



City of Mountain View

Minutes

Council Neighborhoods Committee

Wednesday, April 17, 2024

6:30 PM

Mountain View Senior Center
Multipurpose Room A

1. CALL TO ORDER

At 6:37 p.m. on Wednesday, April 17, 2024, Mayor Showalter called the meeting to order.

2. ROLL CALL

Present- Mayor Showalter, Councilmember Ramirez, and Councilmember Ramos.

3. MINUTES APPROVAL

Motion to approve meeting minutes of February 22, 2024.

Motion- M/S Ramos/Ramirez – Carried 3-0 – To approve the Council Neighborhood Committee Meeting Minutes of the February 22, 2024 meeting as submitted.

4. ORAL COMMUNICATION FROM THE PUBLIC

Melanie from Mountain View Spoke, requesting a permanent small concrete plaque in the 1920s writing, marking 100 years old at the Calderon Street entrance to the park.

Mayor Showalter recommended that Melanie should send an email to the City so that it can be forwarded to the correct staff.

5. **NEW BUSINESS Fiscal Year 2024-25 Neighborhood Grant Program Funding Recommendations**

Housing Specialist Reynoso presented a grant program overview with a summary of activities for which the 29 grant applicants requested funding. Staff recommended funding 28 grant applicants at a prorated amount due to the number of applications exceeding the total grant budget amount of \$40,000. Prorating the amount allows all applicants to receive some funding.

Councilmember Ramirez asked if staff had an opportunity to debrief with applicants after the new fund amounts were allocated and when the applicants were alerted about the changes.

Affordable Housing Manager Barnard responded that it was announced through the Agenda.

Councilmember Ramirez also asked if modifications or adjustments to the funding table could be made in real time.

Affordable Housing Manager Barnard responded that edits could be made in real-time.

Anonymous mentioned that the recommended amounts are less than the requested amounts, and it is frustrating to see this.

Housing Specialist Reynoso responded that there were 20 applicants last year and 29 applicants this year, and out of those, 28 qualified. The amounts were prorated to ensure applicants received some level of funding.

Joanne from Rex Manor Association mentioned that the prorated amounts are shocking, and she now has to think of ways to fundraise. Her neighborhood association relies on the funding from this grant to have its community event. She asked if the Frisbee group is a neighborhood group. She is disappointed and would like to see an increase in the budget since the cost of goods and living has increased.

Affordable Housing Manager Barnard responded that there is room for improvement. There is currently no formal process for groups to register as formal neighborhood groups or associations; however, staff can look into that, and updates to the program can be made in the future.

Anonymous mentioned it would be hard actually to hold or have events with the prorated amounts.

Anonymous stated that the guidelines need adjusting and the distribution of funds should be even among all the groups.

Affordable Housing Manager Barnard mentioned that all the grant applications submitted this year raise the issue of what is considered a community versus what is considered a neighborhood. While the current grant guidelines do not provide these definitions, staff can present and recommend revisions to the program in the November meeting.

Olga Melo from Community Action Team spoke on how it would be hard to have their annual event on the prorated amount as the cost of renting City facilities accounts for a large portion of their grant funding. She would also like staff to look at what can be done to increase the time a group can receive reimbursement. It is hard for individual community members when receiving funds takes a long time.

Melanie from Loreto Street asked about the funding criteria.

Affordable Housing Manager Barnard responded that eligibility details are in the grant guidelines, which were reviewed during the presentation. The guidelines are also posted online and reviewed during the grant preparation calls hosted by the City for all applicants to attend.

Melanie from Loreto Street also asked why there was no group debriefing session.

Affordable Housing Manager Barnard responded that debriefs had not been needed in the past as staff reviewed the applications and ensured the applicants met the eligibility criteria outlined in the guidelines before recommending funding.

Andre Valente from the Monta Loma neighborhood spoke about the overlap between the new and existing groups, making things difficult in a scenario like this, where everyone requests grants.

Anonymous mentioned that groups cannot register as formal groups or neighborhood associations, and it would be great if there were a way to track who is formal and informal. In addition, there is currently an overlap in the neighborhood groups. Also, the guidelines are the way they are currently, and there is room to improve them in the future.

Anonymous spoke on how she can see how large and small groups may be able to overlap and suggested that staff look to add tiers for some of the smaller groups.

Affordable Housing Manager Barnard responded that staff will look into this and bring it back to the committee at the end of the year. She also encouraged all the groups to submit their feedback to City staff throughout the year and encouraged groups to attend the meeting scheduled for November to provide additional feedback.

Greg Coladonato from Slater Neighborhood spoke about this being a unique program that is not offered everywhere. He understands these funds are at the discretion of the City. He and his association are grateful for whatever amount the City will approve and provide them with and will put the funds awarded to best use. He mentioned the City is not obligated to give money to each group, and he and his team are grateful for whatever amount they are awarded.

Eugene from the "Downtown Committee" suggests raising the budget so everyone can receive the funds requested. The country is divided, and these funds create events that help unite the community.

Ava from Varsity Park spoke about being grateful for everything the City awards her and her group. She asked if the City could speak with vendors for subsidies since many neighborhoods use the same vendors. She thinks there are other innovative ways to help all the groups besides funding.

Affordable Housing Manager Barnard mentioned that this is why there is a networking reception that allows the groups to connect and coordinate innovative ways to collaborate on activities such as using vendors. Groups can speak to all the applicants tonight to share ideas, and all the groups should take advantage of the time to network.

Bee Hansen from Santiago Villa Mobile Home Parks spoke and mentioned that their group now has 501c3 status. Her group has been successful in assisting other mobile home parks in becoming neighborhood associations. She is thinking maybe all the mobile home parks can be combined into one larger neighborhood association. She also shared how her group will ask for donations at all its events, which helps with some costs, and encouraged other groups to consider doing the same thing.

Paula Perez from Grupo Embajadores de Mountain View expressed gratitude for the City staff's availability to speak with their group individually before submitting the grant. They appreciate the City staff's ability to provide assistance in Spanish and are grateful that these types of funds are available.

Justine from Springer Meadows appreciated the available grant funds to help cover costs. She agrees with the comments that the costs of goods and food are increasing and explains why these grant funds are so helpful to the group.

Anonymous expressed surprise that the city currently has no other source of funding to fund everyone fully. She also asked if additional funding for the grants would be available in the future or if there could be a place to draw down funds.

Anonymous spoke on how it would be helpful if the City could vet and contract with certain vendors for certain items, such as ice cream vendors for all the groups that do ice cream socials.

Anonymous from Springer Meadows Neighborhood suggests a streamlined process for block party permits. An online portal where the permit status can be tracked would be helpful.

Affordable Housing Manager Barnard mentioned that the housing team cannot speak about the permit process as that is another department; however, that feedback would be passed along to the appropriate department.

Jason spoke about this being their second year applying for this program, and this program helps make their events more accessible for those with lower and/or fixed incomes.

Rosa Arrellano from CalTega stated that this was her first time applying. Their group has put together many activities post-COVID that help the community with necessities, such as a community pantry. All their events and resources are open to the community. They appreciate that Spanish-speaking staff was available for them to reach out, ask questions, and discuss their application before submitting it.

Councilmember Ramirez stated that these are usually fun meetings but that too much flexibility in these programs is causing other issues. Increasing the budget does not solve all of the problems. He questioned how granular we should get with the program at this time. This year, staff err on the side of generosity. As more groups apply, the program will not be able to be as generous. We need to explore groups and have clear geographic guidelines to avoid overlap. Even if the budget is approved, the long-term policy issues remain. Currently, he is not inclined to recommend approval for all groups. He would like to look at geographic overlap. This is not to say that the groups are not doing good work; however, some of the groups can work with larger groups that overlap to coordinate events and funding.

Affordable Housing Manager Barnard mentioned that staff will work on an updated map now that all the groups have submitted their boundaries and will examine different options for grant awards to share with the committee at the November meeting.

The committee asked staff if funding from four groups would be reallocated to other groups and where that would leave the budget.

Affordable Housing Manager Barnard responded that would still mean that the request is in excess of \$10,000 from the budgeted amount of \$40,000.

Councilmember Ramos asked if something in the past allowed the grant amounts to be auto-increased every year.

Staff responded there was an increase last year.

Mayor Showalter also mentioned the increase from last year was a one-time increase that was allowed for inflation.

Councilmember Ramos recommended looking at stricter boundaries in the future and agreed with everything mentioned by Councilmember Ramirez.

Councilmember Ramirez states that groups 1, 3, 4, and 6 should be removed from the funding list, and the

funding that would have been provided to those groups should be reallocated to the remaining groups.

Councilmember Ramos asked if funding would be increased by \$10,000 annually.

Mayor Showalter responded by mentioning that there is a budget meeting every year, at which time an annual increase to the CNC grant program can be discussed.

Mayor Showalter mentioned that this program is unique and that stricter boundaries are necessary. The program is currently suffering from its own success. She is confused about why Arts of Mountain View and The Frisbee group felt their activities met the grant guidelines, as there may be other places where those groups can obtain funding.

Mayor Showalter recommended the Loreto Street group should talk to the historical society for funding their activities.

Mayor Showalter requested staff work on a new map showing all the grant groups' boundaries. She also confirmed that the funding increase from last year was a one-time increase due to inflation. She also told the groups that staff would not work with vendors to negotiate contracts. She encouraged the groups to work and collaborate with one another to negotiate those items and activities.

Mayor Showalter instructed staff to look at making rules more formal.

Affordable Housing Manager Barnard mentioned that staff would work on an updated map and research some additional grant funding options to present at the November meeting.

Motion-M/S—Ramirez/Showalter to remove Loreto Street Neighborhood Group, Vincent and Beyond Neighborhood Association, Eagle Park Youth Ultimate Frisbee Group, and Arts Mountain View and award the prorated amount to the remaining groups. The committee will ask the Council to increase the budget by \$10,000 to increase the grant budget amount to \$50,000.

6. COMMITTEE/STAFF COMMENTS, QUESTIONS, COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mayor Showalter announced the next CNC Neighborhood meeting for the Grant Road Sylvan Area on May 15, 2024, at Amy Imai Elementary School and invited members present to attend and participate.

7. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:45 p.m. on Wednesday, April 17, 2024, Mayor Showalter adjourned the meeting.

Approved on May 15, 2024