

HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD
CITY OF MESA
MESA CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
57 EAST 1ST STREET, LOWER LEVEL
May 27, 2004
REVISED
-MINUTES-

MEMBERS

Ms. Susan Klecka, Chair
Dr. Carlos Vallejo, Vice Chair (Excused)
Ms. Mary Bolig (Excused)
Ms. Teresa Cotton (Unexcused)
Mr. Raymond Jones
Ms. Judy Kent
Ms. Kim Reynolds
Mr. Ken Salas (Excused)

Ms. Linda Starr (Excused)

STAFF

Ms. Nichole Ayoola
Ms. Ruth Anne Norris

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Susan Klecka welcomed those in attendance and Board members and staff was introduced.

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

No citizen's comments.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MARCH 25, 2004 MEETING

There was no quorum to approve the minutes of the April 22, 2004 meeting. Minutes will be approved at the August 26, 2004 meeting.

MONTHLY HOUSING REPORT

Ruth Anne Norris provided the Housing Report. Last month Raymond Jones asked about the delinquency rate at Escobedo. This month there was an additional amount of \$597 year-to-date is \$4,612 and for March there was another \$2,802 that was delinquent. When checks are bounced it takes a long time for Mesa Housing to find out that there are insufficient funds in the account. The funds are deposited into the City of Mesa account and can run through three times before Housing is notified. Portions of the balance are late fees, insufficient fund charges, eviction costs and non-payment of rent. Another delinquency occurred when a tenant moved out without notifying Housing Services.

There were approximately 1200 applications taken for the Section 8 Program. The waiting list is now closed.

The Stardust Foundation has agreed to fund the feasibility study for Escobedo Apartments. The preliminary data would be presented to City Council for direction.

HUD has sent information on the 2004 budget. The federal fiscal year started last October. The budget has been approved but Congress has yet to approve the appropriation bill. On April 22, 2004 HUD released an outline on how the program would be administered. It would result in cuts to Mesa Housing Services. HUD has created a cap on the average per unit cost per month

that was reported to them in August of 2003, which means that they would not be paying for any increases in rents. Ms. Norris stated that the most significant effect would be on the administration fees, which is how part of the Housing Director's salary and all of the staff that work full time in the Section 8 Program. These fees would be reduced by an average of \$6.50 per unit leased. Currently Mesa Housing Services receives \$50.00 for every unit leased but that would be cut to \$41.00. This creates difficulty because the fiscal year has already started and Housing Services is operating under the assumption that a certain amount of funding would be received but that is not the case. There really would not be a way to tell what the real effects would be until June 30, 2004. Hopefully funds would not be removed but it could happen. This affects efforts to fill the vacant position. Plans to fill the position are now put on hold. HUD is changing how they fund programs in response to the federal deficit. There is less money available and all agencies funded would be affected. Mesa Housing Services has already started using its reserve funds and there are no plans to restore those reserves.

Ms. Norris then answered several questions regarding the situation with HUD that was asked by the Board. Mesa Housing Services will be looking at every rental contract to review whether families are over housed and the rent still reasonable. The 10% rental increase was approved by City Council as part of the budget package and would go into effect August 1, 2004. Tenants were informed during a tenant meeting.

2003-2004 GAPS ANALYSIS DATA

Nichole Ayoola explained and discussed the Maricopa County Homeless Indicators with the Board. The City of Mesa belongs to the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) Continuum of Care Committee on Homeless. The committee looks at homelessness from a regional perspective. Each year HUD puts out a program called a SuperNOFA (Notice of Funding Availability). It's a comprehensive Request For Proposal that is applied for by local municipalities within Maricopa County. The funding is used to address issues pertaining to homelessness. MAG completes the process but part of the requirements is that needs are reviewed within Maricopa County, which is included in the handout on the Gaps Analysis. This is the reason for the homeless count that is done every year. It shows the gaps in the services, which is included in the SuperNOFA. Each year HUD has different priorities for funding. The committee solves the issue of how the data best fits into what HUD requires so that the maximum amount of funds can be obtained. There will be further discussion on the subject at a later date. Councilmember Whalen sits on the committee and Ms. Ayoola is the proxy. There will be more information in the near future. Next year's agenda would include discussion on a citywide plan to end homelessness and looking at affordable housing.

Judy Kent asked how the count was conducted. Most cities used outreach teams but the City of Mesa utilized its police department. This is Mesa's third year conducting the count and hopes to enhance the count next year.

EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT UPDATE

Ms. Ayoola presented a handout with the results of the Tax Credit Initiative. The tax-filing season has been completed and so has the Tax Credit Initiative on the state and local level. Publicity from the statewide level assisted us in getting the word out. There were 300 returns completed through the seven sites with a total of \$527,000 in Earned Income Tax Credit returned to the Mesa community. The total amount of federal returns and families that were assisted doubled. A celebration banquet was held to recognize the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance volunteers, which put in over 3,000 hours at the sites. Also recognized were Mesa Community College and Mesa CAN, which hosted sites and other agencies that aided in promoting the program. Councilmember Kyle Jones served as Master of Ceremony and awarded certificates.

FAMILY SELF SUFFICIENCY PRESENTATION

Donna Hunter of the Mesa Housing Services Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) Program gave a brief presentation to the Board about the program. It is a Section 8 Program that consists of 92 families, which could grow to 94. The goal of the FSS Program is to work with the families to increase their earned income so they no longer need assistance. The families may not be working, could be a single mom who has never worked and needs a GED, college students working on a degree or married couples who have lost jobs. Families come into the program for various reasons. We find supportive services to meet their needs. One of the graduates of the program, Monica Simms met with President Bush while he was Phoenix in March. Ms. Simms bought a home when she graduated. Homeownership is a focus of the program and families work on homeownership goals, which includes financial management. Resources are shared with other cities in the East Valley to get more agencies to provide services to the clients. There is a joint graduation ceremony that is put on for the families and they are able to tell their stories. The financial incentive that HUD has provided is that when the families rent increases because of their income increasing, the difference is tracked in an FSS escrow account. The families that graduate and complete the program get the lump sum of money at the end to use as a down payment on a home, student loans or what ever they'd like but they are encouraged to buy a home.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT REPORT

Ms. Ayoola presented the Community Investment Report to the Board. The report list all of the agencies funded along with the description of the agency and its programs. This report would be given quarterly to the H&HSAB. Board members would be able to track an agencies performance, activities of the agency and where the money is spent. This would tie into the strategic planning for the Office of Human Services.

This information was included in the City Council's packet so that they had an opportunity to see what programs they were funding.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Service awards were given to Teresa Cotton and Dr. Carlos Vallejo for serving as H&HASB members from the Mayor. A presentation ceremony was held May 24, 2004 but neither was able to attend. The awards would be mailed out to them.

Ms. Ayoola explained to the Board that there would be three vacancies to fill. Susan Klecka, Chair has given the full six-year term allowed. Dr. Vallejo would also be vacating his seat as Vice Chair. Ms. Cotton will be moving away from Mesa and no longer would be able to serve. Eric Norenberg will work on getting the positions filled.

STAFF REPORT

Ms. Ayoola gave a staff report. Arizona Community Action Agency state conference was held on May 13, 14 and 15. Kathleen Kelly, director of the City of Mesa's Community Revitalization attended the conference, which was very successful.

The ABC brochure is now completed and will be printed soon. The brochure explains how to contribute to the ABC Program through your monthly utility bill. A meeting was scheduled with Cooley Charities to help market the program on a regional level. The meeting was cancelled but would be rescheduled.

Ms. Ayoola would be attending a conference in Boston that provides workshops and information about Community Action Program laws.

Election of the new Board members would be held in August or September. There would be no meeting in July.

Interviews would be held next Friday for the Human Services Specialist position. There are eight people scheduled to interview. There were 173 applicants. Ms. Ayoola reviewed eighty-three.

ADJOURN

Ms. Klecka asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Jones made the motion to adjourn and Ms. Kent seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:45 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nichole V. Ayoola, Human Services Coordinator

lw/NA