018 to 2020, how are things different? What were the top five needs in 2016 compared to '18, compared to '20?" That type of comparison was extremely difficult, because I would say that the majority of answers this time were all through the lens of the agency's experience of responding to COVID. Most often, we get the responses, it's one of pre-responses given, but what I noticed in the survey responses this time is that the majority of what people had to say came in the "other" category, and you will see that in the responses and the reply that I gave to you, as far as what those people who responded to the survey had to say. They had a lot to say and, really, we're really open to sharing what their struggles are now and how COVID has completely changed the landscape of how they provide services. I wanted to speak a little bit more about the challenges that I just alluded to, that the agencies are facing. They have had challenges as far as their service provision, their funding, they needed to meet the expanded needs of their clients, the expanded needs of their staff. Their volunteer pool – some of them had less volunteers, or some of them had no volunteers, when they very often in the past used volunteers to provide a lot of their services or complement the services of their staff. As I alluded to before, there really was a changing landscape of client needs and how they would provide their services. I have been meeting with different grantees and different providers in the community since the pandemic began in March, and I can tell you, I am extremely proud of our local human services providers and how they rapidly adapted to meet the needs of our residents in need. They dealt with change that sometimes came weekly from the County and the State Health Department that sometimes affected the work that they were doing. They adapted, and

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they added services based on their clients' needs. They went to virtual services very quickly and overcame a lot of hurdles in the process, from technology to a lot of the mental health or physical health services, had a lot of HIPPA requirements to overcome, but they did it all. One of the additional extraordinary things they did, they offered mutual aid to their fellow agencies. I heard several stories of, for instance, an agency – I'll just name it, La Comida – who serves older adults, that reached out to a local housing provider and a local provider of services to unhoused women, and offered their services to provide meals for their clients. So, not just being concerned, "Oh, how can we meet the needs of our own clients?" they were reaching out to see how they could help other service providers in the community. As far as the key results of the Need Assessment, as I state in my report, housing is a huge need. Housing has come up on the top of the list since, I think, 2012, and it's a huge need that I think is beyond the scope of HSRAP to take on housing itself. I know that our Planning Department and our City Council is very committed to work on issues of housing across the income spectrum in our community. What I did see was digital inclusion that was a big issue that came through from most of the individuals that completed the survey. Their services have been moved online, but they notice very quickly that either some folks didn't have the technology to access their services, or know how to use the services, so that was a big need that everybody noticed. Your job right now is to have a conversation that is looking at the results of the Needs Assessment and to see and to compare it against the current Priority of Needs and to see if there is any needs that you think should be added to the Priority of Needs. You can also see if you want to make a recommendation of, if a need should be taken off the Priority of Needs. I listed in my report that I caution against taking off a need just because you perhaps didn't see it amplified in the survey results due to the fact that sometimes clients and sometimes agencies don't mention needs if they are already being met. In these types of surveys what you usually hear about are the needs that aren't being met. So, your role right now is to look at the results and to have a discussion about them, ask me any questions you may have about the survey results. I see that many of the participants are current grantees or current service providers in the community. They might want to give comment during Oral Communications, but you, at the end of this, will be providing me with a recommendation as to the HSRAP Priority of Needs. There is a lot of rich information in the report on how COVID is affecting the service provider community. I would say that's a very important conversation to have if you want to dig into the information deeper and perhaps at a future HRC meeting consider some of the other effects that COVID has had on the nonprofit community and see if there's a role for the HRC to make any recommendations or any actions regarding that, but your sole role tonight is to discuss the results through the lens of making a recommendation on the Priority of Needs. I have the requested action in front of you right now, and you have this in your packet, but there are the current Priority of Needs. I put the Draft, but there are really the Priority of Needs that were included in the last HSRAP cycle. So, Chair Smith, that concludes my presentation.

Chair Smith: Minka, thank you again for the thorough work you do year in and year out. I also know that I want to add a little bit to what you were saying. I want to go to the Council with a recommendation. Not tonight, but sometime in the spring as I get into the budget cycle, to allow us to do an in-depth re-evaluation of the community. The last one is almost a decade old, and I think things have changed. That is extremely...Minka, do you want to say something?

Ms. van der Zwaag: No, I just want to thank you for your support in doing that. That is something that staff would really like, to work to have a more thorough assessment of the human services needs in the community that goes beyond the work that we were able to do in this survey, so thank you.

Chair Smith: You're very welcome. At this point, I want to open this up for public comment. If you would like to make a public comment, we give you two minutes. Wow, they moved quick on that one. Is there anyone else? I'll turn it over to staff for the two-minute public comment. Thank you.

Ms. van der Zwaag: The first person I see with her hand up is Michele. Michele, I'm going to give to you the ability to talk, and then you will have two minutes.

Ms. Michele Schroeder: Good evening. I'm the supervising attorney at SALA, Senior Adults Legal Assistance. SALA is a nonprofit law office that provides free legal services to seniors countywide and in Palo Alto. We target clients that are low income or at risk of abuse, isolation, or institutionalization. We currently receive HSRAP funding, and we are very grateful for that. The funding has enabled us to expand the availability of our services to Palo Alto residents 60 or older. Seventy-four percent of the Palo Alto seniors we served last year were very low income. Fifty-eight percent were 75 or older, and 36 percent had a disability. These factors place them in great economic and social risk. Legal assistance continues to be a critical need for seniors, even more so during the pandemic. We are seeing clients with legal problems involving the public benefits they rely on to shelter in place and to meet basic needs, such as Social Security, SSI, Medicare and Medi-Cal. We are seeing clients that are worried about eviction, even during the COVID-19 eviction moratoriums, and clients whose housing is otherwise in jeopardy. We see clients that need to do basic planning incapacity to enable them to live with dignity and choice, but they can't afford to pay a private attorney \$400 to \$500 an hour to do this. This planning has become even more important during COVID-19 if they become gravely ill or are dying. Last but not least, we are seeing many clients that are victims of elder abuse, usually by someone living in their homes, or someone that they know, such as adult children, grandchildren, caregivers or tenants renting rooms. Based on what we are seeing, elder abuse is on the rise during the pandemic. Many of our current cases involved abusers living in the homes of our clients and sheltering in place with them during COVID-19. In any case, we thank the HSRAP staff for recognizing this as a priority, and we hope that the Commission will agree with the recommendation for funding. Thank you.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Thank you, Michelle. The next speaker is Kory Amaral, you have two minutes.

Ms. Kory Amaral: I'm Executive Director for the Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area Chapter. We are a nonprofit service organization who serve veterans who have spinal cord injury or disease. We actually did a presentation earlier in the year before the COVID-19 pandemic happened, so I want to thank you all for allowing us to present to you. Right now, the situation has changed, obviously, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Veterans suicide is now higher than ever, due to the pandemic. We must adapt our programs in order to serve our veterans. All of our fundraisers for the Chapter have been on hold, so where are looking for new funding to help support our programs. I know that we are new this year to the City of Palo Alto, but we are

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definitely been around since 1962, so we really appreciate your time and dedication to our chapter, and we look forward to the future. Thank you for your time.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Thank you, Corey. The next speaker is Sara Baltierrez. Sara, you have two minutes.

Ms. Sara Baltierrez: Hello, everyone. I work for Downtown Streets team in Palo Alto. We provide services for adults experiencing homelessness through our volunteer work experience program. We also serve over 300 individuals every month in our food closet in downtown Palo Alto. I just wanted to take this time to really thank Minka and Erum and the rest of the nonprofits that we've been able to collaborate with during the time of COVID. It's really been amazing to see the community come together. There were times when we needed supplies or referrals, and it was really nice to have the City to lean on, as well as our fellow nonprofits. A huge thank you to Minka, again, and to the Council, to the Commissioners. I just hope that we can get support for this funding for those most vulnerable in our community.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Thank you, Sara. Are there any other individuals who would like to speak? Please raise your hand. Chair Smith, I don't see any further hands.

Chair Smith: There is one more.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Oh, hold on. Thank you. Gezel, if you would like to speak, you have two minutes.

Ms. Gezel Frederick: I am from the DreamCatchers organization, offering academic support to low income middle school students in Palo Alto. I just want to say thank you, Minka, and the team that you work with for helping us and supporting us in providing academic support to students in Palo Alto. We're very grateful for the funding that we received. We were able to bring on a third full time member. We are a very small team, so we were able to add an additional member to our team to help push DreamCatchers in a whole different dimension. We were able to offer drop-in sessions, enrichment programs, and really expand our services during such a really, really precarious times. I just want to say thank you so, so much for everything that you've done for us at Dreamcatchers.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Thank you, Gezel. We'll just give it another moment if there's anyone who wishes to address the Commission. I do not see any other hands, Chair.

Chair Smith: Thank you. I just want to take a moment to thank Human Services staff and for these nonprofits. One of the things that they've done during the COVID pandemic is be very nimble and meet people where they are, and if you at a nonprofit, or if you work in the Human Services office, I just want to tip my hat off to you during this period, because I think the work you've done has been so critical to our community. What I want to do is I want to start with a round robin really quickly, because I'm pretty sure there are some questions for Minka, so I'll give each Commissioner three minutes. We will start off with Commissioner Sunita, and then after we do the first-round robin, we'll see if we need a second, or then we can into a discussion or a motion. Thank you.

Commissioner de Turreil: Wow. If I understand correctly, what we're looking at is making sure that we have our Priority of Needs really squared away for the next funding cycle.

Ms. van der Zwaag: That is correct. It's looking at the Draft Priority of Needs, which is the same one that has been used before, and then making any recommendations to staff if you think something should be added or something that maybe should be taken off. You have either option to recommend. I will provide feedback or answer questions for any of your recommendations.

Commissioner de Turreil: So, it seems there's nothing really to take off. I, frankly, am just coming up to speed and feeling a little bit overwhelmed with the variety of the problems, all exacerbated by COVID this year, and not sure where to start in terms of adding anything. It seems more like we're highlighting certain things, or really vigorously circling certain things that have gotten much worse and exacerbated during COVID, so I think I'm going to hold off any comments as I listen and try to learn a little bit more from other Commissioners who have more experience in this space, but I look forward to digging into these issues.

Chair Smith: Thank you so much. Commissioner Regehr?

Commissioner Regehr: I just want to thank Minka and everyone that spoke. I think that I, too...I think that when it says the human service needs, I think that we have to clear that this is the service needs of the agencies, and I would promote, but when I was on the County Commission in Massachusetts, we had a human needs survey that went out to residents, and I think that that's a really good one. It was a doctoral dissertation, and I think –

Ms. van der Zwaag: I would agree.

Commissioner Regehr: That we have to be clear that our mission as a Human Relations Commission is for the needs of the community, not for the social service agencies. I mean, we can support it, but...I guess that's my only comment, that I think that it's great that you did this, but we have to be aware that our needs are also just further...I mean, our desire to help.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Right, and I think I would respond to that. I would maybe phrase it a little bit different. I would not say that HSRAP or this Needs Assessment is instituted to meet the needs of the nonprofit agencies, as an entity. The Needs Assessment was sent to the agencies to be a conduit for the needs of their clients and especially at a time during COVID. If it would have been a different time, even with the time that we had this year to do it, we might have said, "Hey, can you have these surveys out at your front desk? Can you send them out to your email list?" COVID presented a much different time, so I count on our agencies to have a really good pulse on the needs of the individuals they served, and I think that is clearly demonstrated by some of the responses and some of the pivoting that the nonprofit agencies did. I think that's especially shown for the agencies that, let's just say they provide seniors legal assistance, or just another service in the community, but they still heard from their clients that they needed, for instance, groceries, that they needed legal, that they needed medicine, that they needed rental assistance, and they heard those needs of the client and they expanded their services to meet the needs of the clients. So, my lens would be a little bit different. Yes, we just talked to the providers, but we asked the providers, at least for the questions on the needs in the community, to answer it to reflect the needs that they are hearing from their clients. The second half of the survey was clearly to hear about the health of the agency during COVID, but I really do feel like the first half of the survey that all the providers answered it thinking of, "What is my client thinking right now? What are my client's needs?" I think it's a great staff. I'm just saying that I think that nothing should be taken off. I think it's a great first step, but what I'm saying is that

there are a lot of people that aren't clients, that are not going to these agencies that really do need help, too, and I think that we need to broaden our...But that's my only thought.

Chair Smith: Commissioner Regehr, I one hundred percent agree with you. I think that's why we want to send a recommendation before City starts doing the next budget cycle, that we have this funded so that the Human Services office can get the staffing needed, so that we can do a broader community survey, particularly given some of the challenges that we're having at this period of time. I think you have an excellent point.

Commissioner Regehr: Which brings me back to the next step again, that I think that we, as a group, should really tell City Council that we cannot function this way with only five of us. I think we need...Just like the Parks and Rec Chair spoke at the City Council meetings; I think we need to really push all of this again with a new Council.

Ms. van der Zwaag: It would be my hope that the next assessment could be done by a consultant, because even with a commission of seven last time, it was probably...The lead person was a fully retired person. So, I would say, it would be my hope, that the assessment could be done by a professional agency that does these assessments of the community on a professional basis.

Commissioner Regehr: I guess we could discuss that later, because I would prefer –

[crosstalk]

Chair Smith: I think we should bring that...Let's bring that as a retreat discussion. Council Member Tanaka, hopefully as you start a new Council in January, you can bring some of these requests to them for us, so we can start the process.

Council Member Tanaka: I'm very supportive of it, and –

[crosstalk]

Ms. van der Zwaag: He's been very supportive.

Council Member Tanaka: And I'll continue to try.

Chair Smith: Thank you, sir.

Commissioner Regehr: I think we as a group...

Chair Smith: We will. Commissioner Savage?

Commissioner Savage: Regarding the Needs Assessment list, it is a pretty comprehensive, exhaustive list. I certainly wouldn't want to take anything away, and I can't think of anything to add, so I think it's right on the way it is.

Chair Smith: Commissioner Stinger?

Vice Chair Stinger: Thank you. Thanks, Minka, for the report. I have always fought this Priority of Needs, and I've found myself relaxing. When you said something, it should be called the Breadth of Community Needs, or Scope of Needs, and just retitling it would make me feel more comfortable. That's just one comment. The other comment I had was a reaction to something I think you said earlier – that we might want to think about focusing on COVID-related issues, but we also need to think about the basic needs that have existed in the past and continue to exist in this community. I think this list addresses both. I might just, in our comments, think about three

things that I think are particularly true in the environment, besides the increased need for food, nutrition and housing. Digital inclusion – I think a lot of the clients don't have access to digital technology. I think some services need help with outreach. We just heard that in housing. I heard ACS talk about that earlier today, that people who have never needed their services don't know where to go for their services, and the agencies don't know, or have not had experience outreaching to different communities. The other thing I think that maybe we might want to focus on is socialization. Younger children and in seniors, particularly. The lockdown, the absence of socialization, I think, is maybe traumatic is either too soft or too harsh a word, but I wouldn't add those to the Breadth of Community Needs. I would just be looking for services that address those needs. Those are my two comments.

Chair Smith: Thank you. Minka, my comments are...I notice on question two, question four and also alluded to several times during the questionnaire, people mention the digital divide, or the lack of technology or the significant issue of technology. I know it presents a lot of issues. It's almost, given that we live in a virtual space – we are on Zoom right now, right? – we're running business on Zoom, the digital divide now stops people from getting, even seniors, doing medical work. I remember taking one of my parents to a doctor, and they had to punch in on an iPad kind of thing to check in, so this technology divide is significant. I would like to...I don't think this is here to cut anything, but on basic needs and given the fact that we are going back into a significant rise in the COVID count and counties are dialing back, I think we need to have some language on basic needs around digital. Not inclusion, because inclusion means I'm including you, but that digital divide that limits people from receiving social services, limits people from getting to doctors or education or even working. Or even participating in government at this point. And that seems to be a common thread throughout your report. Is that correct, or am I jumping?

Ms. van der Zwaag: That is correct. No, that was mentioned by multiple agencies for multiple questions. It all seemed to come back to access and ability to use certain equipment. I know I listed in my report that has been around for a while, but it's clearly been exacerbated during COVID. Now, it's not that agencies have forgotten the human touch. Many of the agencies have started welfare calls for their clients, calling them on a once-a-week basis, trying to connect different groups, different client bases, to see if maybe some of their younger clients could call some of the older...some younger volunteers would call older clients, just to try to set up unique opportunities for different segments of the community to be in dialogue with each other. I know that's happened, so that has been so important, because I think we've all had that experience that we've been distancing for so long that when we see someone we know in the grocery store, it's a very visceral experience, and for seniors or for other individuals who are at higher risk, if they contract COVID who are being much more careful, they are just much more isolated. Seeing someone on the screen, or seeing their grandchild on the screen is helpful, but just that old fashioned getting on the phone and talking to someone, or dropping off some groceries and backing up on the driveway, but still having an in-person conversation, has been really amplified during this time. The digital divide has been amplified, but that real need for human contact has also been amplified as well.

Chair Smith: Council Member Tanaka?

Council Member Tanaka: I don't have any comments at this point, but I think one thing that you guys probably all know is it's pretty tough times for the City. I'm hoping that we'll get more funding from either federal or state government, but just keep that in mind as you guys do this. I think really prioritizing and figuring out what's needed most. I would love to see kind of like a rigorous prioritization for you guys, because I think it's going to be hard to do everything. I'm hopeful that we'll get more, but it's not going to be easy, so just keep that in mind as you do this. I know it's going to be challenging for you guys, because these are all good organizations. Then also, think about...I'm not sure if you guys heard the peanut butter analogy, but sometimes you can spread things really thin and not make much of a difference, versus focusing on the few, so that's something else you guys could think about. On the Council level, we really don't have time to, or the knowledge, to really look at this stuff very closely, so I'm hoping that the HRC can do that deep dive for us and really figure out what is the right way to allocate very, very scarce resources, and it's going to be scarcer than usual this year. Just keep that in mind. It would not be helpful if you just said, "Okay, we're going to everything we did last year, and no prioritization." That's not very helpful. What would be helpful would be some sort of priority list, so that as we know what the budgets really are we know what can we fund and what can we not fund. I'm hoping we'll get more, but really what the HRC could do is provide that prioritization.

Chair Smith: Thank you so much, Council Member Tanaka. I'm going to open up for discussion. Does anybody have any initial thoughts on this list? We've had our chance to ask questions of Minka. Now I'd like to hear if anybody has an thoughts, suggestions, ideas. Yes, Commissioner Regehr?

Commissioner Regehr: I guess, about money, I think that I'm totally sympathetic to our City, and I guess that's back to hiring a consultant to do a survey. I feel that that would be...There's probably plenty of graduate students that need to write a dissertation and to write about poor, a Needs Assessment, and that would be a free cost to the City. I guess that's my...I wouldn't want to spend money with a consultant to find out what the needs are and spending lots of money when that money could be going towards that. I think back to about the digital access, I think that's not just being able to interact with people. Once our libraries closed down, once all the businesses, there were a tremendous amount of people that were unhoused that had no access to the internet, and we're still seeing that with students. That's something that I just wanted to say, that it's not just being not able to connect. It's not even being able to connect.

Chair Smith: Yes, I think you just really highlighted a new dimension to that. Particularly those that are unhoused, if you can't walk into an office now...You can't walk into a social service office. You have to do it online.

Ms. van der Zwaag: I think one of the survey respondents indicated for the unhoused that even a lot of the services are being done by phone now to be able to access the County's hotline for shelter services. You need a phone, because you need the County to call you back, so it's not even more advanced technology. We're talking not about iPads. It's just the basic ability to have a telephone has been really crucial, and then going back to having places where you can actually charge your phone.

Chair Smith: Yes. You know, I have the general sense – and I'll probably end up throwing a motion out in a second – I think the process, I think it's one thing for us at the beginning of the

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process to over-define priorities, because I believe we're heading into very uncertain times, and I think we're going to see different kinds of applications and different...It's obvious from reading the survey and the Needs Assessment that we are in a different environment now, so I think we should let the application process really help us define some of the stuff in there. Do you need a motion, Minka?

Ms. van der Zwaag: I would like a motion that is a recommendation to staff on the Priority of Needs for the next HSRAP cycle, yes.

Chair Smith: Okay. I think I want to talk about the digital divide being added to the list. Is there anything else any of the places, spaces, things that people see need to be added, need to be removed? Anything else that spoke to you during this report?

Vice Chair Stinger: I want to think about the basic needs. Part of me wants to put overcoming the digital divide under the basic needs.

Chair Smith: I believe it is a basic need, because if you cannot plug into the services you need, then it's a nonstarter. You can't even get anything else.

Vice Chair Stinger: And then, that leads me to a question, which I really can't answer. Part of me is thinking maybe we ought to be focusing on just the basic needs for the next year, but then part of me thinks that some of those basic needs are the ones that the community is funding in other ways. Now I'm forgetting the community funds that exist. Giving Tree. So, maybe some of the other services are less funded, so there's a question of where is the need?

Ms. van der Zwaag: The response that I would give back, Vice Chair, is what I'm hearing from nonprofit providers is that a lot of the funding sources are saying no to new agencies. I would have a hard time taking away something from the current Priority of Needs in a year when everything else is in such a flux, that there is, to kind of respond to what Council Member Tanaka said as well, these Priority of Needs, there is nothing in the request for proposals that requires the HRC to make a recommendation that we meet all of these. These are just the allowable funding categories, so these state what the allowable funding categories are, so that's the baseline. From there, when the HRC is making the recommendation, it can go through and make its funding recommendation. I would go back to the philosophy of HSRAP, which I can't quote exactly, but is the purpose of HSRAP is to assist agencies help clients with their basic needs, but also other needs that...basic needs for low income clients, but that is also considers the needs of other clients that might be higher income, but they have a need as well, such as a mental health need, and so forth. When you consider HSRAP, these would be the baseline needs but in reviewing it, you would look at the philosophy of HSRAP, which has been approved by the HRC in the past, and you would look at the criteria that is in the RFP, and make your funding recommendations based on the philosophy and based on the funding criteria and go from there. So, does that answer your question, Vice Chair?

Vice Chair Stinger: That really helps a lot. Thank you. Given that, then maybe I might say, can we just add overcoming the digital divide to basic needs?

Ms. van der Zwaag: I won't dispute that. It will be a challenging year for the HSRAP subcommittee to really review it, because I think there will be a lot of needs that will be coming through from the community from providers that have received HSRAP support in the past and from new providers that you probably haven't traditionally heard from.

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Chair Smith: Commissioner Regehr?

Commissioner Regehr: Well, that's what I was going to say that I think that because of the unhoused and because we are starting to take on the Safe Parking and... There's not that many organizations that have been dealing with digital divide. There are private organizations that can... like Comcast will give free internet. But I guess my point is that I think an overall – and Minka, this is to your question, too – I think because money is really tight, I would think that part of our criteria should be looking at the agencies and making sure that they don't have any legal issues. I mean, because I think this is money that we're giving, and also to see what their reserves are. I think some agencies are very good about asking for money that have lots of it. I think that we... I would say that there should be a criterion.

Chair Smith: I would push back against that, because my number one evaluation of programs is the effectiveness of the program and what we're funding, and is it impactful to the community? For example, if you look at – and my focus is I run a nonprofit church – I have significant reserves, but they are set aside as funds that are restricted funds, or they are different categories of funds that can't be used all the time for new programs. So, I think –

Commissioner Regehr: I totally understand about the needs, but I also know that there are certain things that you can't restrict, but I'm just saying that I think that when we look at, especially for new organizations that haven't been able to get up the reserves, and if we're talking about basic needs, that we're funding an organization... I mean, I just think it's important to look at their funding sources. If we're a city and we're giving out government money, then I think that we need to look at are we giving the money even though they might have more money than we do? Do you know what I'm saying?

Ms. van der Zwaag: I hear you, Commissioner Regehr. There are questions in the HSRAP application that ask what their funding sources for their program that they're requesting funding for, and there is also a question that asks if they would be able to continue this program, what their plan for continuing this program if they did not receive the funding in question. So there are questions that address that.

Chair Smith: Commission Sunita, do you have any questions? I know this is your first go-around on this priority. Are there any points you would like to address?

Commissioner de Turreil; I'm just wondering, it seems like we're getting... I thought that the point was to figure out that we make sure we have all of our needs there, that there's going to be later discussions around who are the right organizations to fund [crosstalk] be the most effective? So, I think that, from what I gather, it does seem like in many places in the reports and looking at the different needs, digital divide seems like one that's really standing out. It seems strange, but I think it's super exacerbated by COVID right now, and some of the offices being closed. I would agree that that seems, even though it seems strange to say it, it is a basic need at this point. So, I agree with Vice Chair Stinger that that might be something that makes sense to add. But beyond that, I thought that the more detailed discussions around funding, is that going to be something we're going to be looking at at another time?

Chair Smith: Yes.

Ms. van der Zwaag: I would say that the HSRAP, how we evaluate the grantees is put in the HSRAP application, so there are a series of evaluation criteria that are included in the RFP,

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which is the application for the HSRAP program. So, when the subcommittee looks deeply at the applications, when you're looking at the applications, you will be making, the subcommittee and the full HRC, will be making recommendations based on those evaluation criteria that are included in the RFP. You cannot, at that point, add more criteria or say, "I'm not going to fund them because this," or, "I'm going to evaluate them about that." Those are included in our RFP, and that's going out probably in the next week or so. This was the last piece of the puzzle. This was the Priority of Needs. Yes, there are very clear evaluation criteria. The committee gets a grid, and this process is governed by our purchasing process, so it's a very rigorous process. They will be evaluating each applicant by a list of like 13 evaluation criteria and each applicant will be reviewed on those same criteria, and then when it comes to the full committee, you will also get that spreadsheet to be able to evaluate them on those same criteria. You will get a recommendation from the subcommittee, and that's a good starting point and like with any recommendation that comes to the HRC, you can go with it as a full committee, or anybody on the HRC is, at that point, able to express their own opinion, but once again, the agencies have to be evaluated based on the criteria that we told them ahead of time that they would be evaluated on, or it would not be fair to them.

MOTION

Chair Smith: All right, so I want to make a motion that we add digital divide to the basic needs of the HSRAP.

Ms. van der Zwaag: You can make a recommendation to add that.

Chair Smith: I make a recommendation to add that.

Commissioner de Turreil: I second that.

Chair Smith: Okay, let's take a vote.

MOTION PASSES, 5-0

Chair Smith: We have updated that, and I think that takes care of our final item for this evening.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Can I interject, Chair?

Chair Smith: Yes.

Ms. van der Zwaag: I just want to thank the HRC, because I each and every one of you take very seriously your role of reviewing and making recommendations for HSRAP every step of the way, and I just want to thank you for your diligence in reviewing my report and the assessment results today, to hearing the needs that the providers in the community have amplified, as far as their clients, which are the residents of the city of Palo Alto. So, I just want to thank you on behalf of Mary and myself for your time tonight.

Chair Smith: Thank you so much for the hard work you do in our city.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Mary did all of the demographic work, so I know I'm on camera, but Mary is my partner in Human Services, so she gets equal thanks.

Chair Smith: Thank you, Mary.

Ms. Mary Constantino: You're welcome.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. October 1, 2020 Draft Regular HRC Meeting Minutes

Chair Smith: Has everybody had a chance to review the minutes from October 1st? Are there any modifications or changes that anybody would like to make to the minutes? Can I have a motion on the minutes?

MOTION

Vice Chair Stinger: I move that we accept the minutes.

Chair Smith: Can I have a second, please?

Commissioner Regehr: I second.

Chair Smith: Thank you. We'll do a vote.

MOTION PASSES, 5-0

VI. REPORTS FROM OFFICIALS

1. Commissioner Reports

Chair Smith: Do we have any Commissioner reports? Yes, Commissioner Regehr?

Commissioner Regehr: Do you want to go in order?

Chair Smith: Since we're sheltering in place, I don't expect us to have the same level of reports, and I'll have the Vice Chair do a joint report for both of us.

Commissioner Regehr: Okay. Daryl and I were on the Emergency Funding seat, and I'll just...It's called Emerging Needs Fund, so I just wanted to say we met and we've put some...Anyway, do you want to hear what we gave out, the money?

Chair Smith: Yes.

Commissioner Regehr: Okay, so the applicants could request \$10,000, but this is a cycle. Right, Minka? There's four of them, so we didn't want to give out all of the money at once, so we gave \$3,500 to DreamCatchers, and Chita [phonetic] spoke and thanked us about that. Kafenia Peace Collective. That was \$1,500, and that was asking about digital needs. Karat School project, we gave \$5,000, and Ravenswood MayView Clinic, we gave \$2,500.

Chair Smith: I love that clinic. They've been a lifesaver. We do a lot of work with my church with foster care, and Ravenwood does amazing work providing services to those children.

Commissioner Regehr: And then I wanted to also just say that I was asked to mention that the Mountain View HRC is going to have a community engagement on the 18th, Wednesday, and they asked us to promote that.

Chair Smith: It's on police reform, and IdaRose is an amazing Chair for that Commission.

Commissioner Regehr: Right, so she was asking to promote that. And also, I wanted to give a shout-out to Sunita, because in this she was mentioned. I just wanted to say thank you, because she was mentioned for giving out food, and it was just...It's not my report, but I'm just saying. And she had a great quote. She said, "It's not that I'm just delivering this food. There's an intimacy and social bond that's there," so I just wanted to say well done.

Vice Chair Stinger: Yay.

Chair Smith: Good job.

Commissioner de Turreil: I don't know what that thing is that you're showing, but –

Commissioner Regehr: It's called, *The Info Palo Alto. The Year That Changed Everything*, and it talks about people.

Chair Smith: Your good works leave a mark. Vice Chair Stinger, can you give a report on our activities for this month?

Vice Chair Stinger: Okay, I will do that and then I'll add some things to it. Chair and I are subcommittee working on the history and current manifestations of racism in Palo Alto, and we've collected a good amount of history. We've given some thought to some themes that fall out of that. We're going to prepare a video and a presentation, and we'll bring that draft to you in the December or January meeting. There is one element that I think we need to very clearly add to the work we've done, and that is that the lawn signs of Raven Malone, who ran in this election campaign, had been marked, seriously marked, and I think we need to say that that's just inappropriate, campaigning or community response.

Chair Smith: I'm actually going to write an op-ed probably next week about the dangers of white supremacy in Palo Alto, because starting this summer we saw several houses getting defaced, their Black Lives Matter sign. We saw several letters being left on properties. We saw art projects by the City were defaced. Then, we see the only black candidate have her sign put "white lives matter" all over it. I know Palo Alto often pushes that, and I've read some of the comments in the *Palo Alto Online*, and I know Palo Alto also often pushes back and says, "Oh, that's one or two people." Dylann Roof was one person that went into a church and shot it up because of racial violence, and we as a community need to address this and be very serious about this, because at this time it is not just an incident. It now is a pattern of behavior of our community. So, I think we have to be very specific. We have to be very clear, and we need to

write this down, because I was speaking with Minka earlier, and she said, “One of the things that was disappointing in the demographics was that the black community in Palo Alto is shrinking.” Why would I, as a black person, move to a community that has low grade racist behavior happening at a regular basis? I think this is something that is more than just one incident. This is now a pattern, and it’s a disturbing pattern for those of us that are black and brown skin in our community.

Commissioner Regehr: I think that it’s a disturbing one for all of us, because I think our past Commissioner talked about Asian. I think it’s a racial, and I think it is...I would hope, Kaloma, that we could all write it together, as a Human Relations Commission. Or maybe you just want to do it as...

Chair Smith: I was going to write it from the perspective of being a pastor of the University AME Zion Church, but I’m willing to make it an item for our next meeting, and we can write it together as a Commission.

Commissioner Regehr: Because it is a human relation...It is an issue for all of us.

Chair Smith; [crosstalk] to do that.

Vice Chair Stinger: Could you do both?

Chair Smith: I could do both, but I’m going to write it. Council Member Tanaka?

Council Member Tanaka: I think that’s really unfortunate, so we shouldn’t tolerate this kind of behavior, so I would love if HRC kind of dug into it and tries to get to the bottom of what’s going on. Yes, I guess, speaking as a candidate also, my campaign signs disappeared but maybe that was for a different reason, but yes, surprisingly bad behavior happens sometimes. That really shouldn’t happen.

Chair Smith: You told a story this summer, Council Member Tanaka, about somebody hurling anti-Asian slurs against you when you are coming up.

Council Member Tanaka: Yes. That was actually kind in the March timeframe, just as COVID started to hit. At that time, there was a lot of thoughts that it’s from China, and you know, you hear our current president talk about how he references the coronavirus. I came home from my office hours on Middlefield, stopped at East Meadow in Middlefield, minding my own business, waiting for the light to change, and then this white van pulls up next to me, this minivan, like five young white guys in there, and they started yelling at me. I grew up in kind of sketchy area when I was little, so I learned not to engage, especially when there’s five people and only one of me. I hadn’t felt that kind of racism in a long time, and I never felt that kind of stuff in Palo Alto before, either. I’m on the City Council, too. It’s kind of shows that racism is sort of blind to whoever you are. It doesn’t matter who you are or what position you hold, but it’s like wow. That’s not right. But I think much worse happens all the time, and we don’t want that. We want it to stop, so I think it would be great for HRC to dig in and figure out what’s going on and try to see if we can stem the tide here. I didn’t actually hear about Raven’s signs. I didn’t hear about

that. I did get reports about my signs being stolen, and like, how'd they get stolen? But, I think that could be a different issue.

Chair Smith: I'll send you an email of the picture. Commissioner Sunita?

Commissioner de Turreil: I was just wondering, if our very long list of emails that we got there were some pictures and a story about the church on Embarcadero. I can't remember the name of the church, but the big Black Lives Matter sign that was stolen. Prior to it being stolen, there were some images of some folks standing in front and had changed the B and the L and the M to different words. I guess my question is – well, a couple questions. What do we... These correspondences, they're for us to know and get a pulse of what's going on, but how does this...? Is this information collected anywhere? Do we have ways of tracking it? What do we... what's actionable?

Ms. van der Zwaag: Could I just interject? I think these are important discussions. I just want to be careful it doesn't go into an actual discussion on the matter when this is just announcement time. Because this topic wasn't –

Chair Smith: It wasn't agendized.

Ms. van der Zwaag: So, I concur with the importance, and I think in the guise of writing the letter next time, you can have a fuller discussion on this, but I just want to give that caution at this time.

Chair Smith: Thank you. Commissioner Sunita, if you reach out to me next week, early in the week, I can give you an overview of some of the tools that the HRC has at its disposal and how we track things and different approaches, to answer some of the more nuts and bolts questions on that.

Commissioner de Turreil: Thank you, Chair Smith.

Chair Smith: All right.

Vice Chair Stinger: Can I -?

Chair Smith: Yes. You were doing the staff, your [crosstalk]

Vice Chair Stinger: And update, yeah. But I do feel really strongly about that. I will hold my tongue, Minka, but I do feel strongly, and I'm glad we're going to agendize it. What I wanted to do was talk a little bit about a neighborhood meeting I went to for Safe Parking. First, I wanted to recognize Commissioner Regehr for all the attention you gave to the Safe Parking program during the shut-down, during the months that we weren't meeting. You had a wealth of information for me, and I really appreciated that. This was a meeting October 22nd. It was held by Zoom, moderated by Rob Schulze at Peninsula Bible Church. He's put in an application for four Safe Parking spaces. I think basically this was a community meeting with the surrounding neighbors. I thought he did a brilliant job. There were a lot of concerns going in the meeting, and I think he handled them all well. We saw the benefits to, obviously, the people living in

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vans, the neighbors and to the churches. Those benefits were clearly laid out. There is one issue, and that is that he has put his application in four weeks ago, and he hasn't heard from the City. I wonder if that's something that we can follow up on. The second item that I just wanted to bring to your attention was November 17th at 6:00 p.m., there is an Intentional Community: How coops, community land trusts and co-living could change our city. That's sponsored by the same group that did the renters program for us. I can forward that to you, Minka, just forward to the group. Then the last thing I wanted to say was that one of our grantees under HSRAP is Adolescent Counseling Services. Their director, Philippe Rey, received an Angel Award tonight from the Kiwanis Club. They do an annual award program. This was their ninth award, and he pointed out that, to the day, this is the 45th anniversary of ACS, so he thought that was very appropriate timing. They serve 7,000 youth a year. He said two things that I thought were sort of startling. Fifty percent of the adolescents they see under COVID are suffering from depression and anxiety, and one in four have thought of suicide. That's where my comments about socialization came from. That's my update.

Chair Smith: Thank you so much. Staff, before I forget, I think Planning, or somebody is working on an event in December around renting? I lost the details. Can you help me with that?

Ms. van der Zwaag: Right. I will send it out to the HRC in that they are working with Project Sentinel to do an event for renters in December and partnering with Human Services. I will get that out to you. That is kind of a companion piece to an item that will come up on the January agenda. Some of you may recall, a little over a month ago I sent you a notice for the Planning Commission meeting. They were giving a presentation about renter protections from a special Fellow that they have attached to Planning Department for a year from PolicyLink. I have asked that that fellow also to give the same presentation to the Human Relations Commission as you look at renter protections as well from the more human lens in the community. So, we can look to having that presentation in January, but as part of that, Planning Department is looking at ways in which to further engage the renter community, so they are going to be partnering with Project Sentinel for this workshop in the community. I will let you know when that will be, but you have that special presentation in January from the Planning Department.

Chair Smith: And just so everybody remembers, we had Anand Subramanian, who is one of the managing directors from PolicyLink actually speak with use around policing and policy this summer. They are probably one of the best policy shops in the Bay area by far, so I'm excited to even work with him again.

Ms. van der Zwaag: This is a special, I think...I don't think I'll get the wording exactly right, but it was a special Fellowship opportunity to get a Fellow that the City applied for and was granted one, so we are very lucky that we did. Lauren Bigelow, who is the Fellow, will be giving a presentation to the HRC. We also have luck in that she is local. She used to work for Alta Housing, which was Palo Alto Housing Corp., so she brings to her not just this PolicyLink experience, but experience in Palo Alto as well.

Chair Smith: Thank you. I think we've covered all our reports.

Commissioner Regehr: I forgot one. I'm sorry.

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Chair Smith: Go, Commissioner Regehr.

Commissioner Regehr: I just wanted to say thank you to the City, because Magical Bridge is opening up on the 17th, I think, and they're also asking for volunteers. There's a City person that's coordinating the volunteers to help staff it, so I just wanted to say thank you it's opening up. That's going to make a tremendous impact on all of us.

Chair Smith: Thank you. If somebody has a little one at home, I can't wait for it to open.

2. Council Liaison Report

Chair Smith: Council?

Council Member Tanaka: I just want to thank you guys for your work. I know you guys are down a few members. I definitely will try to advocate for more, but I know you guys are doing amazing work. It's really important, and just really value you guys' effort and all the time you guys spend on this, so thank you guys.

Staff Liaison Report

Chair Smith: Staff?

Ms. van der Zwaag: Chair, I just had a couple quick things. One, as it regards to HSRAP, I think I mentioned this at the last meeting, but the rigorous review we do of the grantees when they currently have the grant, Mary and I just completed doing virtual site visits of all 16 HSRAP grantees. That's an hour-long review of the grant with the grantees, so that was a really good experience and is part of their contractual obligations with the City. The other announcement that I had is the City has posters of the Black Lives Matter mural that was in front of City Hall, in front of King Plaza, because now that has been removed, and there will be more permanent art installed at that area, which the Public Art Commission is working on. I believe it will be on King Plaza, but I don't have the exact details on that. But, if you would like a copy of a poster that has the Black Lives mural on it, if you raise your hand, I will somehow find a way to get it. It sounds like all of you want a poster with the mural on it. They're available also at Bell's Books and the Art Center, so if there are members of the public that would like one, Bell's Books, which I believe is in Menlo Park, and the Art Center, and they are free of charge. Yes, Commissioner Regehr?

Commissioner Regehr: I was wondering, too. Are we giving them to the artists?

Ms. van der Zwaag: I would assume we already have, but I'm just conveying this message, but I'm sure the Public Art Commission has already worked with the artist on that. I can't imagine that they didn't. Thank you.

Chair Smith: Thank you.

VI. TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR NEXT REGULAR MEETING:

ADA. The City of Palo Alto does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities. To request accommodations, auxiliary aids or services to access City facilities, services or programs, to participate at public meetings, or to learn about the City's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, may contact 650-329-2550 (voice), or e-mail ada@cityofpaloalto.org. This agenda is posted in accordance with government code section 54954.2(a) or section 54956. Members of the public are welcome to attend this public meeting.

Chair Smith: We are at our last action for tonight. We have three items, because I don't want to make this an extensively long December meeting. The Vice Chair and I will bring forward a report that we want to present to the City, concerning black and brown history and current community in Palo Alto. A second item, a letter to Counselor and whoever else we need to send it to about the escalation of race-based attacks or provocations or incidents in our city, and the dangerousness of that pattern. The final item will be to discuss the timing and nature of the Human Relations Commission retreat in January. Generally, the process is we will vote for our new leadership in January, and we want to time the retreat after that, allowing the leadership to have the time to set the guide to goals moving forward. Is there anything that anybody feels I'm missing from that meeting?

Commissioner Savage: Are we talking about next month's meeting?

Chair Smith: Next month.

Commissioner Savage: Okay, I just want to let you know that December 10th is also, at sundown, the first night of Hannukah It's not the highest, holiest holiday of the year...

Chair Smith: No. If there's one person that understands about Holy Days, it's me.

Commissioner Savage: I did want to bring that up, if there's any chance for a date change.

Chair Smith: Can we do it the week before? Can we do it the Thursday before?

Ms. van der Zwaag: Why don't we send out a couple of dates. It's hard to put Commissioners and their schedules... We'll maybe look at the week before and just another night that week, but we will look at some other dates. If you already know some limitations that you have for that first or that second week of December, if you send it to Mary before she does any type of doodle poll for another meeting night. We don't have to worry about finding a space anymore. That was often a barrier, seeing if the room at City Hall was available, so we don't have to worry about that, but please send Mary your availability the first and the second week of December, please.

Commissioner Regehr: I have a question. When does the new City Council take...when do they...?

Chair Smith: In January.

Commissioner Regehr: In January, so can we, because I know it was very effective when the Parks and Rec Commission spoke and the Chair spoke about being... Could we write a letter about the need of how we would like them to rethink about putting us back to seven?

Ms. van der Zwaag: That would need to be an item that you agendize.

Commissioner Regehr: That's what I'm saying. Could that be on the agenda?

Vice Chair Stinger: Could I make a suggestion?

Chair Smith: Yes.

Vice Chair Stinger: That we do that in January, when we have our priorities for the coming year, as a result of the retreat?

Commissioner Regehr: Except that I don't want...If they are only saying five, it's going to change our workload.

Ms. van der Zwaag: But you have to be honest that, even if you sent it to the Council, by the time anything was agendized, you might be February, March, as far as being able to get on the agenda, if it is decided it's going to be agendized.

[crosstalk]

Commissioner Regehr: So, if it is January we're looking into May, and then I'm just saying I'd like to get a head start.

Ms. van der Zwaag: I hear you, but what I'm saying is I'm not sure if you can completely align, ensure, that one happens, or one discussion happens before the other, the retreat happens. I don't see any possibility that this would...If you're looking to having a retreat in January, I don't see that there would be any chance of Council having a discussion about that before January or February.

Commissioner Regehr: I totally understand that. I totally understand that, but what I'm saying is we wait until after the retreat, that's pushing it even further.

Chair Smith: This is what I will do. We will agendize the item for next week. Commissioner Regehr, if you can pull together the format of the letter, so it's more of a review of the language and not a writing of it at that time, I think that would be extremely helpful for the entire Commission.

Commissioner Regehr: I've spoken a lot. I would like it to hear it from other people besides me, because I've spoken at the City Council, so I know my viewpoint. So, I would rather have someone else draft something, because I feel like I'm...I mean, sure, I'll do it, but –

Chair Smith: What I believe is we will vote as a Commission on the letter. I just want somebody that is passionate about the topic, which I believe is a valid topic, to write it so that it expedites the process as a Commission. If you can bring the points forward so that we can just approve and all sign and move ahead and get it to the Council. We'll see how my schedule works. I will call in one Monday and make a point after we vote. As long as the Commission votes and we have a winning vote, I will go there, and I will speak for us. That's where I stand.

Commissioner Regehr: I wouldn't mind, but I feel uncomfortable writing a letter ahead of time. I'd rather have a discussion and then I write a letter and have it on the agenda. I just don't feel comfortable writing a letter without hearing from all of us, and we can't really discuss it, except at a meeting. Because if I'm off, then I don't want to be...you know what I'm saying?

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Chair Smith: No, I think what will happen is that you'll bring forward the pertinent points in the letter, and we'll be able to discuss. I think everybody has a general sense of it, but I think you have a more intricate sense of it, and we'll be able to approve or make slight modifications instead of discussing, writing, coming back and voting and trying to fast-track the process.

Commissioner Regehr: Okay, got it.

Chair Smith: Make sense?

Commissioner Regehr: Yes, so will it be an action item?

Chair Smith: Yes, it will.

Commissioner Regehr: Okay.

Chair Smith: We'll have a discussion and vote on it. Is there anything else from anybody else?

Commissioner Regehr: Thank you.

Chair Smith: You're welcome. Is there anything from anybody else? Well, I pray that all of you have a... Well, I can't say that. I hope all of you have a great Thanksgiving. Be safe. Stay in small groups. See those in your immediate family. Zoom with those in your extended family, and I will see you in December. Thank you, everybody.

[Unidentified Speaker]: Happy Thanksgiving.

Chair Smith: Happy Thanksgiving.

VII. ADJOURNMENT