City of Portland - Office of Neighborhood Involvement (ONI)
Bureau/Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) - Summary Notes

August 8, 2016

In Attendance:
Sylvia Bogert (SWNI), April Burris (Community member), Jan Campbell (?), Adriana Govea (EPAP), Oscar Guerra-Vera (Unite Oregon), JoAnn Herrigel (Elders in Action), Debra Kolodny (RNW), Emily Larraga (EPAP), Don MacGillivray (League of Women Voters), Zack Mohamed (Unite Oregon – formerly CIO), Octaviano Merecias (Latino Network, EPAP), Sarah Schrock (North Portland)

ONI Staff:
Amalia Alarcon de Morris (Director), Amy Archer (Livability/Operations), Richard Bixby (EPNO), Michael Boyer (Crime Prevention), Nicholas Carroll (Noise/Livability), Brian Hoop (CNIC), Victor Salinas (Livability), Doretta Schrock (NPNS/NWNW), Mark Sieber (NWNW), Teresa Solano (I&R)

Commissioner Staff:
Claire Adamsick

Welcome and Introductions
General introductions, welcome

<u>Houselessness</u>
Package for engagement around houselessness in Portland. Add pot of money to help engage with community around exchanging information. Community members in need and those that want to help do not know how to effectively plug in. That was the main impetus for the funding request. Another proposal has been around funding one or more organizations that currently work with unhoused or those at risk of being unhoused to build capacity and leadership. Directive from Commissioner Fritz is that we present before Council with some consensus around proposal from those engaged in this issue. New fiscal year began July 1st and last week was the first of a series of conversations to hone the proposal. We are tasked to go to Council before using the funds from the $350,000 one-time funds (only available this fiscal year). We are working to engage Marc Jolin from Home for Everyone. At Thursday's meeting we had Coalition representatives, DCL partners, Resolutions NW, Elders in Action, orgs that work with people unhoused (Right to Dream/Right to Survive, CAT, Living Cully, Parkrose Alliance).

- Brian: There is a balance between initial ideas as well as newer ideas around leadership, development, and capacity building and there is a challenge with the funds available. With some tension and disagreements in the room there is an opportunity to engage the passion and be part of the solution. As well as to build working relationships with existing partners and newer organizations working on this issue or those that we have not engaged with historically.

- Preliminary conversation with Marc: If part of the funds are designated to empowering and preparing people living in these circumstances, and to engage on the issue, then he is supportive. If it is about information dissemination, they do not have the capacity to do that, but if others do then he is supportive of that happening too.

- There is a county plan but people do not know about the plan or how it was developed and in absence of that information. It is critical to build a power base within the community as well as breaking down barriers for people to be able to participate in these efforts.

- Frame is engaging people. One strategy is information sharing, one is leadership development, and one is mobilizing for action. There needs to be common principles of what goal is to be accomplished with the efforts so we can also tell the story of what was done with the funds and how effective it was in this effort.

Group Thoughts

Tonight hope to hear thoughts about the tracks as well as ideas on how to put out the funds. We do not have the time to put out an RFP and do evaluation process. Committee to determine how to award dollars and strategy on amounts. Projects do not need to be completed by June 30th, could be for projects that go on for another year. We also will be entering budget season so any opportunity for additional funding would require some information on successes.

- Talked a lot about public outreach and never got to hear about the meetings and participate in the planning.
  - There is hope that we would take the opportunity to hear from everybody. We did build a list of people interested in the topic and we sent out a meeting invite electronically and failed to make calls to everybody on the list due to workload but apologize for leaving anybody out.

- Question about process. Has anything like this happened before where funds were distributed without a process? All the time, but are there any good models? Housing has composed a letter of interest related to the process. A grant proposal is not much different from a letter of interest. Would like to have integrity for criteria for selection and ensure every organization that should have opportunity gets that opportunity. Just have a tight timeline and clear priority, with a short couple page response.

- Need some framework and to ensure that not all funds are in just one of the areas, to ensure that it is an integrated approach. Various funded partners will need to interconnect.

- Suggest having requests require a partnership.

- It might be useful to have a steering committee to evaluate the proposals. Folks interested in funding should get together to identify how funds distributed. This reduces competition and ends up much more collaborative. Empowers the folks in the room to learn about each other and the work.

- Suggest disclosing the areas of focus, but that the distribution of funds will be determined based on the proposals.

- Suggest not using the three tracks because they are words that could mean similar things. Do not get too specific with the words on the "tracks". Give an idea of the parameters.

- Proposals come with a plan and elements that can be measured at the end to determine whether it was effective. Provides another opportunity if there is another phase.

- Information sharing needs to be consistent across the City about what is being done. Want to ensure some geographic distribution.

- Idea of partnering is excellent.

- Categories seem like a process. Is there any potential that there are outcomes connected to the results? We struggle regarding what is measurable. We fund the precursor to the actual outcomes. So it needs to be clear that the measurable items are process focused, it isn't going to be #x houses built, etc.

- There was a range of people in the meeting and not all have trust in City using the money wisely. Money provides an opportunity to help build trust.

- Set a goal to do the most work we can in the amount of the time we have. Programs can go back and argue for how little it got and how much it needs.

- Keep it simple and nimble. It is not a lot of money so we need to build what we actually have funds for currently and to avoid a bureaucratic process.

- This provides an opportunity to role model for the public and other bureaus on how to inform the community about issues and plans.

- Some organizations disagree that sharing information is needed because they know and feel ready to organize and mobilize.

- Understanding what the problem is would be a big help. In defining the problem you can sometimes find the solution. It's been 30 years and this hasn't been resolved. The first thing houseless need to know is where they can be, not just where they can't go. Any solution is problematic for lots of reasons. Getting organization together to allow some of the solutions to happen is important. We also need to define outcomes. It is a regional problem and involves neighboring counties so some leadership from Metro and State would be appropriate.

- This is not just about the homeless being pushed. It is about all the other aspects of the housing crisis. All the pieces are addressed in the Home for Everyone plan but people don't know about the plan. It is easy to focus on the obvious pieces and there is a lot that is hidden.

- There have been a lot of calls for those losing housing because rent went up or eviction without cause. Is there a way to focus on that piece by looking at rent control and/or eviction for cause requirements?

- Educate about what is happening and then identify gaps and allocate some funds to grass roots organizing.

- There has to be some ground work done to building that leadership capacity. They exist within the scope of what has been brought to the surface. Need to figure out the mechanics of it.

Funding proposal
Wide range of strategies for grant proposal funding - $1000 to $150,000

- Let's ask the community first. Would like to hold a public hearing and find out where they want to get services.

- Be careful what organizations give money to because some are not helpful. Example would be of a single mom with a child with a disability and it's hard to get services. Some agencies do not help but want you to sign anyway.

- Some feel that in the draft budget there needs to be more money given to grants. Staffing is separate from funding to partner organizations and seems duplicative. People have struggled with housing issues for 20 years and the only organization that seems to care has been Community Alliance of Tenants.

- At meeting heard strong push for giving all money out but feel strongly that there needs to be staffing to allow a coordinated effort. Understood there wasn't a need for ONI set aside for partners that wouldn't be part of the competitive pool. ONI needs staffing too because awarding the grants and it is a lot to manage.

- There are a number of churches and others involved with homeless right now that would be knowledgeable.

- All would like to see a dynamic website that puts all the information together and is accessible so people can find it.

- This is a gigantic problem that will take trillions to solve. We are not trying to solve the entire problem; we focus on what we can do to begin to address the problem. We aren't building housing, but hopefully we come out the other side with a cadre of people that have lived the experience and that are equipped and ready to advocate for what is needed. The only thing that moves politicians is a critical mass of people. Build power among people to come and speak effectively to enact change.

- Characteristics of organizations are to fund those that have worked with government and serves those impacted, and have been working on solutions. They are a stepping stone to bring in other organizations and projects with those that have been working on long term solutions.

- It is important to have a central staff person to coordinate across all the organizations. Houselessness looks different in every community and so is the organizing and mobilizing.

- Stay away from stereotyping houseless. Some of the people most effectively using technology/internet are low income housing projects. It is not an either/or, yes there are those that have very little access, but there are also people who are down and out and have access to those things.

- There are 10 million and 5 ongoing. This 350 thousand can sway how the ongoing funding will be used and can impact policy. We need to go into the root cause of the situations because it isn't about houseless getting out of being houseless. Some are worried about how funding will be given and measured. The assumption is that a committee will need to look at it and help make those decisions.

- The budget put out is just a draft but it is a blank slate. It should be based on the groups that propose and then allows the committee to decide.