

APPROVED
MINUTES
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE COMMISSION
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14, 2007
8:00 pm

1. Roll Call

Present: D'Orio, Johns, Larsen, Maris, Thomsen

Absent: Duncan, Marks

Staff: Lieberman, Chaney

Other: Linda Gardener, Alameda County

2. Approval of minutes. D'Orio moved to approve the minutes of 2/14/2007. Maris seconded. Minutes were approved 3-2-2.

3. Reorganization: The Commission welcomed its new member Dirk Larsen, and explained the reason for the School Board's change in appointment. Johns requested that the Commission delay the election of a new chair and vice-chair for one meeting, since two of the members were not present at this meeting. MOTION by Johns, seconded by D'Orio:

The SEJC will postpone the election of the new chair and vice-chair for one session, until the April meeting. Passed on a vote of 5-0.

4. Opening Public Forum. There were no members of the public who wished to speak.

5. Old Business

- a. Services to Albany Homeless and Persons in Need of Mental Health Services:
Presentation by Linda Gardener, Alameda County

Linda Gardener, from Alameda County described the "EveryoneHome" program and her role. She noted that Albany is participating in county-wide programs addressing homelessness, including the Alameda County Continuum of Care. She discussed the need for affordable housing and support services and also noted that 40% of younger homeless persons had come out of the foster care or juvenile justice system. 71% of the homeless population has a high school diploma or GED. She noted that Alameda County is one of the ten least affordable counties in the entire country. The goals of the Everyone Home" program are: 1) Prevent homelessness, particularly through discharge assistance; 2) creation of 15,000 wraparound housing units with support services in the next 15 years (from both new and existing stock); 3) "No Wrong Door" consolidation and streamlining of services; 4) Measuring success and Reporting Outcomes, particularly showing cost effectiveness; 5) Developing long-term leadership and political will.

The Commissioners discussed the programs and Lieberman informed them

that in the prior year the Commission had reviewed the Alameda Countywide Homeless and Special Needs Housing Plan. There was some discussion of the City of Berkeley's new proposal to address loitering and the potential impact it might have on Berkeley. MOTION by Thomsen, second by Maris:

The SEJC recommends to City Council that staff immediately discuss with Berkeley City staff and officials the new Berkeley homeless policy and actions, and Berkeley's stated intention to remove the homeless from the street and the potential impact on Albany. Passed on a vote of 5-0.

Albany Community Development Director Ann Chaney discussed the City's current participation in affordable/low income housing and the programs that are relevant to this issue. The Commission discussed how it might be possible to increase affordable housing. Chaney noted the City's regional housing needs assessment calls for a total of 277 units of new housing. She discussed some of the restrictions that make it difficult to develop housing, including the lack of raw land, the parking requirements, and the height limit. The Commission discussed how to come up with goals for Council consideration.

6. New Business:

- a. Nepotism: Thomsen discussed her concern that the City was unnecessarily disqualifying volunteers by a too stringent nepotism policy. MOTION by Thomsen, second by Larsen:

The SEJC request that in order to achieve maximum human capital from the volunteers of the City of Albany, the City Council ask the Charter Review Committee to review and revisit the nepotism policy (Section 3.02) currently in place in the City Charter. Passed on a vote of 5-0.

- b. City Motto: Delayed to a further meeting

- c. Withdrawal of Troops from Iraq: Johns discussed his viewpoint that this was a very important issue for the local community to weigh in on. Thomsen said that she felt that it was a federal issue and that it should be dealt with by individuals contacting their congressional representatives on an individual basis. Maris and Larsen noted that they felt the local government should concentrate on local, not federal issues. Johns agreed that the City was charged with addressing local issues but felt that this issue touched all citizens and that it shouldn't be presumed that this was too large of an issue for a City to address. MOTION by Johns, second by D'Orio:

The SEJC asks the City Council to consider a public discussion leading to a potential resolution calling for the withdrawal of U.S. armed forces from Iraq. Motion WITHDRAWN.

The wording of a potential motion was discussed at some length with regard to whether or not it was appropriate for City Council to address this issue.

MOTION by Johns, second by D'Orio:

The SEJC asks the City Council to consider holding a public discussion about whether it is appropriate to pass a resolution or take other action regarding the safe and immediate withdrawal of U.S. armed forces from Iraq. Motion passed 5-0.

- d. Seniors in need/marginal families: It was agreed that this issues should be merged into the homeless/mental health issue for the next meeting when the Commission considers its recommendations.
7. Closing Public Forum: No member of the public chose to speak.
8. Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m. The next Commission meeting is scheduled for April 11, 2007.