



City of Palo Alto

City Council Staff Report

(ID # 13412)

Report Type: Consent Calendar

Meeting Date: 8/9/2021

Summary Title: Housing Element WG Alternate Replacement

Title: Approve the Housing Element Working Group Alternate Replacement and Modify Protocols for Participation for Alternates During Working Group Meetings

From: City Manager

Lead Department: Planning and Development Services

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the City Council:

1. Replace Housing Element Working Group alternate member Dina Bartello with Gregg Johnson; and
2. Revise Working Group protocol to allow alternates to participate during Working Group discussion.

Background:

On February 1, 2021, the City Council approved the formation of the Housing Element Working Group (Working Group) of 15 members with two alternates. The primary role of the Working Group is to identify potential housing sites and prepare initial housing policies and programs for the 2023-31 Housing Element update.¹ Members of the Working Group were appointed on April 5, 2021, with the City Council specifically appointing a representative of the unhoused community as an alternate member on the Working Group². At its May 10 meeting, the roles of the Working Group, including responsibilities of the alternate members, were presented to the Council.³

¹ Council Report, 01/19/2021: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/agendas-minutes-reports/reports/city-manager-reports-cmrs/2021/id-11871.pdf>

² Council Report, 04/05/2021: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/agendas-minutes-reports/reports/city-manager-reports-cmrs/2021/id-12030.pdf>

³ Council Report, 05/10/2021: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/agendas-minutes-reports/reports/city-manager-reports-cmrs/2021/id-12116.pdf>

For more information on the Housing Element update process, please review the Council report noted in Footnote 3 below.

Discussion:

During the deliberations on the formation of the Working Group, the City Council specifically sought to include a person representing the unhoused community. The Council selected Dina Bartello, who was with Project WeHope, as an alternate for the Working Group. Prior to the first Working Group meeting, Ms. Bartello was no longer reachable. Staff reached out to the individual and to the organization and discovered that she was no longer employed by Project WeHope. Efforts were made to contact Ms. Bartello via email, telephone and through her former employer to see if she was still interested in participating with the Working Group; but Ms. Bartello never responded. Staff sought input from the Housing Element Ad Hoc Committee on how to approach a replacement.

In addition, at the May 10 City Council meeting, staff proposed that alternates on the Working Group be able to speak during the public comment periods of the meetings but would not be allowed to participate in the Working Group discussions. However, if an alternate is only allowed to participate during public comment, and if the alternate is a representative of the unhoused community, it would limit the voice of that community. Therefore, staff suggests it would serve the Housing Element update process better to revise this protocol and allow alternates to participate during Working Group discussion. Please note that alternates would continue as non-voting members of the Working Group.

Housing Element Ad Hoc Committee Deliberations

At its June 17, 2021 Housing Element Ad Hoc Committee (Committee), staff requested input from the Committee about whether to replace Ms. Bartello with another person and if the Committee was also interested in revising the protocol of alternates. Staff provided redacted applications of three other Working Group applicants representing the unhoused community for consideration (Attachment A). Prior to the June 17 meeting, staff reached out to the three applicants to determine if they were still interested in serving on the Working Group; two replied in the affirmative.

The Committee deliberated extensively regarding the two interested applicants. One applicant serves on Downtown Streets Teams, while the other applicant had personally experienced homelessness. The discussion focused on whether a person with organizational/professional experience or a person with personal experience was better suited for the alternate role in the Working Group. The Committee unanimously chose the applicant, Mr. Gregg Johnson, who has lived experience.

After choosing to replace the alternate, the Committee also recommended changing the protocol to allow alternates to participate in Working Group discussions. This would provide

greater participation from the unhoused representative.

Summary of Key Issues:

The key issues staff is requesting feedback on are:

1. Should the vacant Housing Element Working Group alternate position be filled? And, if so:
 - a. Support the Ad Hoc recommendation for selecting Mr. Gregg Johnson, or
 - b. Consider other applicants?
2. Should alternates be allowed to participate in the Working Group meeting discussions?

Policy Implications:

The State mandates the public participation of all segments of the community as part of the Housing Element update. Not replacing the alternate would leave the Working Group without unhoused community representation, which could be perceived as not meeting the State requirements.

Timeline:

The Working Group has been meeting without a unhoused community representative. As the Working Group has started their meetings, it is essential to have the alternate selected as quickly as possible so that they may provide their input earlier in the update process.

Environmental Impacts:

This item is not considered a project.

Attachments:

Attachment A: Unhoused Advocates Applications (Redacted)

ATTACHMENT B

UNHOUSED COMMUNITY ADVOCATES
REDACTED APPLICATIONS

#22

COMPLETE

Collector: HEWorking Group (Web Link)
Started: Sunday, February 21, 2021 11:44:38 AM
Last Modified: Sunday, February 21, 2021 12:17:42 PM
Time Spent: 00:33:04
IP Address: 73.158.217.150

Page 1: Applications are due by 5 pm, March 5, 2021

Q1

Name

Chuck Jagoda

Q2

Mailing Address

Address

[REDACTED]

City

[REDACTED]

Q3

Phone Number

[REDACTED]

Q4

Email Address

[REDACTED]

Q5

No

Are you a Palo Alto Resident?

Q6

Rent

Do you rent or own your home?

Q7

Please state the name of your employer. If unemployed or retired, say "none"

none

Q8

What is the address of your company/business?

NA

Q9

70+

What is your age?

Q10

No

Are you or do you have any relatives or members of your household who are employed by the City of Palo Alto, serving on the City Council, or are Board Members or Commissioners?

Q11

If yes, which department or body?

NA

Q12

Yes

Are you generally available and committed to attend one monthly evening meeting, from 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm, between May 2021 to October 2022?

Q13

Please check all that apply to you or your organization?

- Service Provider,**
 - Stakeholder Group,**
 - Underrepresented Community (limited English proficiency, persons of color, youth, etc.)**
 - ,
 - Special needs community (persons with disabilities, single parent households)**
 - ,
 - Senior (62+),**
 - Neighborhood Organization/Association,**
 - Other (please specify):
teacher, writer, housing/homeless activist
-

Q14

Please state the specific groups or affiliations for the boxes you checked in Question 13.

Downtown Streets Team, Women's International League of Peace and Freedom, Alternative Housing Committee, Heart + Home, North County Year Round Shelter

Q15

Please briefly indicate any education or experience you have in the fields of housing and community development, housing finance or development, social services, urban planning and land use, or other relevant fields. (Please limit your response to a maximum of 250 words)

Community Development for Youth (youth worker), Parkside Studios (SVLE) organizer, Stop The Ban (Palo Alto, 2013). Student of Land Trusts, Alternative Housing (tipi, yurt, domes, etc.), community organizing, Strike Leader 1970 National Student Strike Over Cambodian Invasion. Teacher of various subjects (Latin, Sp Ed, Computer Literacy, Basic Literacy, Remedial Math, Adult Computer Literacy, etc.) In 2014 I wrote a 5000 word comment to a Mercury article on people who died of exposure in Palo Alto which helped start discussions leading to a replacement of the Armory Shelter in Sunnyvale. I am a free lance case worker of homeless people and organize fellow tenants at Parkside Studios. I believe strongly in Land Trusts and YIMBYism.

Q16

Please describe your involvement/experience in community activities, volunteer work, civic organizations, and how you have connected with others in the community. (Please limit your response to a maximum of 250 words)

Please see above. I encounter homeless people on the street and try to help them. I help people with housing, shelter, and accessing various services. I organize tenants in my assisted-housing apartment house. I was Director of Customer Services for a program to give smartphones to homeless folks. I was a youth worker who got some family therapy services and ran a coffee house program and other programs for youth. I've taught on all levels: K through grad school. I write letters to the editor.

Q17

Why are you interested in serving on the Housing Element Update Working Group? (Please limit your response to a maximum of 250 words)

I believe the views of homeless people are not heard, ignored, and refused at civic meetings. If Tim's kind invitation and my participation could change that overwhelming tradition and consequent forced ignorance--- I'd be most grateful.

Q18

How did you learn about the Working Group formation? (check all that apply)

Personal Contact,

Other (please specify):

It's been in the POST and spoken about at Saturday's WILPF meeting.

Q19

OPTIONAL: Please upload any documents if desired, such as resume, CV, or other information

Respondent skipped this question

#28

COMPLETE

Collector: HEWorking Group (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, February 24, 2021 12:12:44 PM
Last Modified: Wednesday, February 24, 2021 12:29:12 PM
Time Spent: 00:16:27
IP Address: 98.33.100.10

Page 1: Applications are due by 5 pm, March 5, 2021

Q1

Name

Gregg Johnson

Q2

Mailing Address

Address

██████████

City

██████████

Q3

Phone Number

██████████

Q4

Email Address

██████████████████

Q5

Yes

Are you a Palo Alto Resident?

Q6

Other (please specify):

Do you rent or own your home?

Shelter

Q7

Please state the name of your employer. If unemployed or retired, say "none"

None

Q8

What is the address of your company/business?

NA

Q9

56-70

What is your age?

Q10

No

Are you or do you have any relatives or members of your household who are employed by the City of Palo Alto, serving on the City Council, or are Board Members or Commissioners?

Q11

Respondent skipped this question

If yes, which department or body?

Q12

Yes

Are you generally available and committed to attend one monthly evening meeting, from 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm, between May 2021 to October 2022?

Q13

Senior (62+),

Please check all that apply to you or your organization?

Other (please specify):
unsheltered (underrepresented)

Q14

Please state the specific groups or affiliations for the boxes you checked in Question 13.

NA

Q15

Please briefly indicate any education or experience you have in the fields of housing and community development, housing finance or development, social services, urban planning and land use, or other relevant fields. (Please limit your response to a maximum of 250 words)

As a senior citizen who has worked full time and experienced homelessness, i have first hand knowledge of the difficulties experienced within low-income housing process

Q16

Please describe your involvement/experience in community activities, volunteer work, civic organizations, and how you have connected with others in the community. (Please limit your response to a maximum of 250 words)

Limited involvement , connected through security job and discussions with public while at work

Q17

Why are you interested in serving on the Housing Element Update Working Group? (Please limit your response to a maximum of 250 words)

to give back and share experiences in housing as well as help in creating solutions to housing crisis

Q18

How did you learn about the Working Group formation?
(check all that apply)

Personal Contact,

Other (please specify):
LifeMoves staff

Q19

OPTIONAL: Please upload any documents if desired, such as resume, CV, or other information

Respondent skipped this question

#42

COMPLETE

Collector: HEWorking Group (Web Link)
Started: Monday, March 01, 2021 12:53:52 PM
Last Modified: Monday, March 01, 2021 6:00:39 PM
Time Spent: 05:06:47
IP Address: 98.35.205.16

Page 1: Applications are due by 5 pm, March 5, 2021

Q1

Name

Alexis Crews-Holloway

Q2

Mailing Address

Address

[REDACTED]

City

[REDACTED]

Q3

Phone Number

[REDACTED]

Q4

Email Address

[REDACTED]

Q5

No

Are you a Palo Alto Resident?

Q6

Rent

Do you rent or own your home?

Q7

Please state the name of your employer. If unemployed or retired, say "none"

Downtown Streets Team - Palo Alto

Q8

What is the address of your company/business?

Headquarters: 1671 The Alameda, Suite 306, San Jose, CA 95126

Q9

18-25

What is your age?

Q10

No

Are you or do you have any relatives or members of your household who are employed by the City of Palo Alto, serving on the City Council, or are Board Members or Commissioners?

Q11

If yes, which department or body?

N/A

Q12

Yes

Are you generally available and committed to attend one monthly evening meeting, from 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm, between May 2021 to October 2022?

Q13

Please check all that apply to you or your organization?

Service Provider,
Underrepresented Community (limited English proficiency, persons of color, youth, etc.)
,
Special needs community (persons with disabilities, single parent households)
,
Senior (62+),
Environmental,
Other (please specify):
Homeless Services

Q14

Please state the specific groups or affiliations for the boxes you checked in Question 13.

Unhoused, at-risk, and vulnerable community members in the Palo Alto area. Many are seniors (55+) and/or disabled. Our Team Members provide valuable services to the City of Palo Alto by keeping the downtown streets clean and litter-free 7 days/week, and our Downtown Food Closet provides food security to those in need.

Q15

Please briefly indicate any education or experience you have in the fields of housing and community development, housing finance or development, social services, urban planning and land use, or other relevant fields. (Please limit your response to a maximum of 250 words)

I have a BA in Criminology & Justice Studies from Humboldt State University. I grew up in Palo Alto (attended Palo Alto High) and have worked as the Case Manager for Downtown Streets Team in Palo Alto since August of 2019. In my position as Case Manager, I have provided individualized case management and advocacy for 30+ unhoused and at-risk Team Members (clients). I have assisted my Team Members in obtaining shelter, public benefits, medical benefits, free transportation, vital documents, cell phones, glasses, bank accounts, and much more. I connect clients to community resources and identify housing solutions to meet the needs of my Team Members. Prior to COVID, I conducted weekly outreach to unhoused community members, including street outreach.

Q16

Please describe your involvement/experience in community activities, volunteer work, civic organizations, and how you have connected with others in the community. (Please limit your response to a maximum of 250 words)

In my position as Case Manager with Downtown Streets Team, I have learned first-hand how important building community networks, engaging in community activities and volunteer work, and creating partnerships are in working collaboratively towards social and economic justice. One of my favorite parts of my job has been to infiltrate the existing community networks and to cultivate my own partnerships with community members and local agencies to better serve my Team Members. I have joined service provider networking groups like Minka Van Der Zwaag's Palo Alto Homeless Services Committee (formerly Palo Alto Homeless Senior Committee) and North County Alternative Services (NCAS). I am also the Co-Chair of Service Provider Network (SPN) for Santa Clara County and the Vice President of the Board for Heart and Home Collaborative, seasonal women's shelter in Palo Alto. In addition, I join the regular City and County service provider calls (Minka's Non-profit Check-in Calls and County EOC Bi-weekly Homeless Services and housing phone call). Lastly, I am a Court Appointed Friend and Advocate (CAFA) Mentor for Fresh Lifelines for Youth (FLY) Program, and my mentee is a wonderful youth at Palo Alto High. I feel very well connected to the Palo Alto community and strive to provide the best representation and advocacy for all of our unhoused and at-risk community members.

Q17

Why are you interested in serving on the Housing Element Update Working Group? (Please limit your response to a maximum of 250 words)

I am well-versed in the shortcomings of affordable housing in the Palo Alto area both professionally and personally. Professionally, I struggle to find local appropriate housing solutions for very low-income and unhoused individuals - minimum income requirements are often too high for my Team Members to meet (ex: needing to make 2-2.5x rent/\$1,000+ per month to qualify for a unit that costs \$500 or less), which disqualifies them from "affordable" housing. Personally, I was pushed out of Palo Alto when my family could no longer afford to live in this city. As someone who advocates for our unhoused, vulnerable, and at-risk community members daily, I could bring a unique perspective to the Housing Element Update Working Group. While I am no longer a Palo Alto resident, I feel more connected to the Palo Alto community now than ever before. Including a local service provider like myself, with demonstrated experience in community networking, social services, and volunteer work, in this group would help to provide greater representation for our most vulnerable populations. I hope to have the opportunity to participate in this group. Please find my resume attached and feel free to connect with me on LinkedIn. Thank you for your consideration!

Q18

How did you learn about the Working Group formation?
(check all that apply)

Email from the City,

Personal Contact

Q19

OPTIONAL: Please upload any documents if desired, such as resume, CV, or other information

Alexis Resume updated 3.1.21.pdf (221KB)