

Equity Advisory Committee (“EAC”)

Minutes from September 12, 2012 Meeting

Community members present:

Valerie Coleman, Jane Henzerling, Angela Jenkins, Stella Kim, Erin Le, Miguel Penn, Jamie Wagoner

Community members absent:

Elena Gil, Rick Hauptman, Barry Kendell, Alex Randolph, Susana Rivero, Mollie Ring, Monali Seth

Call to Order approval of minutes:

Zoë Polk noted that there were several grammatical errors on the minutes from the last meeting, and that the minutes were transcribed verbatim. The committee moved to table approval of the minutes until the next meeting when grammatical errors have been corrected. The committee also requested a return to the summary format for minutes.

Public comment on items not on the agenda:

None.

Commissioners and staff report:

Commissioner Lee reported, first, that the Local Business Enterprise program was transferred from the HRC to the Mayor’s office. Second, the HRC has written a letter to discourage the use of the word “illegal” when referring to undocumented individuals. Third, the Commission has decided to support Resolution FD1172 to prevent mental health providers from engaging minors in efforts to change their sexual orientation. Fourth, Friends of HRC has 501(c)(3) status, and is setting up a website, developing logos and attempting to raise money to help the HRC. Fifth, O’Connell High School in the Mission is available for the October 25th Commission meeting. Commissioner Lee would like to report back to the Commission regarding the EAC’s interest in that October 25th meeting at O’Connell.

Discussion on Commissioner Lee’s report: The committee asked Commissioner Lee what assistance EAC can offer in preparation for the event. Commissioner Lee suggested that the EAC help with setting up the event and crafting an agenda for the meeting that will interest the public. Zoë and Commissioner Lee then asked the committee for topics and speaker suggestions. Angela Jenkins suggested talking about disparity in suspensions, and bringing back CJJ. Jane Henzerling stated that she would have to go back to the education subcommittee, but that the broad theme of topics the subcommittee had previously discussed revolved around

disparities in discipline, school culture, student achievement, college access and readiness. The committee also decided that the meeting should focus on education, and should be linked to the trend in increased girls' arrests and the link to suspensions.

Zoë offered to liaise between the education subcommittee and Commissioner Lee. Jane said the education subcommittee could help recruit speakers to discuss the issues.

Commissioner Davis reminded the committee about the Board of Education candidates forum at USF on September 13th, and the September 27th hearing between the Board of Education and Board of Supervisors to discuss poor in educational outcomes for African American students and whether the school system has done anything to remedy the disparity in achievement between African American students and other students. Commissioner Davis noted that African Americans are performing at levels below special education students on state testing. Additionally, Commissioner Davis and Angela had a meeting with the City Administrator to discuss the Drinking Gourd project. Commissioner said they are wrapping up the first phase of what was the African American Leadership Council, and said moving forward they will focus more on subcommittee groups. They have met the goals they set out, and moving forward will focus on: working with USF to develop teacher trainings, meeting with Coleman Advocates to talk about going into public housing developments to do workshops on A-G requirements, the summer internship program, supporting the work Angela did around mental and physical health programs, and working with Zoë on the reentry and restorative justice war on drugs issues.

Zoë: The committee members' bios and pictures are online. Zoë reported back to the Director on the work that the EAC was doing, and the Director said she wants EAC subcommittees to present at a Commission meeting before the end of the year – date to be determined.

Speaker Series

Zoë and Valerie introduced the speakers - Karen Foster Garrison, Roxanne Murray, and Cathy – all of whom work for Family Service Agency (FSA) in different programs. Valerie and Stella of the silver tsunami subcommittee chose these speakers because the speakers provide services related to seniors' economic security (or insecurity) – an issue that repeatedly came up during Valerie's and Stella's interviews with service providers.

The speakers described their work at FSA. The Senior Division of the FSA specializes in geriatric mental health and also provides aging services.

Additionally, the speakers handed out a sheet with demographics, explaining that San Francisco has a large population of aging adults and a much smaller population of children because many families have left the area. As a result, many seniors are left with no support – a problem when

one considers that seniors require \$27,282 - \$39,513 yearly to survive in San Francisco, but only earn \$10,440 through SSI. Many people are slipping into poverty.

The speakers also showed a video that was made for the “One Away Campaign,” featuring interviews of aging people in San Francisco discussing their economic insecurity. Interviewees talked about having to choose between things like medicine and food and not being able to pay their bills. Many had worked hard under the belief that they would be secure, only to realize that they did not have enough money to support themselves. A commonly expressed theme was feeling one bill or one injury away from being on the streets.

Another video featured an interviewee who said that she thought the older people were being driven out of San Francisco because of the rising costs, but that she didn’t know where she, as an older person, could go. She lived in a rent controlled apartment and had a spending plan to keep her bills under control, but said she was only a paycheck or two from being on the street with homeless people.

Karen and Cathy described their Foster Grandparent Program, in which seniors can volunteer to spend time with children who often otherwise would not have much contact with older adults. The children can be any age up through high school, and benefit from the program because they gain companionship with committed adults – the seniors volunteer a minimum of twenty hours per week. Additionally, the seniors benefit from the program because often they do not have opportunities to socialize in their older age, and this gives them a reason to be social. Moreover, the seniors can earn non-taxed stipends, which are hugely helpful considering that they often only have an income of about \$1100 per month.

Commissioner Lee asked whether the program turns anyone down. Karen said some people do not fit well with the program and that when that is the case, she likes to suggest that the seniors apply to other programs.

Roxanne, the Program Director for Seniors Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) and Economic Security Initiative Center for Older Adults (ESIC), then began describing her program. She introduced Shiva Branda, an ESIC and SCSEP participant who is an architect, but who requires extra assistance because her age was a barrier to employment despite her skills and training. At SCSEP and ESIC, she uses her skills and experience to help others, while ESIC and SCSEP help her to be financially stable.

Shiva, Roxanne, and one other volunteer administer the programs primarily by using the skills that the volunteers of the programs offer because the programs are seriously underfunded. They provide services to older adults (over 55) who have been hit hard by the recession, some of whom have worked hard their entire lives, and others with less experience. Some have skills that are still useful, but others need to be retrained for this economy. Thus, SCSEP provides

workforce training for the older adults leading to permanent job placement, and provides them with a stipend. Additionally, the programs connect adults with available resources that they may not already be familiar with. The programs provide services related to wellness counseling, affordable housing, financial management, aging with dignity.

Roxanne stressed that the baby boom population will be huge, that the Silver Tsunami is real and that we should make sure that we are prepared to care for the Baby Boomers.

Questions from EAC Members

How is the program funded?

It is a federal program and is funded by the Department of Labor.

What kind of jobs do you train them for?

All types – administrative, customer service, sales, case management, etc. The individuals are trained through partners of the program, including nonprofit and government agencies that require additional staff. The training is provided on the job.

What is the average age?

Recently, it's about 55, though the ages range from 55 - 89. Roxanne used to administer a SCSEP program in Massachusetts in the 1990's and the average age was about 72.

What are the most common benefits that people don't know about?

One example of a service provided by a volunteer was when a volunteer recently secured funding for a wheelchair for a woman whose wheelchair burned in a house fire. Also, Shiva assisted with securing an eye appointment for a woman who required job training, but couldn't do the training because she was going blind. Apparently Lenscrafters has a program called "The Gift of Sight."

Sub Committee updates

Valerie discussed her and Stella's concern, as members of the silver tsunami subcommittee, that the senior age population is growing so quickly, and the fact that the problem is (and older adults in general are) somewhat invisible. She said that she thinks the objective of the City and the committee should be to come up with creative agencies that can work together.

Zoe said that she noticed that the government spends a lot of money preventing at-risk youth because they are related to reducing crime rates, and increasing public safety. She wondered if maybe seniors do not receive as much funding for their issues because they are not viewed as a

threat to the general population. Angela agreed that a lot of money goes towards public safety and everything that is deemed as threatening.

However, EAC members pointed out that soon the City will be overwhelmed by the number of older people, which could lead to homelessness being on the rise if the City is not prepared to deal with them. This could indeed turn into a serious economic threat for the City as it tackles the problem, partially because of reduced income taxes for the city as there is a smaller working population.

Subcommittee Updates: No updates this meeting.

Announcements

Jamie passed out a flyer for his new project with Bay Area Legal Aid, called the Gay and Lesbian Bisexual and Transgender Seniors Advocacy Project. The project is designed to assist low income LGBT seniors who are danger of being displaced from their tolerant neighborhoods and moved into less tolerant neighborhoods. Seniors may end up going back into the closet during their old age due to the intolerance around them.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:15 pm