



Cambridge Human Services Commission
Meeting Minutes
June 9, 2016
5:30 – 7:30 pm
Citywide Senior Center
806 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Commissioners present: Christine Elow, Christopher R. Hall, Anna Leslie, Linda Naval, Sumbul Siddiqui, Nan Stone, Rev. Lorraine Thornhill

DHSP staff present: Janice Alger, Mike Payack (recorder), Ellen Semonoff

After welcoming members of the Commission, Ellen Semonoff announced that the City of Cambridge & the Cambridge Community Foundation, in collaboration with the Cambridge Nonprofit Coalition, are hosting a Needs Assessment Forum. The forum will take place on Monday, June 20, 8:30 am – 12:30 pm, at Morss Hall (MIT). Commission members are invited to attend. This is an opportunity for Commission members to share their professional voices and what they have learned through everyday experience about resident need in Cambridge. The results from this needs assessment process and final report will be delivered to the City Council to make informed decisions in establishing broad funding goals. A future Advisory Committee will be developing recommendations for the investment of mitigation funds (aka “Community Benefits” funds pledged to the City of Cambridge through zoning amendments and agreements with developers) that are tied to the City Council’s broad funding categories. This is a great opportunity to help inform the City’s funding priorities. Mike Payack will email this information to members of the Commission.

Ellen also announced that the City of Cambridge, in conjunction with the search firm GovHR, has begun the search process for the next City Manager. The City is hosting a series of focus groups to gather opinions from residents and key constituents on the characteristics, experience, challenges and opportunities to be considered in choosing the best City Manager for the City of Cambridge. The Human Services Commission has specifically been invited to the session with a focus area on human services. This focus group is scheduled for Wednesday, June 15, 6:30 – 7:30 pm, in the Citywide Senior Center ballroom. Attendance is optional. Mike will also email this information to members of the Commission.

Ellen reminded Commissioners that the City of Cambridge’s FY2017 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) allocation is \$2,511,259. This represents a \$35,428 (or 1.4%) cut from FY2016. This translates to a \$5,314 cut to the portion of the allocation that the City dedicates to Public Services (or Human Services). However, due to the closure of former CDBG recipient Centro Latino this past fall, the Commission has the rare opportunity to decide what to do with some extra funding, in this case \$18,000.

The Commission recommended conducting a formal process for the FY2017 CDBG grant cycle, whereby existing satisfactorily-performing grant recipients were invited to renew their current award. In addition, the Commission decided to issue a closed mini-RFP for three one-time \$6,000 grants (or four one-time \$4,500 grants) since Centro Latino would not be applying for renewal funding.

All currently-funded programs submitted applications to renew their current award and all currently-funded Agencies submitted proposals for one-time FY2017 awards. Mike Payack provided copies of these applications and proposals to each member or the Commission for review one week ahead of tonight's meeting.

Mike announced that he performed site visits to all currently-funded programs during the FY2016 grant year and shared some notes from these visits. Mike announced that all currently-funded programs are considered "In Compliance" with the Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) guidelines and DHSP requirements.

After a discussion of FY2017 applications for renewal funding, the Commission recommended renewal funding for existing CDBG programs at FY2016 levels.

City staff and Commission members had a discussion on selection criteria to consider when reviewing proposals for the additional one-time FY2017 funding. The Commission decided on the following selection criteria:

1. Whether or not the proposal was for one-time funding
2. Size of the organization
3. Nature of the service (is it an essential service?)
4. Long-term impact
5. Availability of alternative funding options
6. Financial need of the program
7. Need for the service in Cambridge

The Commission considered this selection criteria while reviewing the proposals. In addition to recommending renewal funding for existing CDBG programs at FY2016 levels, the Commission recommended one-time FY2017 funding to the following programs (listed alphabetically by organization):

- Cambridge Camping Association – Daybreak Day Camp (\$6,500)
- CASPAR – Emergency Services Center and Shelter (\$6,500)
- Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House – Emergency Food Pantry (\$5,000)

Mike announced that the Commission will break for the summer (July and August) and resume meeting in September. Mike asked members of the Commission to save the following dates for 2016-2017 meetings:

- September 8, 2016
- October 13, 2016
- November 10, 2016
- December 8, 2016
- January 12, 2017
- February 9, 2017
- March 9, 2017
- April 13, 2017
- May 11, 2017
- June 8, 2017

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Payack
Planner/Contracts Manager
DHSP/Planning & Development