

Citizen Advisory Committee
Application Review Meeting Minutes
February 7, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by mark Bisaccia.

Present: Committee members Roberta Garlock, Jeffrey Moreno, Michelle Miller, Carol Eagles, Colleen O'Connor.
CDA Staff Mark Bisaccia, Ronald C. Dumas and Rosa Richardson

Absent: Committee Member Victor Borrás

Columbus House- Colleen Perez introduced herself and gave a brief description of the Subsidized Housing Program. She explained that this program is a program specifically designed for each client in order to meet their needs. This services that are provided include but are not limited to Budget assistance, Employment assistance, assistance in completing Social Security Income applications, Mental Health and Substance Abuse assistance, Home Health Care, Hospice, etc. Currently there are 21 clients in West Haven.

Mark Bisaccia asked Ms. Perez how long it takes to get through the assessment and into a program such as this. She explained that there are several ways in which a individual can be placed into this program. Sometimes an individual may enter this program through the Dept. of Housing and not need the opportunities of Case Management. Often times, individuals would go through the whole system from homelessness to shelter where they will receive Case Management and other services as needed with the goal of moving them into subsidized housing.

Committee Member Miller asked if the individuals have to go through HUD or Section 8. They do not necessarily have to go through those programs. Ms. Perez said often times an client is ready to move on from this program but cannot keep a rent without some assistance. However, there is not always Section 8 vouchers available to them so they would have to remain in this program until it is available to them.

Mr. Bisaccia stated that there is more homelessness in this area and in this City. He then asked If they or other agencies have the same level of difficulty when reaching out to 211 as we do. Ms. Perez informed the Committee that 211 have funding cut and is now only available from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. They used to be available 24 hours per day. Agencies who rely on this service have been going before the State Legislators to get the funding back.

Committee Member asked if there are specific rules for using Shelters. Ms. Perez explained that although they are pretty relaxed in their rules, they will not allow any for of disruptive behavior.

Mr. Bisaccia reminded Ms. Perez that they must retain all records relative to this program for at least 4 years. He also stressed the importance of getting quarterly reports and invoices to the CDA Office in a timely manner.

BOE- Mr. McGrath informed the Committee that they are seeking funds to paint and line the playground area at Forest School. He explained that the application for Savin Rock as well but they found funding for that school. He was asked what they would need for just Forest School and he believes that \$25,000 would cover it. Their original request was in the amount of \$55,000.

He then explained that the pad at Forest School, which was requested in the current budget will be completed during April Recess.

The Committee had no questions for Mr. McGrath.

Vertical Church- Paul Bronson , Outreach Pastor and Marissa DeRoche introduced themselves to the Committee.

Pastor Paul stated that The Dream Center is close to opening and they anticipate that it will hopefully be open in March. He explained that they will provide the Food Pantry, Clothing Closet, Employment and Financial Counseling a “Recovery” program as well as Housing Crisis Prevention. Their goal is to provide a safe, healthy environment for individuals to come to in order to not only receive basic needs but to receive assistance in order to better themselves. This assistance will be a skill assessment, employment programs and resume writing to name a few.

They are seeking funds in order to provide internet access and the necessary equipment and software in or to provide training modules (i.e. Cisco Network Academy). Pastor Paul Bronson again stated that they want to be able to assist individuals in their time of need and offer them the resources to get back on their feet and provide a better life for themselves.

Committee Member Garlock asked if they would receive certification once this module is completed. Pastor Bronson stated that he is not sure but he believes they would receive a college credit. Committee Member Miller read a statement from the document that was distributed to the Staff and Committee Members. She asked if this program would be provided to church members first based on this document. Pastor Bronson stated that this document was created when this program was brought in as a pilot program. He also stated that he did not believe that many members would participate. He also stated that regardless, no one who came to the Dream Center would be refused.

Member O’Connor asked how they chose Cisco. This Program is used by other organizations He explained that the Team of professionals had met with this agency and a pilot program was implemented approximately 2 years ago. Cisco is secular based program that is used by other organizations and it was easy and reasonable to start up.

Member Eagles asked if this site would be used as an internet HUB for individuals who do not have internet service. Pastor Bronson stated that they are flexible and open to this.

Mr. Bisaccia stated that he had spoken with the City’s IT Department and access to WiFi in the area would be utilized by the many residents in the area. He would like to continue this discussion.

WH Public Library- Colleen Baillie introduced herself and explained the need for a Social Worker within the Library. She stated that many of the requests by Library patrons far exceed the knowledge these patrons need. Some of the inquiries include homeless shelter, SSI applications, unemployment, housing and DCF. She explained that some of the patrons suffer from psychotic episodes and mental illness. Librarians do not have the knowledge or resources to assist in these types of situations.

Mr. Bisaccia informed her that the city is requesting a Social Worker in the next fiscal budget. Maybe the City can collaborate with the Library.

Marrakech- Lori _____ of Marrakech stated the need for lighting in the rear of 450 Island Lane. The back parking Lot is used for evening events since there is no receptionist after hours. She explained that many of the clients need the extra lighting due to their disabilities. This process had started just before COVID but was put on hold. They are seeking 5 lights in the lot.

Shoreline Wellness - Robert Powers CEO and Kim Kenney, Grant Coordinator introduced themselves and gave a brief description of the programs they provide. She stated they recently purchased the property at 66 Tetlow Street aka: “The Blake Building”. They are awaiting final approval from MARB on the sale and are looking forward to expanding their Clinic and Outreach within the clinic. .

Committee Member Miller asked how they would be able to ensure that Low/Mod Income individuals/ Families will be accommodated? Kim explained that they have been making modifications to the intake applications to be able to ensure that Low/mod demographics are included in order to ensure they receive priority.

Mr. Bisaccia asked what they are seeking for tenants for the first floor as described in the application. They would like to provide Medical Clinics, Community Space for activities such as after school programs, a Day Care or early childhood pre-k to 3 years for tenants.

Member Eagles asked what impact they would have if they were denied this application. They will continue to move toward opening. However, it may take longer.

Mr. Power and Mrs. Kenney thanked the Committee for their time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted by,

Rosa Richardson