

NOTES OF THE MEETING – **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE
CITY OF OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA
HELD WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 9, 2006

As a quorum was not present, Ms. Jennifer Bell, Legal Counsel, indicated that the members of the Oakland Housing Authority Board of Commissioners will convene as a Committee of the Whole in lieu of a Special Meeting /Work Session in the Commissioners Room, 1619 Harrison Street, Oakland, California on the above date. Chair Moses L. Mayne, Jr. presided and called the meeting to order at 6:07 P.M.

I. Roll Call

Commissioners present were Alfred Lee and Chair Moses L. Mayne, Jr. Commissioner Joe L. Brown was absent, while Commissioners Robert J. Pittman, Jr., Jacqueline M. Taylor and Ramon J. Terrazas were excused.

II. Report from the Legal Counsel regarding final decisions made during Closed Session at the last regular meeting on July 24, 2006.

Mr. Jennifer Bell reported that there were no final decisions made during the closed session on July 24, 2006.

III. Modifications to the Agenda

There were none.

IV. New Business

A. Briefing on Video Security Systems.

Mr. Jon Gresley, Executive Director, said that we are giving this briefing because at one of our briefings on the design aspects for scattered sites, someone suggested that we put video cameras on said sites. He said that many times neighbors come to us saying that we ought to put video cameras on our sites. Mr. Gresley thought that video cameras are useful as a part of our specific overall strategy, but to spend money on putting video cameras is not productive. He called upon Mr. Carel Duplessis, Chief of the Oakland Housing Authority Police Department, for a briefing on the feasibility of using security video systems.

Mr. Duplessis said that for a crime to be committed, three things have to

happen. The perpetrator must have the desire, the opportunity, and the desire to commit the offense. He said that if any of these three elements is absent, the crime will not occur. Mr. Duplessis said that society generally seeks to reduce crime by removing one or more of these elements. The existence of secular and religious laws, culture, taught by elders, parents and teachers work to reduce the desire to commit the crime. Other elements that deter crimes include law enforcement, security guards, and architectural design. He said that the use of natural and man-made barriers and devices to provide protection from criminals is not new.

Mr. Duplessis continued and said that the common space generally breeds the primary area for potential danger. The common areas at the Housing Authority scattered sites are at times breached by intruders providing an opportunity for criminal activity. He said that in order to combat the issue of intrusion into common areas, most of society would tend to believe that monitoring is the solution. Mr. Duplessis then discussed video surveillance system of a Closed Circuit Television (CCTV).

Mr. Duplessis said that we do not hide video cameras, and everybody sees them. He said that even the sophisticated systems used by banks and stores like Macys do not fully deter crimes. The Housing Authority has experienced that there is no proof of reducing people's fear of crime. Mr. Duplessis said that we do not constantly monitor criminal activity even though we have cameras. He said that our police officers cannot watch the monitor constantly and cameras are very expensive.

Discussion followed. Commissioner Lee asked if we are hoping to get a decision from the Board tonight. Mr. Duplessis said no because this is just a briefing. Mr. Gresley said that we do not see using cameras as a very viable practice for general usage at our scattered sites. Chair Mayne asked which application we think would be prudent for us to use. Mr. Gresley said that we have them on areas where we do get a lot of traffic, where there are doors that could be opened, stairwells, and places that are frequently visited by people. Mr. Duplessis added that our officers have been trained to provide information to the architects during the design phases. He said that our trained officers have provided information for better security.

Commissioner Lee indicated that he was a big proponent of video cameras. He said they use them in their buildings that have more than ten units.

Commissioner Lee said they usually monitor the common areas, the trash, the exits and the parking lots. He said that in his building in Oregon there are eight cameras and they only cost him \$15,000. He provided all the equipment and someone else installed them. Mr. Lee said that the maintenance per month is minimal. He said that, as the price of video cameras gets down, there is more

opportunity to use them. While Commissioner Lee thinks that cameras are not feasible to use at all the scattered sites, he would like us to utilize the technology on our larger sites. Chair Mayne asked about the quality of Mr. Lee's cameras. Mr. Lee said it is excellent. Commissioner Lee noted that every time he goes to China, he buys a new set of cameras.

Mr. Gresley indicated that we might want to have a fleet of these cameras that we can move around for special purposes and for maintenance purposes. Mr. Duplessis said that not too long ago they put a camera in a parking lot across a liquor store. Commissioner Lee said that we should consider putting this on our next budget cycle.

B. Briefing on potential security contract at Lion Creek Crossings.

Mr. Gresley said that from previous discussions, we have been concerned about Lion Creek Crossings' gang-related activity. He said that at Lion Creek Crossings, they do have private security, but many of the problems exceed their capacity for response. Mr. Gresley said that Related Company has approached us about contracting for us to provide police officers there on patrol. He said we are intending to bring to the Board a contract for its approval at the next meeting. Mr. Gresley said that an agreement has been reached for Related to pay the cost of two full-time police officers for a two-year contract. He called upon Mr. Duplessis to provide a briefing.

Mr. Duplessis said that the Lion Creek Crossings is one of the highest crime areas in the City. The area behind 69th Avenue is notorious for drug dealing activity. He said we have done some preliminary work a couple of days ago and provided it to Related, outlining about ten families we have determined to have been involved in drug activity. Mr. Duplessis said an agreement is being drafted for Related to pay two full-time Police Officers for a two-year contract.

Commissioner Lee asked if we have a performance contract, a management contract, with Related. Mr. Gresley asked if it is in terms of our expectations for them as management. Commissioner Lee said yes. Mr. Gresley said we do not have a management contract, but the Partnership has a management contract with Related. Commissioner Lee would like our General Counsel to review some of the criteria and start monitoring that process. He also would like to get the City Council person involved in this project and have a meeting with them. Commissioner Lee noted that a meeting with the City would be very helpful. Mr. Gresley said it would be better if the Commissioners are also involved. Mr. Lee said he is available.

C. Briefing on Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

Mr. Gresley noted that this is one of the areas that Mr. Joseph Villarreal has

taken a lead on. He said it relates from both of public housing and Section 8, and noted that Ms. Sharon H. Cossey has responsibility in this area also. Mr. Gresley said we have drafted a Limited English Proficiency Plan for our Section 8 Administrative Plan and Public Housing Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP). He said these are near final drafts, and we are still getting comments and are reviewing them. Mr. Gresley hopes to bring this to the Board this month for final adoption. He called upon Mr. Villarreal for an overview. Chair Mayne asked if we are going to talk about implementation of this also. Mr. Gresley said Mr. Villarreal will talk about how this fits into the overall steps, and this is the beginning.

Mr. Villarreal said that this came from the December 19, 2003 notice that HUD published. It is based on Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and an Executive Order that was issued in early 2000. Mr. Villarreal said that previous to our current efforts, we have been battling our efforts largely on the City's Equal Access Ordinance. First, he introduced Mr. Doug Lee, Senior Program Analyst of his staff. He said Mr. Lee does a lot of work on the Project Based Vouchers. Mr. Villarreal also introduced Ms. Apple Lo who is working as an Intern this summer. He noted that Ms. Lo had worked for Affordable Housing Associates. Mr. Villarreal also noted about Ms. Lo's senior thesis at U.C. Berkeley, which encompasses about how the Housing Authority was deficient in this area, and how our Limited English Proficiency efforts were poor. He said we have been working for the past couple of months looking on matters like what we have done, what is in the City of Oakland in terms of population, and who do we need to serve.

Mr. Villarreal indicated that one of the things that Ms. Cossey had worked with MIS Department, as she was transitioning the project, was that she started tracking those who need language assistance in order to get a better picture of the population. He said that knowing from census data, if we look at just the guidance and the census data, it is Chinese speakers, largely Cantonese, Spanish speakers and Vietnamese speakers. He noted that the Plan presented to the Board is largely where they come from. Mr. Villarreal said that we have looked at some other housing authorities like Las Vegas Housing Authority. He said HUD audited their Fair Housing Equal Housing Opportunity, and we looked at their Plan.

Mr. Villarreal continued and said that we have sent these drafts out for comments to the Law Center for Families and Bay Area Legal Aid, both of which have come and spoken before the Commission about what they would like to see us do in this area. He said that we just received comments from both agencies. Mr. Villarreal said we would like to come back to the Board in September after we have had a chance to meet with both agencies. He noted that staff will provide copies of the agencies' letters to the Commissioners.

Staff are composing our replies to them and the replies will be provided to the Commissioners at the same time. Mr. Villarreal informed the Board that the representative from Bay Area Legal Aid is going to be on vacation starting next week, until August 28, 2006. He said we would like to work with them with a number of issues. Mr. Villarreal indicated that we are already working on finding translators for interpretation services. He said that we are already collecting documents that HUD has already translated, and we will probably put up some newer posters next week. Some of the implementations have already been going on, but we will be bringing detailed implementation plans to the Commissioners in September.

Discussion ensued. Chair Mayne asked if we have a solution with regard to the Senior Thesis Study. Ms. Apple Lo answered that she was not only focusing on the Oakland Housing Authority, but also on affordable housing providers in Oakland. She noted that there is a solution, but it may not be applicable to the Oakland Housing Authority. Chair Mayne said it has to be. Commissioner Lee said that the Board has brought this to us as part of the Equal Access. He indicated that he is looking for implementation timeline and for the need to deploy staff that are able to speak multiple languages into positions where they can be effective as their primary jobs. He would like to see it in our hiring practice as a bonus point or criteria to get us into an even scale to serve our population. Commissioner Lee would like to incorporate it into the ACOP Policy. If not, he would like to see it as a directive.

Mr. Villarreal noted that our last recruitment was for clerks. He indicated that we have been speaking with Ms. Pam Foster, Director of Human Resources, to determine what we can and cannot do, how far we can go, and what we have to do. Commissioner Lee noted that it is hard enough to get through even if you speak English. He said it is really a burden for the people who do not speak English. Commissioner Lee does not believe that it will cost the Agency any more. Mr. Villarreal said there may be a one-time cost for translation. Commissioner Lee said that if we hire one person, it will cost us less. Mr. Gresley said we have to be concerned about the quality of the product. He said that there are people who speak other languages that often can tell you what is going on but may not be able to translate. Mr. Gresley indicated that we have a number of employees who speak different languages who are receiving premiums to do translation, and they do have to pass the test.

Ms. Bell commented on the things we want to do in terms of setting up a legal document, in particular, a back-to-back translation. We will have somebody translate the document and have another person translate it back into English to make sure the translation is correct. Ms Bell said that that is particularly important for leases and other documents, because if we do not speak the language, we cannot evaluate whether the translation is done properly.

Commissioner Lee indicated that he is against translating a legal document into different languages because of the vagueness of it. Ms. Bell said that one of the problems with that is that there are guidance that essentially say you have to translate some documents. Mr. Gresley believes there is a solution. He said we ought to have a statement at the bottom of our leases, no matter what the language and the statement and that language is, "In Court, the English version shall prevail." Ms. Cossey said that we should write in plain English first, because we need to be very clear about what people are required to do and what our obligations are under the Lease. Then, eventually, we will use what the (Oakland) school district has used where its staff take discussions on what the requirements are. The school district staff use videos which do not cost very much and have been very effective. Commissioner Lee said that when it comes to legal documents, we should stick with the English version, for our protection. Ms. Bell agreed with it

Mr. Gresley indicated that we have access to translation in about 150 languages. Mr. Villarreal asked for any other specific issues on the proposed plans. Chair Mayne said that he had none, but asked if the Legal Aid staff provide support to us. Mr. Villarreal said that one of the letters from the Legal Aid was critical, but the other was supportive. Mr. Villarreal feels that we will be able to meet a lot of the Legal Aid's concerns. He said that the Legal Aid staff are willing to work with us and give us good ideas. Chair Mayne would like the Legal Aid people to provide us with what they want. Ms. Bell said that one of the things we are talking about is creating a glossary of the technical terms so that there will be consistent translations in every language all the time. Mr. Gresley said we have intended to bring this back to the Board on August 28, 2006, but he believes it deserves taking the time now to work with these letters and meet with the Legal Aid staff, and staff will bring this back to the Board in September.

V. Recognition of people wishing to address the Commission.

There are none.

VI. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Gresley said that it is summer and a lot of people go on vacation. He noted that Mr. David Lipsetz just came back from vacation.

Commissioner Lee thanked Mr. Villarreal and his staff for the Administrative Plan and the ACOP Policy briefing.

VII. Adjournment to Closed Session.

Without any further business, the meeting was adjourned to a closed session at 7.20 p.m.

Closed Session

The Oakland Housing Authority Board of Commissioners convened in Closed Session at 1619 Harrison Street, Oakland, California on the above date. Chair Moses L. Mayne, Jr. presided and called the meeting to order at 7:25 p.m. regarding the following:

- Conference with legal counsel pursuant to Government Code Section 54656.9 regarding pending cases in the Alameda County Superior Court.

Attendance

Commissioners present were Alfred Lee and Chair Moses L. Mayne, Jr. Commissioner Joe L. Brown was absent, while Commissioners Robert J. Pittman, Jr., Jacqueline M. Taylor and Ramon J. Terrazas were excused.

The Closed Session was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Chair

Secretary