THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

CONSOLIDATED PLAN ADVISORY BOARD
NOTES FOR SPECIAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 2013

SAN DIEGO CIVIC CONCOURSE
NORTH TERRACE ROOMS 207–209
202 'C' STREET
SAN DIEGO, CA 92101

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT	BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT
William Moore, Council District 1, Chair Vicki Granowitz, Council District 3, Vice Chair Audie de Castro, Council District 4 Sam Duran, Council District 5 Robert McNamara, Council District 6 Aaron Friberg, Council District 8	Michael C. Morrison, Mayor's Office

STAFF PRESENT	ATTENDANCE SHEET
Amy Gowan, Program Manager, CDBG Eliana Barreiros, Acting Program Administrator, CDBG Ulysses Panganiban, Project Manager, CDBG	• 25 people signed the attendance sheet

Call to Order

- Chair Moore called the Board meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

Staff Announcements

- The City received from HUD a notice to expect a reduction in its Fiscal Year 2014 CDBG entitlement allocation of up to 5 percent due to federal sequestration.
- March 19, 2013, is the tentative hearing date for the City Council to consider the recommendations of the Consolidated Plan Advisory Board on which projects should receive CDBG funding in Fiscal Year 2014.

- April 2, 2013, is the tentative date for releasing the 2014 Annul Action Plan for a 30-day public review period. The plan will be posted on the City of San Diego's website and be made available at the CDBG Program office, as well as in select libraries and community centers.

- New interns have been hired and began on March 4, 2013.

- Work on the next Consolidated Plan will continue after the submission of the Fiscal Year 2014 Annual Action Plan to HUD.

Board Announcements

- Mr. McNamara asked about the coordination of Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas (NRSAs) with the new Consolidated Plan in terms of consultant services and direction from the Mayor's Office.

- Mr. McNamara asked about the process for filling vacancies on the Consolidated Plan Advisory Board. Staff responded that the Mayor's Office has the primary responsibility for initiating and processing appointments through the City Council.

Non-Agenda and Agenda Public Comment

- Beth Barnes, with the LGBT Community Center, commented on the Consolidated Plan Advisory Board's process for scoring and ranking the Fiscal Year 2014 CDBG applications and provided suggestions for improvement.

- Denise Serrano, with the LGBT Community Center, commented on the Consolidated Plan Advisory Board's process for scoring and ranking the Fiscal Year 2014 CDBG applications and provided suggestions for improvement.

- Melissa Peterman, with St. Vincent de Paul Village, commented on the Consolidated Plan Advisory Board's process for scoring and ranking the Fiscal Year 2014 CDGB applications and provided suggestions for improvement.

Discussion and Action Items

- Item 6a – Survey of CDBG FY2014 Applicants Regarding Application Process/Form: Staff presented the results of a survey of applicants regarding the Fiscal Year 2014 CDBG application process and form. Board members asked staff some clarifying questions on the major themes that emerged from the survey and proceeded to discuss areas of improvement and ways to improve the process and form.

- Item 6b –Preliminary Discussion Regarding Process, Policies, and Procedures for Evaluating Fiscal Year 2015 CDBG Applications: After receiving comments from the

public, the Board discussed suggestions for improving the evaluation process, including: eliminating subcommittees when scoring applications; reconsidering score weights; shortening the application process; avoiding amendments to applications; exploring more partnerships to leverage funds; setting policies to guide scoring and Board actions; and avoiding subjectivity as much as possible. Staff commented on the need for the Board to balance changes to the process and application form and its desire to release the application earlier than compared to last year.

- Item 6c –Attendance Policy for CPAB Members per Municipal Code §26.2107: After receiving a brief staff report, the Board discussed establishing its own attendance policy. Board members asked about current practices followed by community planning groups and the extent of the Board's discretion in establishing its attendance policy. Mr. McNamara moved, and Mr. de Castro seconded, to direct the Board chair to draft an attendance policy that removes members based on absences and to consult with the City Attorney's Office on said policy. Motion passed 6-0-0 (Aye – Moore, Granowitz, de Castro, Duran, McNamara, and Friberg; Absent – Morrison).

Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned 9:41 a.m.

THE CENTER

Serving the lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender community of San Diego County since 1973.

March 13, 2013

San Diego City Council
202 C Street
San Diego, CA 92101

Council President Gloria and members of the Council,

As you are aware, the Consolidated Plan Advisory Board's actions during this year's CDBG process resulted in an unwarranted and damaging outcome for the San Diego LGBT Community Center's public services application. After reviewing the tape of the final meeting of that committee, we offer comments below regarding the apparent lack of overall fairness, consistency and transparency of this year's process. Further, we also offer some suggestions for FY 15 process improvements that may help to avoid some of this year's misunderstandings and unfortunate outcome.

To be clear, we do object to the outcome but our larger concerns lie with the process. It is the process itself which fails to meet the HUD and City goals. The goal of the City's CDBG process, as we understand it, is to procure for the City of San Diego, in a HUD-approved competitive, transparent process, those projects and services that the City has identified as priorities for each year from among those that are HUD-prescribed. We do not believe that this goal has yet been attained in the current process as it has been neither transparent, nor competitive on an even playing field. Moreover, it was not based upon priorities that were identified in advance of the competition.

We recognize that this advisory board was implemented in part to provide community input into the CDBG process and to address the misperceptions that awards were being made not on merit or value to the City, but instead as a result of perceived political agendas. However, we do not believe the operation of the current advisory board accomplishes those desired outcomes because members of the advisory board have neither the experience nor the expertise needed to conduct an informed and fair selection process.

Unlike other community advisory boards the City sometimes uses, the expectations for this volunteer committee – e.g., that they have the knowledge, skill and expertise to fairly evaluate all types of social service programs, across all City geographies, target populations and disciplines – are not practical expectations for an all-volunteer board and were not the basis for selecting advisory board members. Without these qualifications, advisory board members would naturally be expected to make decisions based upon personal bias and limited personal knowledge. As a result, the board's work was seriously flawed, was inconsistent with the goals of the DBG program, and is unfair to applicants.

For example, this year's committee initially ranked The Center's application with the second highest competitive score. However, when presented for further committee review, the Center's application score was suddenly changed to a score ranking 13th. No objective standard for this score changing was enunciated. Instead, the brief committee discussion regarding this sudden score-changing included the following

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brief comments: "It's about priorities" and "They don't need the money as much as other agencies." Moreover, The Center's score was the only score in the top six to be lowered, while grantees from the 19th and 23rd positions were raised. This is at best confusing, but it also raises questions about personal bias and lack of information about applicant programs.

Follow-up questions after the public process revealed an erroneous belief that the Center's proposed professional mental health services provided to LGBT low-income, high-risk youth, seniors, families do not meet the committee's priority criterion: to fund only direct, measurable, life-saving services. Given the wealth of publicly available information regarding the depression, anxiety and struggles of LGBT individuals and families, as well as the documented disparities in availability of competent mental health services to this population, this gross misunderstanding can only have resulted from a lack of information and expertise. Because of this lack of committee knowledge, 60+ people with mental health problems ranging from domestic abuse to deep depression due to an AIDS diagnosis face the prospect of being unable to access mental health services. For some, this is absolutely a life or death matter, making these services fully consistent with the life-saving criterion.

Based upon these and other experiences with this advisory board, we respectfully suggest that, if the City chooses to continue to use an advisory board, several process improvements for the FY15 year would be helpful.

- If the City would like to prioritize specific types of projects (e.g. homelessness or shelter projects, food delivery, case management, domestic violence) or specific geographic targets, or specific population targets or whatever may be the pleasure of the City, then those priorities should be established by the Council itself **prior** to the issuance of the RFP. This will provide an opportunity for broad public input on the proposed priorities, will provide clear direction to the advisory board and staff prior to scoring applications, and will provide all applicants with the same information regarding priorities. This would replace the current process, which appears to have advisory board members deciding upon a set of "priorities" that have neither been noticed in the RFP nor discussed in a public process. The priorities established by the Council can then be appended to the application, so that those who apply are aware of them and may have confidence that they will guide the selection process. It will also provide an opportunity for advisory committee members to receive training on the programs to be procured.
- If the scoring of applications is to be done by the volunteer committee, the applications should be read "blind". While parts of the application may inadvertently allow an individual committee member to identify a specific agency with which they are familiar, blind reading of applications can reduce the too readily formed perception that familiar agencies are chosen by the advisory board members for personal or political reasons rather than the importance or utility of the service to be provided to the City.
- If the scoring of applications is to be done by a subcommittee, then the recommendations of such a subcommittee should be identified as subject to specific criteria when submitted to the whole body. For example, committee comments about whether a specific agency "needs the money" would not be appropriate if the criteria do not specify established budget cut-offs as a priority. Moreover, those criteria would apply evenly to all applicants.

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- Parts of the application are highly technical and best evaluated by the technical experts – City staff – using clearly identified criteria. This further alleviates the burden on committee members to understand areas where they may not be expert and provides an opportunity for the expertise of the staff to be effectively utilized.

Thank you for your time and attention, and for your consideration of these suggestions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Delores A. Jacobs
Chief Executive Officer
The San Diego LGBT Community Center
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djacobs@thecentersd.org

cc: Council President Todd Gloria, District 3
Council President Pro Tem Sherri Lightner, District 1
Councilmember Kevin Faulconer, District 2
Councilmember Mark Kersey, District 5
Councilmember Lorie Zapf, District 6
Councilmember Scott Sherman, District 7
Councilmember David Alvarez, District 8
Councilmember Marti Emerald, District 9

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Talking Points - Consolidated Plan Advisory Board Meeting Notice
Wednesday, March 13, 2013, 8:30 AM

St. Vincent de Paul Village has witnessed the evolution of the CDBG evaluation and funding procedure over recent years and welcomed the objectivity that the Consolidated Plan Advisory Board (CPAB) would bring to the process.

However, we are concerned about the process used by the CPAB for awarding City CDBG funding for the 2013-2014 cycle.

For example, at the CPAB Special Meeting on February 12th, the CPAB rescored projects without regard to the approved scoring rubric.

The rescoring that occurred conflicts with the CPAB's efforts to ensure objectivity through a published, formalized and approved scoring process. These actions allowed CPAB members to subjectively shape funding decisions without consideration of the approved scoring matrix and were outside the published process. This kind of subjective scoring makes it difficult, if not impossible, for applicants to learn from the results to improve CDBG requests for funding in future cycles.

Further, it was announced during the Special Meeting on February 12th that public services projects serving homeless men, women and families would be scored lower than other target populations which contradicts the goals set forth in the City of San Diego 2010-2014 Consolidated Plan, the CDBG CPAB scoring matrix, and the focus of City Council and the Mayor.

We want to recognize the City's efforts to improve the way in which CDBG funds are awarded. The application, guidelines, and technical assistance provided this year were much improved.

It is the action of the CPAB that calls into question the objectivity of the CDBG awards process. I encourage you to maintain the objectivity required by the original scoring and ranking of projects published prior to the Special Meetings in February.

St. Vincent de Paul Village remains committed to the work of providing for the needs of homeless men, women, and children in San Diego.

Thank you.

Melissa Peterman