

MINUTES - REGULAR MEETING

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT AND CONSERVATION COMMISSION (NICC)

Community Meeting Center, Council Chamber
11300 Stanford Avenue

Monday, December 3, 2018

CALL TO ORDER: 6:30 P.M.

ROLL CALL:

CHAIR RAMIREZ
VICE CHAIR MCINTOSH
COMMISSIONER BLACKMUN
COMMISSIONER BRIETIGAM
COMMISSIONER CRAWFORD
COMMISSIONER PHAM
COMMISSIONER SERRANO

Absent: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Allison Wilson, Neighborhood Improvement Manager; Nate Robbins, Senior Program Specialist; Timothy Throne, Program Specialist; David Dent, Building Official; Officer Brian Hatfield, Police Department; Judy Moore, Recording Secretary.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Chair Ramirez.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – PUBLIC: None.

MINUTES: It was moved by Commissioner Pham and seconded by Commissioner Blackmun, to receive and file the Minutes from the September 10, 2018 Meeting. The motion carried by a 5-0-2 vote as follows:

Ayes: (5) Blackmun, Crawford, Pham, Ramirez, Serrano
Noes: (0) None
Abstain: (2) Brietigam, McIntosh

MATTERS FROM STAFF:

STREET OUTREACH PROGRESS REPORT, SPECIAL RESOURCE TEAM (SRT) UPDATE:
In regard to homelessness, Officer Brian Hatfield, of the Garden Grove Police Department, stated that his Special Resource Team (SRT) works with many organizations that provide outreach to the homeless, one of which was City Net, with whom his team was in daily contact to provide weekly collaborations, timely responses to requests, team coordination, and street outreach for location and field response. He noted that shelters quite often did not have enough beds for the referred homeless; that Illumination Foundation focused on sheltering families with

children; that shelters should have 40 or less beds to avoid chaotic situations; that the City of Anaheim had a crisis stabilization facility for mental health with recipients staying 7-10 days; that in lieu of a shelter mandate, each city in the County was required to account for a certain number of beds; that the County had approximately 2,500 homeless with Garden Grove at approximately 150; that approximately 8 out of 10 calls resulted in a bed; that business owners providing food did not help the homeless issue; and, that trash left by the homeless attracted truck drivers, who deposited trash in the same areas instead of going to the dump.

He further explained that environmental design should be considered, with one example being the slanted concrete areas under bridges used for homeless living space. Typically, individuals were told to move on due to trespassing, however, if arrested, no cases were prosecuted. In Huntington Beach, these areas receive chain-link fencing to create a barrier, as approved by CalTrans.

Officer Hatfield then read a letter he wrote describing the difficulties families face with a member who has mental health issues and often becomes homeless, and indicated that many families would have used resources if available. He added that large shelter facilities become overwhelming for both homeless and monitoring staff by creating bad situations for families and unsafe conditions. He recommended that stabilization facilities be created for individuals, and that smaller shelters would be more manageable. Though other cities did not want the migrating homeless, the bottom line was that the homeless search for a place to belong.

Staff then provided statistics for City Net's first quarter:

- 23 of 27 case-managed homeless exited the streets (21 in emergency shelters with hotel/motel vouchers and 2 in permanent housing)
- 81 of 100 homeless were served with resources
- 23% of the annual budget was expended (\$5,815 of \$25,000)

Staff further added that City Net's outreach services included Action Plans tailored to individuals with goals, sheltering, counseling, child supervision, medical services, public and private resources, and permanent housing. Case management successes depended on willingness, though some who received the services did not get permanent housing, such as those who did not seek shelter, but needed assistance with identification cards. Families needed permanent supportive housing (PSH) in lieu of transitional housing, as children needed to develop in a safe atmosphere. Examples of PSH included the Orchard in Santa Ana, Thomas House in Buena Clinton, and Potters Lane in Midway City. Also, the permit process for people living in recreational vehicles (RV's) greatly reduced the number of homeless occupied RV's, and that any trespassing issue related to CalTrans or Union Pacific would take a long time to resolve.

Officer Hatfield then noted that Commissioner Brietigam's suggestion to give the City Attorney more power to deal with prosecution efforts was in the works and that in parks, individuals could be arrested for curfew violations, but not for camping, and that officers could perform citizen's arrests after closing hours on behalf of property owners who provided trespassing letters. He added that Crisis Stabilization

Units (CSU's) were effective, though would need to service the County and not Garden Grove specifically. Such units could be modules on hospital property or stand-alone buildings for 15-30 people. Chair Ramirez suggested mobile CSU's, like Red Cross, as a possible solution to be more effective and reduce the number of people involved.

Officer Hatfield then remarked that cultural aspects of Vietnamese and Korean homelessness were issues such as incompatible shelter food and language barriers, and suggested a small-scale joint shelter between Garden Grove and Westminster. He added that two more officers were needed to handle regular law violators; that the homeless know the officer's schedules; and to help lower the crime rate, officers would need to spread out to enforce law violations only as they could not tell people where to go. In Garden Grove, homeless hot spots included Newhope Street/Westminster Avenue corner, Knott Street and Garden Grove Boulevard, the flood control channel, pan-handlers on medians, and Hoover Street and Garden Grove Boulevard on the Union Pacific railroad right-of-way.

Commissioner Pham suggested to make residents safer through mental health first aid training to reduce the homeless stigma.

Lastly, staff stated that the City was moving toward Code Enforcement being the first point of contact for homeless complaints on private property.

CODE ENFORCEMENT PRESENTATION AND GRAFFITI ABATEMENT OVERVIEW:

Building Official David Dent gave a presentation on Code Enforcement and graffiti abatement commenting that the directive was to provide education and outreach to the community. He noted that outside property maintenance fell under Code Enforcement and substandard non-permitted construction fell under Building Abatement, with both inspection types beginning with calls of complaints. He stated that the two divisions under Building and Safety merged over the past year to form an organized approach to enforcement of issues such as for dispensaries, short-term rentals, dead or overgrown lawns, hotel/motel issues for public safety, abatement, receivership, citations, and the homeless.

With only 3 code officers and 2 abatement officers, staff's hope was to expand enforcement services via volunteers on weekends and a part-time staff member in the office during the week. Any funding would be obtained by grants, such as the Tobacco Grant, for officers to address weekend garage sales and street vendors, whose operators were aware of Code Enforcement's schedules. For any language barriers, City Hall staff were often used to assist. Code Enforcement's goals are to be 'proactive' instead of 'reactive', and to eventually be the main hub for complaint calls, with the Police Department handling parking enforcement. Part of the outreach would include various 'door hangers' for bulky item pick-up and other issues.

In regard to graffiti, the merged divisions would proactively work with police to make the private owners more responsible for their property, such as installing lighting in dark areas. For shopping carts, stores would be made responsible by receiving warnings or getting cited for wayward carts. Code Enforcement would also

be the point of contact for certain types of pest infestations such as rats, rodents and bed bugs, and for green pools, animal nuisances working in conjunction with Public Works, and air quality nuisances.

Staff then highlighted Building and Safety's new mapping tool on the City's website, which would allow the public to view areas of violations and to make reports of violations.

Commissioner Brietigam then mentioned a recent influx of calls from neighbors in regard to non-serious code enforcement issues for which they received warning letters and suggested code officers use more discretion in order to best use City resources. Staff replied that the violation letters were standard for everyone and that all calls for complaints were addressed in person. Pro-actively, once an issue was addressed, further complaint calls on the same issue would not be taken.

Chair Ramirez suggested that the City Attorney review the City's current perspective in regard to the seriousness of violations.

Staff then announced a Special NICC Meeting would be held Monday, February 4th for the Annual Housing Element Progress Report.

MATTERS FROM COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioners thanked staff and wished all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Commissioner Brietigam thanked staff as this may be his last meeting as he would not seek further seats on Commissions. Staff commented that Commissioners were to remain seated until further notice.

Commissioner Pham asked for a moment of silence at 9:06 p.m. for World Aids Day, which was December 1st.

Commissioner Serrano recommended a joint agreement with Westminster, Stanton or Cypress, possibly with the Sheriff's Department to create a four-man team to address homelessness in the area.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

The next meeting of the Neighborhood Improvement and Conservation Commission will be a Special Meeting held Monday, February 4, 2019, at 6:30 p.m., at the Community Meeting Center, Council Chamber, 11300 Stanford Avenue.

JUDITH MOORE
RECORDING SECRETARY