



COUNCIL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES – February 1, 2021

CALL TO ORDER: The Regular meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE (September 2020-July 2021):

Committee Member	Present 2/1/2021	All Meetings Year to Date		Meetings Mandated By Resolution	
		Present	Absent	Present	Absent
Council Member Salinas	✓	3	0	3	0
Council Member Wahab	✓	1	0	1	0
Council Member Andrews	✓	1	0	1	0

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Kelly McAdoo, City Manager; Jennifer Ott, Deputy City Manager; Paul Nguyen, Economic Development Manager; Sara Buizer, Planning Manager; Catherine Ralston, Economic Development Specialist; Suzanne Philis, Senior Secretary

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING DECEMBER 7, 2020

A motion to approve minutes from the December 7, 2020 Regular Meeting was made by Council Member Salinas and seconded by Council Member Wahab. The motion was approved.

2. SELECTION OF COUNCIL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Economic Development Manager Nguyen introduced the item with an explanation of chairperson and vice chairperson duties.

Council Member Wahab nominated Council Member Salinas as Chair, Council Member Andrews seconded, and the motion was approved.

Council Member Wahab nominated Council Member Andrews as Vice Chair, Council Member Salinas seconded, and the motion was approved.

3. PROJECT CONCEPT REVIEW: COVENANT HOUSE CALIFORNIA PROPOSAL AT 27211 TYRRELL AVENUE

Planning Manager Sara Buizer introduced the item noting she had been working for years with faith-based organizations to find a location for transitional housing for young adults, 18-24 years old who were experiencing homelessness after aging out of foster care. The location on Tyrrell would be in partnership with Hayward Unified School District and would utilize available land behind Shepherd Elementary School. The lead agency, Covenant House California would use about an acre of land to set up nine prefabricated units that would house up to four youth at each. She noted the location would require a conditional use permit, which would normally take six months to process, but because the County of Alameda needed to allocate Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) funding by June 2021, city staff was trying to expedite approvals. Ideally, Covenant House would like the project up and running by July, she said. She noted the City would have to waive police powers so the strict zoning requirements and lengthy planning process could be streamlined.

Assistant City Manager Ott mentioned the City's Navigation Center used the same emergency funding source. She thanked Manager Buizer for her hard work.

Council Member Wahab confirmed the facility was aimed at the TAY population (transition-age youth). She asked if neighbors had been outreached with information about the proposal and asked what feedback was received.

Planning Manager Buizer said the usual half-mile radius was used for the proposal and noted Covenant House sent out flyers and information was provided to neighbors and interested parties through Eden Housing and faith-based groups near the site.

Covenant House California CEO Bill Bedrossian said the flyer for the townhall meeting was sent to 836 addresses. At the February 1, 2021 townhall meeting, he said between 17-20 people joined the call and most had frequently asked questions. Mr. Bedrossian acknowledged the assistance of community partners getting the project to this point. He added that although they haven't gone door to door to talk to neighbors, feedback received to date had been positive. He said folks were more supportive of helping homeless youth; noting it was less stigmatized than chronically homeless adults.

Council Member Wahab asked what metrics would be used to measure the success of the program. Mr. Bedrossian said they measured everything, but noted a favorite statistic was the staffing to youth ratio. He also mentioned that youth could stay in the program for up to two years and graduates had a 92% success rate of staying housed permanently. Mr. Bedrossian said youth can always come back for help after leaving, as Covenant House had deep alumni networks and designated staff that work with alumni.

Council Member Wahab asked staff to include this information in future reports. She also asked staff to pay special attention to women in the TAY population since it was more difficult for them when homeless. She mentioned that the Renaissance Scholars through California State University East Bay could provide assistance with college tuition.

Council Member Andrews disclosed that she had bumped into a Covenant House representative on B Street and he had told her about the program. She didn't know they had a proposal with the City when she spoke with him, she said.

Council Member Andrews asked for more information about security, both for Covenant House residents and the students at Shepherd Elementary.

Mr. Bedrossian said security was a big issue for them. He said there would be at least three staff members on site 24/7; extra fencing around the property with decorative hedges; and buzzers at doors and gates.

Council Member Andrews asked about visitors and if guests would be required to wear badges. Visitors were not allowed on site because each unit was "home" to multiple people, Mr. Bedrossian explained, the only exception being social workers and mental health case managers and they would be identified with guest pass stickers.

Council Member Andrews asked what would happen if one of the kids got into mischief. Mr. Bedrossian explained that they have a chain of command at site to address all issues. The process starts with Covenant House's Community Involvement Coordinator walking a two-block radius getting to know neighbors and giving them information about the House and contact numbers for staff. He also mentioned that each youth was responsible for maintaining a code of conduct within the radius. Covenant House would be immediately responsive to all complaints, he said, and would pay for any damages. The youth would have the consequence of performing community service, he said, and rarely, restriction from the program. Mr. Bedrossian said even in the City of Hollywood where they housed 100 youth, they rarely had anything happen in the community that would cause them to restrict a youth from the program.

Council Member Salinas said he hoped the kids weren't overly surveilled and confirmed the Covenant House followed restorative justice strategies. Mr. Bedrossian said yes, the kids received multiple chances and that the Covenant House would never give up on them. He explained that they wanted to change the narrative so the young people believed in something different and still had hopes and dreams to guide them forward. He said Covenant House had a partnership with Bay Area Legal Aid to assist the youth with expunging their records for charges related to homelessness and with immigration issues. Finally, Mr. Bedrossian noted there would be security cameras around the site.

Council Member Salinas mentioned the preschool and SIAC (Student Information & Assessment Center) at Shepherd Elementary and asked if any of the residents at Covenant House would be restricted from being near children. Mr. Bedrossian acknowledged that they do not conduct background checks on residents so this was one of the things being discussed with HUSD as they determined the terms of the lease. He said the gates and cameras were added for additional security and site planners were trying to design two driveways to keep both uses separate.

Planning Manager Buizer confirmed for Council Member Salinas that the site would have nine buildings, eight of which could house up to four residents each, but the maximum occupancy was 30. Staff would utilize the ninth building. Manager Buizer mentioned that each unit would be self-sustaining with three bedrooms, two bathrooms, living space and a kitchen so residents could practice cooking. She said Covenant House was having great success with these units at their other

locations. The units were prefabricated and approved by the state, she said.

Council Member Salinas confirmed units would be one-story and asked why not two-story. Manager Buizer said there were no city land use regulations that prohibited units from being two-story so it was probably related to cost.

Mr. Bedrossian confirmed it was a cost issue and noted County funding had to be matched. He explained that 30 residents was the “sweet spot” and any more residents would require Covenant House to double the number of staff. If they were to do that, occupancy would need to increase to 60 or 90 residents, he said.

Council Member Salinas confirmed the site layout and commented that he wanted it to look like a school or service center. Mr. Bedrossian explained that of the nine acres, seven would be grass and fields and the hedge in front of the fencing around the Covenant campus was to make the area more dignified for the residents and aesthetically pleasing to fit in with the surrounding community.

Council Member Salinas said he wanted Covenant House to give a presentation to the Hayward Promise Neighborhood (HPN) at CSU East Bay. He noted the HPN was in the last years of a Department of Education \$50 million, five-year grant for which they would be reapplying. He said it was possible the Covenant House program could fit into their scope of work.

Council Member Wahab asked for future informational items to be listed separately from action items and for photos of this project and other Covenant House locations to be included in the report to Council. Mr. Bedrossian said the architects were working on more detailed plans that would be included.

Planning Manager Buizer explained that the report to Council would include a resolution waiving police powers. Since this was an unusual request, she said, she wanted feedback from Committee members.

Council Member Andrews asked about procedures if one of the residents tested positive for COVID. Mr. Bedrossian said the configuration of the site was changed to accommodate that question and certain rooms and areas would be designated as quarantine areas. He noted that less than 2% of staff and youth at all locations had tested positive for COVID over the last 10 months. He also noted Covenant House had partnerships with east bay medical clinics for testing and access to project Room Key through the County, if needed.

Council Member Salinas opened the floor for Public Comments.

Dr. Arlene Nehring thanked the Mayor, City Manager McAdoo and staff for their assistance with the project. She noted the population of homeless youth was doubling every year in large part due to the lack of affordable housing. She noted this site was identified for its location to education institutions, social and health services, and public transportation. She said that she personally drove around to 30 different sites but found religious parcels were zoned single-family housing only. Dr. Nehring thanked staff at HUSD and member of the Interfaith Council and spoke passionately about the project and everyone involved.

Council Member Salinas asked about next steps and Assistant City Manager Ott said because Members were supportive of the project, the item would move forward to Council. She noted that once the project was approved for HEAP funding, the main problem would be getting the utilities hooked up in a timely manner.

Council Member Salinas said Council Member Wahab's comments were good and the faster the project happened, the better.

Council Member Wahab asked how the project would be funded moving forward. Mr. Bedrossian explained that the County had committed to on-going funding as had the State. He said there were no expectations of funding from the City of Hayward. He said Covenant House at Hayward was positioned to be better funded than other houses with 49% of funding coming from government and 51% from corporate and private donors. He said, in total, they received about \$22 million in funding.

Council Member Salinas encouraged Mr. Bedrossian to reach out to CSU East Bay saying he saw a lot of potential in the partnership.

4. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF FUTURE MEETING TOPICS

Assistant City Manager Ott introduced the item noting with two new Council Members on the Committee, staff wanted to hear from them which topics should be prioritized. She also mentioned that there was an upcoming Council retreat to discuss the City's Strategic Roadmap and based on the feedback from Members tonight and due to the Economic Development Division being down one Specialist, some priorities may need to be taken up at the retreat.

Economic Development Manager Nguyen mentioned that Future Meeting Topics was discussed at every CEDC meeting and new items and priorities could come up or be added at any time with the caveat that Council Members recognize existing staff resources.

Council Member Wahab said an assessment of the Economic Development team should happen including what staff would like to see in what industries and/or areas of focus. She said she understood the Council priority-setting retreat was coming up but suggested something offline that could focus on economic development specifically.

Going down the list included in the meeting packet, Council Member Wahab said the Bay Area 2050 update should be informational unless there were certain points staff wanted to highlight; that she'd already shared her feelings about shared workspaces and incubators and their priority for the City right now; that the College Town/workforce development update shouldn't be a priority right now; and that the economic impacts of COVID-19 should be a top priority.

Council Member Wahab cited as her priorities: creating and upscaling economic development programs by partnering with other agencies and groups; bringing healthy foods to Hayward including recruiting a union-backed grocery store; improving fiber optic networks and availability; and conduct a review of policies impacting economic development and clean up any outdated policies or barriers to incoming business. She noted that entrepreneurialism was high after the last pandemic and many of her friends were looking to start their own businesses.

Council Member Andrews also expressed support for a grocery store as well as healthier, fresh restaurant options noting some improvement had occurred on Hesperian. She also wanted to provide support to local businesses during COVID and to start the process of reimagining B Street and other shopping areas after COVID.

Council Member Salinas said staff waited for new members before putting the list of Future Meeting Topics in order by priority. He said his number one priority was COVID recovery whether that happened this year or next. As soon as the state gives Alameda County the yellow light, he said, he wanted local, neighborhood merchants ready to open. He commented that financial relief would be only part of the recovery, he'd heard from constituents that what they need was jobs.

Council Member Salinas pointed out the marketplace was changing and even he was using Amazon. He said the City needed a strong fiber network. He noted he'd requested a status update from the City's Council Infrastructure Committee.

Council Member Salinas mentioned that since 2018, he'd used the phrase "Slow the role," meaning the City Council and staff should stay strategically focused on what needed to be done. Regarding grocery stores and healthy restaurants, he said yes, the entire City was a food desert and that it was easier to get a 40-ounce beer and a pack of cigarettes than it was an apple.

Council Member Wahab mentioned that in December and January she was working to expand Hayward's reach and attract businesses from across the bridge. She reached out to Google but they weren't interested, but she noted there were other potential partnerships with similar companies. Council Member Wahab said there were resources for small businesses to move online noting that brick and mortar businesses were dying. She also noted that these companies had translation services for some business owners where language barriers also existed. She acknowledged that some businesses would leave and never come back. While working on the recovery, staff needed to simultaneously make it easier for businesses to come to Hayward by reviewing zoning codes and ordinances. She also suggested staff create an inventory of building vacancies in preparation.

Council Member Andrews mentioned she was outreached about a small business initiative started by the Warriors basketball team and said they were looking to reach out to fans in others cities. She said she would pass the information to Economic Development Manager Nguyen.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REFERRALS

Council Member Wahab said she would like a monthly check in from the Hayward Chamber of Commerce and local businesses including those in South Hayward and the industrial corridor.

Assistant City Manager Ott mentioned that Planning Manager Buizer and Economic Development Specialist Ralston sat on the Board of the Downtown Hayward Improvement District.

Hayward Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Kim Huggett said the Chamber had an extraordinary reach noting 45 businesses had made comments at a recent meeting to discuss the widening of Whipple Road.

Mr. Huggett announced that Council Member Andrews was leading a Black Business Roundtable happening on Feb. 12th at noon. He noted Margaret Jackson of the Alameda County Small Business Development Center would give a presentation. This was just one of nine Chamber events happening this month, he said.

Council Member Salinas questioned the late start time for the CEDC meeting and asked why. City Manager McAdoo explained that Council Member Wahab had a conflict at 4pm and noted he had agreed to a later start time when she'd asked him earlier. She said it was up to Committee members to determine what worked.

Council Member Wahab said 4pm worked for her but noted Council Member Andrews had a work conflict and a later start time would be better for members of the public who might want to participate.

Council Member Andrews said she worked 7:30am-4:30pm every day. She noted the 4pm start time had always been difficult for her even when she was a member of the public just wanting to listen in.

Members discussed the various pros and cons of different start times. City Manager McAdoo directed staff to poll members and try to find a time that worked for everyone. In the meantime, she said she would check the municipal code to see if there was any language regarding changing the day or start time of a standing committee meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.